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On Description

Alice Jedličková (ed.)

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Introduction: On description

This volume results from the international interdisciplinary colloquium *On Description* (Institute of Czech Literature, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, November 2013) which provided an opportunity for scholarly discussions among representatives of various disciplines: literary theory and history, analytic philosophy and fictionality theory, linguistics and classical philology, art history and intermedia studies. Some of the scholars involved have previously been co-operating in related fields of research: Heidrun Führer, Bernadette Banaszkiewicz and Emma Tornborg in exploring ekphrasis, Zdeněk Hrbata, Stanislava Fedrová and Alice Jedličková inquiring into the historical poetics of intermedia landscape representations, Marián Zouhar and Petr Koťátko sharing issues in semantic theories etc. Hence the volume presents more than just conference proceedings: some of the authors decided to employ the incentives of the discussion in extended versions of their papers that encompass a significant part of their research.

The introductory paper by linguist Jana Hoffmannová (Czech Language Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague) "The absent description: compensating for its evocative and identifying function" focuses on a specific kind of description which may be observed in everyday spoken communication, particularly in face-to-face dialogues. As evidenced in her illuminating and amusing exemplifications from empirical research, descriptive passages often lack explicit attribution of qualities, which are replaced by various reference devices such as indefinite or quasi-demonstrative pronouns. Nevertheless, it is the shared experience and knowledge as

well as non-verbal communicational strategies of the participants that make it possible for the description to fulfil its function.

In his contribution "The semantics of definite descriptions and identification", Marián Zouhar (Institute of Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovak Republic) demonstrates the usage of various modes of descriptive identification as based in logical calculus, taking into account the background of individual semantic theories. Another paper taking its starting point in the field of analytic philosophy and discussing the principles of possible worlds theory, "Identificatory functions of the description in a fictional text" (by Petr Koťátko, Institute of Philosophy, ASCR, Prague) aims at explaining the relationship between the identity of fictional characters and their literary description.

In the context of modern literary theory and interart studies, ekphrasis is often defined as a particular type of description presenting a work of art in a vivid manner. In tracing the history of ekphrasis back to its ancient rhetoric roots (and thus suggesting "The trajectory of ekphrasis"), Heidrun Führer and Bernadette Banaszkiewicz (Lunds universitet, Sweden, Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany) challenge this comprehension by emphasizing the evocative power of ekphrasis and its communicative interaction with the recipient, embraced in the notion of enargeia. Following the idea of suggesting an alternative approach to the frequently discussed genre of ekphrasis, Emma Tornborg (Linnéuniversitetet, Kalmar/Växjö, Sweden) takes her nodal point in current intermedia studies, and focuses on the "interartial ekphrasis" exploring it as a transformation of static visual media products into verbal representations. The title of her paper, "Time is of the essence: temporal transformation in ekphrasis" reveals that her intention is to question the traditional dichotomy between spatial ("static") visual art and temporal ("dynamic") verbal representation. Ekphrastic texts interpreted here provide a particular zone where the temporal aspects of visual and verbal representations seem to meet our experience of time (or of "timelessness"). A different perspective on ekphrasis is suggested by Stanislava Fedrová (Institute of Czech Literature, ASCR, Prague) in her paper "Description and its subject: through the eyes of the observer", challenging another traditional view, the assumed "objectivity" or noninterpretative character of description by displaying a variety of observer's perspectives in ekphrastic descrip-

tions, ranging from mere record of sensory data to rivalling methods of sophisticated interpretation.

Various forms and functions of descriptivity are explored in Zdeněk Hrbata's (Institute of Czech Literature, ASCR, Prague) contribution, its title bearing a reference to the crucial motif of "The chariot of Thespis" featuring Gautier's famous novel *Captain Fracasse.* The analysis is governed by principles of historical poetics, i.e. by taking into account the presence of generic and discursive models or their elements distributed in the novel's structure (such as *roman comique* and theatricality, novel of adventure and the journey topos). The inverse approach, which employs description not as a subject, but as a tool of historical poetics, is introduced in the study by Ivana Taranenková (Institute of Slovak Literature, SAS, Bratislava), "Towards an adequate storyworld and expression: description in slovak realist fiction". The way descriptions are structured and the presence or absence of their symbolic meanings in realist novels provides the author with subtle criteria enabling her to discern between two divergent lines of development in the realist method in Slovak 19th century fiction, and to grasp their particular qualities at the same time.

In asking "Experientiality: does it divide or link description and narration?", Alice Jedličková provides another contribution to the ongoing discussion on the narratological opposition "narrative vs. description" (questioned also in Heidrun Führer's and Bernadette Banaszkiewicz's survey). In spite of the fact that experientiality is attributed mainly to narrative as one of its crucial features, Jedličková puts Werner Wolf's claim to the test that description may also be characterized by a particular experiential (mainly sensorial) quality, and suggests that we should pay attention to the individual literary devices rendering it. Consequently, the final text retraces one of the crucial aspects introduced by the first, linguistic one: how description relates to our experience.

Alice Jedličková

The absent description: compensating for its evocative and identifying function

Jana Hoffmannová

In everyday spontaneous spoken utterances, particularly in face-to-face dialogue, very specific "descriptions" often occur. These tend to be implicit and indefinite, containing a large number of anaphoric devices or indefinite and pseudo-demonstrative pronouns, inseparably associated with "filler" words. An explicit description based on autosemantic words is sometimes almost entirely missing here, but then even this kind of indefinite, almost "minus" description performs its function in conversation; the participants understand each other perfectly even without autosemantic words and they have no problem in identifying all the entities referred to by mere indefinite hints. Here I shall attempt to present the operation of descriptions of this type in several situations in ordinary everyday communication, and I shall first offer several samples to present a clear picture.[1]

1 The exemplifications of everyday spoken communication in this contribution are chosen from a corpus of recordings and their transcriptions that has been created under the supervision of Olga Müllerová in the Czech Language Institute since the 1980s until recently. Currently, the research of this type of dialogues benefits from the collection of spoken texts ORAL of the Czech National Corpus. These sources confirm that neither the linguistic nor the stylistic characteristics of everyday face-to-face dialogues have changed significantly in the past few decades.

1) Dialogue between a customer and a dressmaker

D tak pudeme do kabiny / **to** našpendlíme na vás / tak co říkáte šíři? [so let's go into the changing room / we'll pin **that** onto you / so what do you think of the width?]
C no jak myslíte vy [well, whatever you think]
D tak záda sou **takle** / vám je předvedu pardon / já myslim širší už ne / že sme tu šíři trefily [so the back is **like that** / I'll show it you, excuse me / no wider, I'd say / we've got the width right]
C já myslim **takle** nó [**like that** then, I think]
D jo? je **to**? jak ulitý **to** sedí [yeah? is **that** it? **that** fits just right]
C nó [right]
D límeček stojáček dáme níž / **to** je moc vysoko / **tady nahoře** je menší / vy máte [we'll put the stand-up collar lower / **that**'s too high / **up here** it is smaller / you have]
C krátkej krk [a short neck]
D krátký krk / no tak asi **takle** ho nechám [a short neck / okay maybe I'll leave it **like that**]
C jo dobrý dobrý **to** bude [okay, **that** will be okay]
D hm a dýlka? **to** je dlouhý ne? **to** zkrátíme asi [hmm and the length? **that**'s long, isn't it? we could shorten **that**]
C jak myslíte / nó **takle** to je / ano / ani dlouhý ani krátký [whatever you think / yes, **that way** it is / yes / neither long nor short]
D no vy máte sukni asi **takle** / **takle** ne? [well, you have a skirt **like that** perhaps / **like that**, no?]
C nó no no [yes, yes, yes]
D **tý** dýlky? tak **todle** dáme níž / **to** bude lepší níž [**this** length? so we'll take **this** down / **that** will be better lower]
C jasně jasně [sure, sure]

In this dialogue which accompanies the activity (action) performed jointly by both participants, the dressmaker is actually progressively piecing together a description for the customer of the cut-out clothes, using a couple of basic noun "terms" (*šíře* [width], *dýlka* [length], *záda* [back], *sukně* [skirt], *límeček stojáček* [stand-up collar]), though the most frequently used terms here are deictic, anaphoric, demonstrative and pseudo-demonstrative

pronouns or pronominal adverbs (*to*, *todle*, *takle*, *tady nahoře*), which accompany the gestures and movements concerned. I am in no way being innovative in referring to this situation: as early as 1932, Miloš Weingart wrote with passion on the dialogues he had with his tailor as this good fellow tried out a new suit on the professor; he hardly used any autosemantic words, but only substitute *to*, *tady*, *todle*, *takle*. But Weingart, too, judged that this considerably fragmentary and implicit mode of expression is entirely sufficient in the given situation – on the basis of joint activities, movements and gestures the inferences work perfectly and the dialogue participants understand each other.

2) A conversation between two fifty-odd-year-old former classmates (Ivana and Jarka) about their postsecondary meeting and one of its participants

I je fakt že sem na ní koukala / každej nabral / ale vona teda nabrala extra / nepředstavitelně / to je koule / vona se jen valila [it's true I looked at her / everybody had put on weight / but she'd put on extra weight / incredible / she's a ball / she was just rolling around]

J no vona taky že je menší žejo trošinku / no teďka vona teda nikdy nebyla tvigy / ale byla tak jako normálně že jo [well, she's also smaller isn't she a little / well now she was never twiggy / but she was like normal, wasn't she?]

I vona přišla a já ti na ní koukám / řikám si to snad neni možný / né teda kuli tý tlouštce / to sem eště ňák přehlídla protože vona to dost maskuje / měla **takovy** šaty na tom sako černy / **to se tak ňák to** / ale Jarčo já ti na ní koukla ve vobličeji a řikám si to neni možný / **to ti todleto ti měla takovy secvrkly ti jako a takle** ti **to** viselo přes voči / vona byla jak meloun teda ve vobličeji / teď ohromně byla nalíčená […] a **teďko tady ty** voči a vona ti nemohla ty voči snad ani vodevřít / jak ti měla ukrutně **taji ty** klapničky **takovy jako** vopuchly / ale tak ta kůže ti jí visela až přes **to** / řikám si no Ivano to si nefandíš ale jak ta zestárla to teda […] **teďko jo ti taji ten** obličej a **teď tulety** faldy všechno [she came and there I am looking at her / and I wonder if it's really possible / not just because she was fat / I'd still kind of overlooked that because she rather covers it up / she had **such** clothes on and a black jacket / **it**

was kinda / but, Jarka, I tell you, I looked her in the face and wondered if it was possible / **I tell you she had this kinda shrivelled like and like this it** hung over her eyes / her face was like a melon / now she was awfully done up […] and **now here those** eyes and I tell you, she couldn't even open her eyes / the way she had **those here** lids **all like** puffed up cruelly / but then her skin hung over **this**, I tell you / and I say to myself, well, Ivana, you don't think that much of yourself, but the way she has aged, well now… […] **now yeah that** face here and **now these here** folds and everything]

Jarka did not take part in the last meeting. Ivana is telling her about it and as part of her narrative she is describing some classmates. The amount of deictic terms, pseudo-demonstrative and indefinite pronouns and pronominal adverbs is clear at first glance, just like in some cases the absence of autosemantic words: **takovy** šaty [**such** clothes]; **todleto ti měla takovy secvrkly ti jako a takle** ti **to** [**I tell you she had this kinda shrivelled like and like this it** hung over her eyes] viselo přes voči; ta kůže ti jí visela až přes **to** [her skin hung over **this**]… Nevertheless both friends have no problem in understanding each other, the dialogue is lively, the classmates slander with gusto and shameless criticism. This is again facilitated by the essential use of nonverbal devices (gestures and the like), and their usage is actually constitutive for the descriptive sections of the dialogues: Ivana points to the "shrivelled" and "puffed up" parts of her classmate's face on her own face.

3) Conversation between two twenty-something secondary school friends (Zdena, Táňa) about a flat that one of them (Táňa) has visited

Z já sem úplně na půdní vestavby / mně se tydlety úhly a všecky ty různý / ježiš to se mi strašně líbí [I'm totally into loft conversions / those angles and all those various… / Gosh, I really like that]

T to je nádhera viď / normálně maj rohovou vanu v koupelně / a **takovou tu** ještě víš kterou / **takhle** nahoře ještě **s tim sedacím jako** [it's marvellous, isn't it? / basically they have a corner bath in the bathroom / and one of **those**, you know the ones? / **like that** above but also **with that sitting one like**]

Z a maj to **s tim kulatým**? [and do they have it **with that round one**?]

T no kulatou / a prostě sedací ještě **takhle** […] vpravo tam maj kuchyň plus obejvák / ale to maj přepažený **jenom tak takovym tim vysokym** […] potom **jako** tam maj vstup do malý chodbičky / **jakoby** vlastně nejsou to dveře […] pak tam maj eště krásný letiště **s takovym tim kulatym** ze strany [yes, the round one / as well as the sitting one basically **like this** […] to the right there they have a kitchen plus living room / but they **only** have it partitioned **about this high** […] then **like** there they have an entrance to a little passage / as if there isn't actually a door […] then they also have a fine double bed **with one of those round ones** from the side]

Táňa is describing a flat to her classmate and implicitness is again manifested in this dialogue by the omission of a number of autosemantic words (e.g. words like *sedátko* [stool], *přepážka/zástěna* [partition], *noční stolek* [bedside table] were not explicitly stated) and the high frequency of substitute expressions, particularly pronominal. However, sample 1) involved direct reference to objects present within the situation (clothes and the customer's body), whereas in sample 2) the slandered classmate was not actually present, but the face of the participant in the conversation served as a substitute for her face. In sample 3) the description of somebody else's flat does not at all involve reference to objects present at the time and the place of the conversation and so only evocative gestural hints can be used to qualify them, e.g. "*kulatý*" [round] and "*vysoký*" [high]; instead of clear non-verbal devices, it is primarily the common knowledge and communicated experience of both friends that comes to the fore and is asserted here. On this basis again inference operates, and there is no problem in supplementing the "literal meaning" (Grice, 1975: sentence meaning) with the "implied meaning" (Grice: "speaker meaning") for total understanding to be achieved. Similarly, when an old lady describes the landscape of her childhood: **4)** "no to bylo údolí / to bylo údolí úplně / ta řeka dělala krásný oblouky / **takový** točila **takový** / no bylo to krásný" – [well, it was a valley / it was entirely a valley / the river did fine curves / **like this** it curved **like this**] the word "*meandry*" [meanders], which she does not remember, can easily be supplemented.

Of course, if the dialogue is not an uncommitted conversation among friends, but e.g. a conversation in an institutional environment, then the missing description can sometimes inevitably make understanding more dif-

ficult – e.g. when an old woman calls a fire brigade operator because a frightened neighbour has come running to ask her to phone as there is a fire in her bathroom. The old woman is unable to formulate the description that the fire brigade operator requires, but even here on the basis of his experience, the professional gradually places the required information into the description and understands.

5) F – fire brigade operator, C – caller

F vo co tam de mi řekněte [tell me what it's about]
C je to / hoří v bytě [it's / there's a fire in the flat]
F a co tam hoří v bytě? [and what's on fire in the flat?]
C no v bytě to hoří / **já nevim** /v koupelně je to / je tam voheň [yes, there's a fire in the flat / **I don't know** / it's in the bathroom / there's a fire there]
F co tam hoří nevíte? [what's on fire there, don't you know?]
C **no to já nevim** / hoří tam vošklivě / je tam voheň [**I don't know that** / there's an awful fire there / there's a fire there]
F no ale co? to nevíte? vy ste tam nebyla? [yes, but what? don't you know? haven't you been there?]
C no já sem to viděla / dyť tam hoří [well I saw it / it is on fire]
F a v tý koupelně hoří? a má tam plyn v tý koupelně? [and there's a fire in the bathroom? and is there gas in the bathroom?]

It might be possible to notice some other interesting facts here, e.g. the way that the participants in the dialogue sometimes jointly, by means of dialogical exchanges and mutual reactions "co-produce" the description, e.g. while shopping:

6) C – customer, S – sales assistant

Z **ňákej** stan pro dva / aby byl s kopulí ale vzádu / **asi** nemáte vite [**some kind of** tent for two / but with the dome at the back / you **probably** don't have one, eh?]
P **ňákej** / vy chcete **ňákej** malinkej stan [**some kind** / you want **some kind** of little tent]

Z no **takovej** / no nemusí bejt úplně malej / no ale [well **one like that** / it doesn't have to be totally small / well but…]
P **takovejdle ňákej? [something like that?]**

To follow the samples I shall endeavour to at least briefly classify this type of "description" within particular theoretical and methodological contexts. In articles published between 1997 and 1999 (two of which came out in *Slovo a slovesnost*, and another two in *Česká literatura*) Ladislav Nebeský highlights what is **unclear**, invisible or hidden in communication, and in the "blank spaces" in the text. He distinguishes intentional obfuscations and the unintentional lack of clarity in spoken communication, caused e.g. by various background noises. He writes that "communication from the author of an unclear utterance to the addressee is only possible if the addressee shows interest in a clarification of the unclear utterance", as this becomes "a challenge to find the hidden (even if this hiddenness is sometimes only a mere convention)". Even then two other conditions must be met for trouble-free communication: 1) the author chooses an unclear utterance, the intended elucidation of which can easily be revealed to the addressee; 2) the addressee expects the author to have made this choice. These conditions regarding the author's and addressee's strategy and motivation, as well as their mutual expectations are met in our conversations. No particular "blanks" emerge in them and perhaps we should not speak of "invisible signs", but we can talk of a potential lack of clarity in view of the high level of indefiniteness and the downplaying of autosemantic words. However, such lacks of clarity do not occur in communicative reality and descriptions are not in any way functionally defective. Nebeský states that "the formation of unclear utterances is a violation of natural language (Czech)"; in our case this is problematic, or we might understand it that way when focusing on the standard of written speech; however, such "unclear utterances" organically belong to Czech as a natural language in its spoken form.

In some of his articles Nebeský refers to the work of Irena Vaňková on silences; it is primarily the chapter on "Silence, inner speech and implicitness" from her 1996 book that is most applicable to our subject (1996: 27nn). This is based on Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, who writes on the subject of internal speech, that it is elliptical, fragmentary and allusive, and according to Josef Vachek (1983) in these respects our spontaneous spoken utterances are simi-

lar to internal speech. Vygotsky states that when the participants in a conversation have a meeting of minds and the same focus of awareness then the role of speech stimuli is reduced to the minimum, but understanding takes place without problems, so that between people living in close psychological contact, understanding through elliptical speech is more the rule than the exception (Vygotskij 1976: 273–274). If living contexts are shared to a high extent (or even identical) among the participants in communication then "expression by means of hints" and "understanding through guesswork" in situationally and "relationally" based everyday practice is common. Vygotsky quotes Yevgeny Dmitrievich Polivanov that "in fact everything we say requires a listener who knows what it is about". This was evident, for example, in sample 3). And Vaňková adds that even hermeneutists expect preunderstanding: one always already understands a text (and being) to some extent, when you approach it, because one is always already equipped for it with some experience. Her problem is how far the implicitness, ellipsis and allusoriness that allow for guesswork and eventual understanding can go, i.e. whether they can go as far as silence (to which none of the participants in conversations 1–3 are inclined at all).

Another few words on **implicitness** and **explicitness**: here I must definitely mention a seminal article by Karel Hausenblas (1972) entitled "Explicitness and implicitness in linguistic expression". Here the author defines explicitness as "literal expression of something", while he believes that implicit expression is that "from which one understands something that is not expressed literally, but that can be interpreted". Clearly, we are coming very close here to Grice's contrast between "literal" and "implied" meaning ("sentence" vs. "speaker" meaning), though apart from Grice we should also mention the context created by other philosophers of language, sociology and ethnomethodology, such as Alfred Schütz, Harold Garfinkel, Erving Goffman, Thomas Luckmann and others, who highlight the (stereo)typification of everyday communication and the conventionalization (sedimentation) of experiential patterns. They state that language is a store of socially valid typifications or "interpretational templates". Hence in everyday communication we continually move – as in our aforementioned "descriptions" – among typifications, routinizations of linguistic behaviours (enabled by the sedimentation of long-term experience) on the one hand and their specific contextual involvement on the other hand. This is nothing new: it is only

this connection between the specific and experiential contexts that allows for the interpretation of vague indexical terms (e.g. the deictics with which our samples are so replete), and at least relative deindexicalization leading to understanding. (For a summary of these approaches see Auer 1999).

In conclusion let us go back to explicitness / implicitness and Irena Vaňková, who says that silence as a speech phenomenon is at the very extreme pole of **implicitness**, from which a transitory zone of (textual) expression extends with varying degrees of implicitness / explicitness all the way up to (textual) expressions of maximum **explicitness**. I shall present one more sample from an everyday dialogue which is not far from being a monologue: one of the participants (a child) is primarily passive and his competence only allows him to perform quite minimal reactions (signals of comprehension / incomprehension), while the other one (his mother) is very active and produces a maximally explicit description. (Or perhaps an exposition? Evidently here the traditional classifications of "stylistic approaches" – narration, description, exposition etc – are insufficient.) Here the mother is preparing her young son to take part in a relative's wedding ceremony; with the aid of photographs and great patience she gradually (and repeatedly) clarifies what *wedding announcement*, *wedding guest*, *myrtle*, *train*, *wedding ring* and so forth actually mean.

7) Conversation between a mother (M) and her 3–4-year-old son (S)

M hele tak **tomuhle se říká svatební oznámení**. to dycky když někdo chystá svatbu tak si nechá udělat takovýhle kartičky: a tam je napsáno kdo s kým bude mít svatbu kdy ta svatba bude a kde bude hm aby to všichni věděli aby tam mohli přijít na tu svatbu. pozor pozor abys to nezmačkal jo? [here, so **this is called the wedding announcement**. whenever somebody is arranging a wedding then he has this kind of little cards made: saying who is going to have a wedding with whom, when and where the wedding is going to happen, hmm so that everybody knows they can go to the wedding, careful, careful not to crumple it, eh?]

S co to tam je: [what's that?]

M **to je myrta. to je taková kytička**: a všichni **svatebčani (.) to sou hosti na svatbě**: tu si připnou takhle na šaty. hele až bude mít Ondra s Kájou svatbu tak ty budeš mít taky **takovou myrtu. to je taková kytička**

a hele tady má **špendlík**. vidíš? [**that's myrtle. it's kind of a flower**: and all the wedding guests – the guests at the wedding – they pin it like this to their clothes. here, when Ondra and Kája have their wedding then you are also going to have this myrtle. **it's kind of a flower** and here is a **pin**. see?]

S jo. [yeah]

M **to je kytička s mašličkou a v tý mašličce je špendlík** [.] […] hele koukni a tudyto: **tomu se říká vlečka**. ty šaty jsou dlouhatánské až na zem a vzadu mají **vlečku**. a tu **vlečku** nese družička […] [**it's a little flower with a ribbon and there's a pin in the ribbon**. here, look at this. this is called a train. these clothes are so very long they reach down to the ground and have a **train** at the back. and this train is held up by the bridesmaid]

In this case here in this asymmetrical conversation / mother's utterance, we barely note any hint of implicitness: on the contrary the "keywords", i.e. the weight-bearing autosemantic words (*myrta* [myrtle], *kytička* [flower], *mašlička* [ribbon], *špendlík* [pin], *vlečka* [train], and so forth) are frequently repeated. However, we consider this to be an exceptional case – in everyday communication, symmetrically profiled situations definitely predominate, in which experience shared by partners results in high implicitness. Together with the use of extra-linguistic means, these facilitate the success of those "absent", "minus", "allusive", "indefinite", implicit descriptions, the evocative and identifying function of which is extensively involved.

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The semantics of definite descriptions and identification*

Marián Zouhar

Introduction

Definite descriptions are expressions that are used to *identify* objects (as broadly construed as possible) by describing them as *unique instances of the properties expressed by the descriptions*.[1] For example, the definite description "the author of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*" can be used to identify Richard Wagner because it is Wagner who is the unique instance of the property of *being the author of Der Ring des Nibelungen*; the definite description "the first opera ever" is usually used to identify Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* because *Euridice* is deemed to be the unique instance of the property of *being the first opera ever*; the definite description "the most famous fictitious Belgian detective" can be used to identify Hercules Poirot who is the unique instance of the property of *being the most famous fictitious Belgian detective*. As we can see, definite descriptions can be used to identify real persons, works of art and fictitious characters; and we may enlarge this list indefinitely – there are definite descriptions of places, of abstract entities such as numbers, of properties, of artefacts, of sets of individuals, of elementary particles, of biological species, of social institutions, etc. etc.

From the syntactic viewpoint, a definite description consists of the determiner "the" (the definite article) and a predicate expression such as "author

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1 When talking about the property expressed by a definite description "the *F*" (where "*F*" is a predicate) I mean the property of *being F* which is expressed by the predicate "*F*".

of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*" or "first opera ever" or "most famous fictitious Belgian detective", etc. Given their syntactic structure, definite descriptions belong to an indefinitely large set comprising the quantifier expressions such as "an *F*", "every *F*", "all *F*s", "at least some *F*", "exactly three *F*s", "several *F*s", "at least one but at most ten *F*s", "no *F*", "most *F*s", "both *F*s", etc. (where "*F*" is a predicate).

Thus, there are two important facts to be recognized in the case of definite descriptions: 1) that they are often used to identify objects and 2) that they are quantifier expressions from the syntactic viewpoint. Apparently, points 1) and 2) may create a kind of tension. The reason is that point 1) indicates that definite descriptions can be taken as semantically referential expressions, while point 2) suggests that they should semantically behave as other quantifier expressions, i.e., non-referentially. Such a tension can be overcome provided one of the facts is given priority over the other one.

One of the most influential semantic theories of definite descriptions highlights the fact that definite descriptions are quantifier expressions. According to Bertrand Russell, definite descriptions are quantifier expressions and behave in the same way as other quantifier expressions. Putting the details of his formal theory aside, Russell views the sentences involving definite descriptions of the form "The *F* is *G*" as expressing three pieces of information: a) that there is at least one individual that is *F*; b) that there is at most one individual that is *F*; and c) that any individual that is *F* is *G* as well.[2] The sentence of the form "The *F* is *G*" is said to express the conjunction of the three pieces of information. As a result, it is true provided all three conjuncts are true; alternatively, it is false provided at least one of the conjuncts is false as well. In particular, the sentence of the form "The *F* is *G*" is false provided 1) there are more individuals that are *F* or 2) there is no individual that is *F* or 3) there is a unique individual that is *F*, which is not *G*.

According to Russell's theory, definite descriptions are quantifier expressions. If a sentence involves a quantifier expression as its noun phrase, I say

2 The first formulation of Russell's theory can be found in Russell 1905; a formal theory of definite descriptions appears in Whitehead – Russell 1910. Russell's theory has been extensively discussed – both sympathetically and critically – for more than one century and thus there is vast literature about it.

that its truth-conditions are *general*.[3] On the other hand, if a sentence involves a referential expression, its truth-conditions are *singular* because they involve, as their constituent part, the individual referred to.[4] Given that definite descriptions are supposed to be quantifier expressions, the sentences involving definite descriptions have general truth-conditions.

The argument from identification

It might be objected that when we take definite descriptions as quantifier expressions we suppress the other fact that is true of them, namely the one concerning their identification role. It can easily be observed that being an identification device is perhaps the most important role definite descriptions have in communication. Since the same communication role is also played by proper names, personal pronouns or demonstratives, definite descriptions should be taken on a par with these kinds of expression.[5] It is widely accepted that sentences with proper names or personal pronouns as their constituents have singular truth-conditions. And if we compare definite descriptions to the expressions of these kinds, the truth-conditions of the sentences involving definite descriptions should be singular as well. Since Russell's theory suggests that the sentences involving definite descriptions are quantificational, the identification role of definite descriptions cannot be captured by it. Or so it might be argued.

Let us label this kind of reasoning *the argument from identification*.[6] The argument can be formulated, in a more rigorous manner, in the following way:

1) It is an empirical datum easily recognized in everyday communication that the definite description "the *F*", as uttered by a competent speaker

3 For the sake of simplicity, I assume that the sentence does not involve any singular term either as a constituent part of the sentence's noun phrase or as a constituent part of its verb phrase.

4 The pair of terms "general" and "singular" is sometimes replaced by a closely connected pair of terms "object-independent" and "object-dependent" truth-conditions; cf., for example, Neale 1990.

5 I assume that proper names, personal pronouns and demonstratives are not quantifier expressions.

6 Various versions of the argument from identification abound. Many of them – or maybe all of them – are rooted in Strawson's famous attack on Russell's theory of descriptions; cf. Strawson 1950. Recent versions of the argument were proposed in, for example, Devitt 2004 and Koťátko 2006.

of the language in the sentence of the form "The *F* is *G*", is used to identify a particular individual.

2) If an expression is used to identify a particular individual, it is a referential expression (rather than a quantifier one).
3) If an expression is referential, it contributes the object referred to, i.e. its referent, to the truth-conditions of the sentences in which it appears.
4) Thus, the definite description "the *F*" is a referential expression and contributes the object referred to, i.e. its referent, to the truth-conditions of the sentences in which it appears.

The argument from identification points out that the individual identified by the speaker's utterance of the definite description should enter the truth-conditions of the sentence uttered. So, instead of the general truth-conditions specified above we should have the singular truth-conditions. The argument is used to support the idea that definite descriptions are referential expressions rather than quantifier ones. However, despite its superficial appeal, it is far from being conclusive. It implies that explaining the identificatory role of definite descriptions is tantamount to claiming that they are referential expressions. This is what is stated by Premise 2). However, it is this premise that is in need of justification in the first place; otherwise the argument cannot be sound.

To say that the argument is not sound is not to say that it is not valid. In fact the argument is valid in the sense that if all its premises, i.e. claims 1–3), are true, its conclusion, i.e. claim 4), has to be true as well. What I am saying is that the conclusion need not be true because not all of the premises are true. In particular, Premise 1) can be taken as true because it just registers what can be recognized as a rather widespread empirical datum; Premise 3) can also be taken as true because it just states what it means for an expression to be referential. Thus, we are left with Premise 2) as a possible troublemaker.

Identification and reference

The argument from identification assumes that an expression can be used to identify an object provided it refers to the object. However, this assumption can – and should – be doubted. First of all, however, we should clarify in which sense the terms "reference" and "identification" are used here.

The notion of *identification* is connected with a certain kind of *linguistic* and *communication behaviour*. In particular, identification is a relation between the

speaker of the language, an expression of the language and an extra-linguistic object; it holds that the speaker identifies the object by uttering the expression in question. Thus, it is the speaker of the language who can be said to identify extra-linguistic entities. When the speaker identifies something, she picks up an object and makes it a topic of the discourse. In a broader sense of identification, the speaker may use various kinds of means – she may stretch out her hand and point to an object; she may put her hand on an object; she may use various linguistic devices (with or without a simultaneous gesture); etc. For our present purposes, however, the more limited notion of identification (specified in the second sentence of this paragraph) suffices.

The notion of *reference* is connected with certain kinds of *relation between expressions and extra-linguistic entities*. Thus, it is expressions themselves which can be said to refer to something.[7] Reference can be taken as a kind of a semantically-based relation. For example, a proper name refers to an individual provided there is a semantic convention according to which the proper name names the individual and the individual is a bearer of the name. What is important for us is that if an expression is referential, it contributes the object referred to into the truth-conditions of the sentences in which the expression occurs.

Let us return to our assumption according to which an expression can be used to identify an object provided the expression refers to the object. There are at least two ways in which we can read such an assumption – prescriptively and descriptively. When read in a *prescriptive* way, it claims that whenever one finds an expression which can be used to identify an object, one may postulate the reference relation between the expression and the object. Such a reading suggests a special convention associating the notions of identification and reference in a certain way. Anyway, as with all suggestions of these kinds, we are free to deny it. When read in a *descriptive* way, it claims that the speaker is allowed to identify objects only by using the expressions

7 This notion of reference is rather alien to Strawson and his followers. According to them, expressions themselves cannot be said to refer to anything; instead, it is users of the language who can be taken as referring to something; cf. Strawson 1950, Linsky 1963 or Searle 1969. However, it is by no means difficult to define a notion of reference as a relation between expressions and extra-linguistic entities. After all, Linsky himself did it. Many interesting considerations on various kinds of reference and their connections to identification can be found in Cmorej 2001 and 2009.

which refer to these objects. This is a more promising way because, in descriptive reading, the claim becomes an empirical one about a certain kind of linguistic behaviour and a certain kind of semantic properties of expressions. Empirical claims can be tested and either verified or falsified. Consequently, disputes over empirical claims can be settled by arguments and evidence. Thus, the claim that identification assumes reference should be read descriptively. The claim can be doubted provided it can be shown that there are examples of expressions which are not referential, but can be used to identify objects.

Data about identification

The claim that it is only referential expressions which can be used to identify objects is empirically implausible. If it is implausible, we cannot infer that an expression is referential provided it can be used to identify something. The main reason is that there are many kinds of expressions which both can be used to identify something and are by no means treated as referential expressions.

As we have said, the aim of identification is to select an object as a topic of discourse. Obviously, this can be done by any suitable kind of expression without claiming that the expression in question refers to the object identified. Let me present two illustrative kinds of cases in which we might be willing to say that an expression is used to identify an object without there being any reference relation between the expression and the object identified.

Firstly, the speaker may successfully identify a particular individual by using a definite description despite the fact that the individual identified fails to exemplify the property expressed by the definite description in question. Consider a situation, in which the speaker uttered the sentence, "The Russian tsar is unscrupulous". She intended to say something about Vladimir Putin by her utterance of the sentence. For the reasons we need not go into – be it her true ignorance of the relevant political facts or her scornful attitude to Putin's political practice or anything else – she used the definite description "the Russian tsar" to identify Putin. She was successful despite the fact that Putin does not exemplify the property of *being the Russian tsar*; strictly speaking, no actual individual, including Putin himself, does exemplify it. Anyway, her hearers have deciphered the speaker's message and have recognized that she has called Putin unscrupulous.

An analogous situation might arise had the speaker used a definite description which, in fact, expresses a property which is exemplified by someone, though not by the individual identified. Suppose the speaker uttered the sentence, "The Russian prime minister is unscrupulous". Again, she identified Putin by using the description "the Russian prime minister" and her hearers have recognized it. This held despite the fact that it was Dmitri Medvedev rather than Vladimir Putin who was the Russian prime minister (and, thus, exemplified the property of *being the Russian prime minister*). It would be extremely implausible to say that the description "the Russian prime minister" referred to Putin because the speaker used to identify Putin by her use. If the definite description is to be allowed to refer to anything at all, it should refer to Medvedev. To sum up, we may admit that the speaker identified Putin by her uses of "the Russian tsar" or "the Russian prime minister"; however, this cannot oblige us to admit that the descriptions did refer to Putin.

Secondly, the speaker may successfully identify a particular individual by using an expression which is not a singular term at all. The speaker may use various kinds of quantifier phrases, for example, to select the intended individual and the hearer may recognize what the speaker is doing by her utterance. By way of illustration, consider a situation, in which the speaker uttered the sentence, "Someone in this room owns a Ferrari". The quantifier phrase "someone in this room" was used by the speaker to identify a particular person even though the phrase merely quantified over the set of persons present in this room. Despite this linguistic fact, the speaker was successful in her identification and the hearer has correctly recognized who was identified. Anyway, we would not claim that the phrase "someone in this room" referred to the person identified by the speaker's utterance. Again, we can see that there is a gap between identification and reference that need not – and even should not – be bridged forcibly by any statements about their interconnections.[8]

The above cases are merely sketched, but the message seems to me clear enough: Given their communication intentions, surroundings, background, etc., the speakers are free to use various kinds of expressions to identify objects. This holds even in the case of expressions which are not taken as (semantically) referring to the objects identified. Thus, we should not derive

8 Both kinds of examples are discussed at great length by Stephen Neale in Neale 1990: Ch. 3.

any semantically relevant pieces of information concerning an expression's reference from the mere fact that the expression can be used – or has been used – to identify something.

If the above reasoning is sound, we should extend it to definite descriptions as well. Consider the case in which the speaker used a definite description to identify the object which (uniquely) exemplified the property expressed by the description. We might be tempted to claim that the definite description referred to the object in question. However, we should resist this temptation unless there are strong reasons in its favour. If the claim that the definite description is a referential term is based merely on this kind of identification uses, it would not be justified enough. The reason is that there are clear cases in which we would not treat identification uses of expressions as reasons for classifying these expressions as referential ones. In other words, if definite descriptions are to be taken as referential expressions, we need arguments that are not based on our identification practice.

Variable universes

The argument from the previous section notwithstanding, it might be claimed that there are good reasons for establishing semantically relevant connections between identification and reference in the case of definite descriptions. Unless we admit that definite descriptions are expressions semantically referring to individuals the speakers used to identify we could not get the truth-conditions of certain kinds of sentences right. This can be said about the sentences involving descriptions which express properties exemplified by more than one individual. According to Russell's theory, such a sentence is false; however, the speaker should be often taken as saying something true by it. Suppose the speaker utters the sentence, "The apple is rotten". We are tempted to say that the sentence is true provided 1) there is a contextually salient apple the speaker had in mind and 2) the apple in question is rotten. This is true despite the fact that the set of apples is not a singleton set. Russell's theory is too demanding here: It requires that there be exactly one apple in the whole universe of discourse and this apple should be rotten in order for the sentence to be true. Obviously, this is not how it works in the natural language.

It might be suggested that a more appropriate explanation which meets our daily communication practice consists in that the definite description

is taken as an expression referring to the salient apple; the sentence, "The apple is rotten", is true provided this apple is rotten. This suggestion is tantamount to saying that the definite description is a referential expression rather than a quantifier one. Although we might admit that this suggestion solves the problem in question, it is by no means general enough. The reason is that the phenomenon is widespread and concerns a large set of quantifier expressions.

A short detour to other kinds of quantifier expressions might help us find a more general solution. The core problem with Russell's theory consists in the assumption that there is a fixed and stable universal set of all individuals and the quantified sentences in language are about this universal set. Let us consider a simple example. Suppose that a competent speaker of the language utters, in a certain situation, the sentence, "All apples are rotten". Since she is a competent speaker, she assumes that her utterance is both correct and suitable for reaching her communication ends. Let us suppose that, in uttering "All apples are rotten", she intends to describe the situation in her house.

Now, according to ordinary semantic theory, the sentence uttered would be true provided the set of all rotten individuals involved the set of all apples as its subset. Had there been at least one apple such that it was not a member of the set of rotten individuals, the sentence uttered would be false. Assuming the universal set is identified with the set of all individuals in our world (whatever they are), there seems to be a discrepancy between our real practice and our explanation. The explanation requires that the sentence be false because there are a lot of apples in the universal set that are not rotten. Despite this fact, we are strongly inclined to say that the speaker said something true provided all apples in her house are rotten while the condition of other apples outside her house is irrelevant for the truth value of the sentence. What our communication practice suggests is that we do not in fact assume there is a fixed and stable set of all individuals that is described by all sentences uttered. Rather, we freely go through various universes that are relevant for particular stretches of discourse. When the speaker describes her apples, she is talking about those stored in her house, but remains silent about those that are located in innumerable other places in the world; in such a case we may identify the universal set with the set of individuals occupying a particular place in the speaker's house. When she changes the

subject-matter and starts talking about something else, it is highly probable that the set of individuals she is talking about differs from the one spoken about previously.

To sum up, our communication practice does not assume that there is a fixed universal set of all individuals and that our utterances are about this set of individuals. Rather, we work with variable universes in particular communication situations.[9] This is a simple explanation of our language use. The speaker of "All apples are rotten" knows that there are more apples in the world and not just those in her house. Furthermore, she fully masters what the sentence means; in particular, she knows that the sentence is about all apples – full stop. Despite this fact she utters it and believes that her utterance is true. This set of claims about our language use and communication practice would be incompatible without further provisions. As far as I know, the simplest way to get rid of the air of incompatibility is to admit that we work with variable universes.

The strategy based on the idea of variable universes is general. It can be applied in the case of definite descriptions as well. Let us go back to our example, "The apple is rotten". We may admit that we do use the sentences of this kind despite the fact that we also know that there are more individuals of the relevant kind in the world; in particular, the speaker might use the sentence even in the case she is aware of the fact that there are more apples in the world. And she can do so without any suspicion that her utterance would be false for that reason. A simple explanation along the above lines has it that the universal set involves just one apple; in particular, the universal set invoked by the speaker need not be the same as the set of all individuals there are in the world; rather, she might have in mind a fairly limited subset of this set.

To sum up, when we introduce the idea of variable universes into our semantic theory, we may satisfactorily explain the truth-conditions of all kinds of sentences involving quantifier expressions; on the other hand, the suggestion according to which definite descriptions are referential expressions

9 The idea of variable universes was suggested by various philosophers; one of the most elaborated suggestions is that of *situation semantics* developed by Jon Barwise and John Perry; cf. Barwise – Perry 1983.

is not general enough because it does not enable us to satisfactorily handle sentences involving other kinds of quantifier phrases.

Conclusion

No doubt, definite descriptions are often used to identify individuals; this is a feature they have in common with proper names, demonstratives or personal pronouns. And since proper names, demonstratives and personal pronouns are usually supposed to be paradigmatic instances of referential expressions, the same should hold for definite descriptions as well.[10] If it does hold that definite descriptions are referential expressions, the truth-conditions of sentences involving them are singular.

As we have seen, it might be unreliable to conclude that a certain kind of expression is referential from the fact that it can be used to identify individuals. There are cases in which we would be reluctant to claim that an expression, which was used to identify an individual, has to be taken as referring to the individual in question. This may hold even in the case of definite descriptions which were used to identify individuals; in particular, we would not admit that a description refers to an individual which does not (uniquely) exemplify the property expressed by the description. Thus there need be no link between identification and reference because there need be no significant link between our communication practice and the semantic behaviour of expressions.

Identification devices occurring in our language need not be identified with referential expressions. Consequently, we may both retain the idea that the speakers of a given language often use definite descriptions to identify extra-linguistic objects and adopt a theory according to which definite descriptions are true quantifier expressions. The truth-conditions of the sentences involving definite description are general in such a case (provided the sentences involve no referential expressions). And if we adopt the view that

10 Nowadays, there are certain attempts to class demonstratives with quantifier expressions rather than with referential expressions. While Ernest Lepore and Kirk Ludwig claim that it is merely simple demonstratives that should be taken as referential expressions and that complex ones have to be treated as quantifier expressions, Jeffrey King proposed to take both kinds of demonstratives – simple and complex – as quantifiers of a sort; cf. Lepore – Ludwig 2000 and King 2001. In King 2001 one may find an elaborated collection of arguments for the quantificational treatment of demonstratives.

definite descriptions are quantifier expressions we may, as well, retain various similarities between descriptions and other kinds of expressions which are usually treated as quantifier phrases.

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Identificatory functions of the description in a fictional text[1]

Petr Koťátko

We tend to understand part of what we find in a literary text to be descriptions of individual entities: people, towns, houses, rooms, pieces of furniture and so forth. Does the nature of a narrative fictional text justify such a reading? The following paper is intended as a polemic with an answer which (as we shall see) finds some support in contemporary analytical literary theory.

Possible answer: No! No matter how long the novel is, it does not give us a complete description of an individual, e.g. of a person. Quite the contrary, it leaves many things underdetermined: in other words, many obligatory parameters of determinedness of a human being always remain empty. For example, Flaubert does not tell us how much Miss Emma Rouault weighed and measured at the moment she first met Charles Bovary (at the Les Bertaux farm). Hence the descriptions that we collect as we read a novel cannot identify a complete human being, but just a set of properties that in various possible worlds belong to various individuals (differing from each other in other properties not mentioned in the novel). This holds even if the descriptions found in literary texts, or easily deducible from them, include the so-called *definite descriptions*, whose function consists in identifying, in the world to which they apply, precisely one individual or nothing (if they are not satisfied by anything there). The problem is that these descriptions

1 The author is obliged to Professor Lubomír Doležel and to all other participants in the discussion at the *On Description* colloquium for inspiring criticism.

(e.g. "Emma's lover, who accompanied her to the Yonville agricultural show") can do their identificatory work only if it is possible to identify the world to which they are supposed to apply. But this is precisely what the text of a literary work does not enable us to do, since the descriptions it contains are satisfied by a set of worlds (provided that the set of descriptions is coherent). Hence not even definite descriptions used in a literary text can identify an individual, since it is impossible to pick out the world to which they should be applied in order to perform their identificatory function. Gregory Currie summarized this by saying that expressions such as "Emma Bovary" are not actually proper names of individuals, but names of functions that assign individuals to possible worlds (cf. esp. Currie 2012).

Objection*[2]: All inhabitants of the actual world that I can think about, including myself (as the subject of my own thoughts), are in the same position as Emma in this respect. After all, only a limited set of determinations will ever be available to us. But we automatically assume that an incomplete description of an entity is something different from a description of an incomplete entity. Why should it be any different in the case of Emma Bovary?

Answer: In the case of literary characters it is not just that the text provides us with a limited set of descriptions. What is crucial is that we cannot assign anything more to the name "Emma Bovary" than what these descriptions identify, and that is a function from possible worlds to individuals rather than a complete individual. Here the *incompleteness* of a description corresponds to *unsaturatedness* as a characteristic property of a function: it manifests itself in the fact that the function requires completion – an argument to which it might apply. In our case permissible arguments are possible worlds and it is only through application of a function to a possible world that we arrive at an individual (as the value of the function for this argument). Hence for literary fiction it is the case that what appears to us to be an incomplete description of a complete entity actually identifies an incomplete entity, because there is no sphere independent of the sets of descriptions we find in a text, which might determine what those descriptions leave under-

2 Without wishing to influence readers in any way I shall mark my own viewpoints in this debate with an asterisk.

determined. In other words: because the set of descriptions of Emma Bovary which we are offered by Flaubert's text is necessarily *incomplete* (with respect to the obligatory parameters of the determinedness of human beings), *no* description from this set can aspire to the role of a *partial* description of a human being. It can only be a partial characteristic of an entity identified by a whole set of these descriptions, i.e. of a function from possible worlds to individuals.

On the other hand, in the case of descriptions of actual individuals in everyday communication there is a sphere which determines what our descriptions leave undetermined, namely the actual world. This world contains, independently of our descriptions, complete individuals, definite even in those regards which are epistemically (currently or in principle) inaccessible to us. The descriptions available to us then aspire quite naturally to the function of partial descriptions of these individuals.[3]

Objection*: An analogical presupposition belongs to our role of interpreters of literary works. The world in which the story of Flaubert's novel takes place is the world that we must presuppose if Flaubert's text is to fulfil its literary functions. And this is a complete world in which complete human beings live in complete settings (complete towns, rooms etc.), find themselves in complete situations and take part in complete events, while the narrator naturally provides us with only an incomplete description of all this. With regard to literary works there is no point in considering any other world than the one required by the literary functions of the text: and all the descriptions contained in the text relate to this world.

3 This recalls the relationship between Quine's thesis of underdetermination of the physical theory by data and the thesis of the indeterminacy of translation. The former is an epistemic indeterminacy which does not prevent us from assuming that the physical reality is entirely determinate even in those respects in which the available data do not enable us to decide between alternative theories. In the latter case nothing analogous applies. If the observable behaviour of the language users does not enable us to decide between alternative translation systems, there is no place for assuming any other sphere in which what we find to be indeterminate would be determined: since "there is nothing in linguistic meaning, then, beyond what is to be gleaned from overt behaviour in observable circumstances" (Quine 1987: 5).

Counter-objection: If you insist that the world of the novel is complete, we have to ask in which mysterious way the author managed to create it, granted that he can provide us only with incomplete sets of descriptions of characters, settings, events and so forth.

Answer*: It is entirely sufficient if the author has written a text whose literary functions require the reader to presume a complete world as the world where the story of the novel takes place, where its protagonists live etc. In this way, the author has established that world as the world of his novel. Descriptions contained in the text of the novel have thus acquired the status of incomplete descriptions[4] of complete individuals, settings, events and the like.

Objection: In what sense is the reader to presume that Flaubert's text provides him with incomplete descriptions of complete entities, when he knows very well that he has no chance of completing these descriptions in any respect that would go beyond the text?

Answer*: Even the descriptions that we use in our thoughts and utterances about the actual world cannot be completed in an arbitrary respect, if we make appropriate efforts and if circumstances are favourable. Some determinations are *in principle* inaccessible to us – in other words, the fact that they are not among those available to us is not just the result of accidental limitations of our momentary cognitive situation. For example, there is no procedure to decide whether the number of hairs in Alarich's beard was odd or even at the end of the last of those days on which he was alive and nobody had counted his hairs.

Objection: In such cases, however, a consideration still makes sense in which we at least counterfactually exceed the limits of our cognitive situa-

4 This incompleteness is sometimes stressed in the ostentatious indeterminacy of the description (well known from ordinary conversation): e.g. the narrator in *The Red and the Black* states in his description of the Verrière landscape that beyond the left bank of the Doubs, "there wind five or six valleys" http://www.gutenberg.org/files/44747/44747-h/44747-h.htm [accessed 31. 1. 2014]. It would be absurd to interpret this as an instruction for the reader to imagine that in the world of the novel the number of valleys oscillates between five and six.

tion. For the following counterfactual assertion is still true: "If at the given time we had been in a cognitively suitable position, we would have been able to ascertain the number of hairs in Alarich's beard". This consideration rests on the construction of a possible world that is identical with the actual one with the exception that somebody (for instance myself) was in a suitable position at a suitable place at the time in question.

Answer*: In this response you are working with the "evidence-transcendent notion of truth", which has been rejected by antirealists, such as Michael Dummett and Crispin Wright (cf. esp. Dummett 1991, Wright 1987). If we accept this concept of truth as coherent (defending it against the antirealist attacks) we can apply it without difficulty also to the world of the literary work – and perform the manoeuvre that you have just described. Let us consider the assertion: "At the time of her first meeting with Charles Bovary, Emma weighed 132 pounds." This statement evidently cannot be verified, but I can consistently claim: if I lived in the world of Flaubert's novel and was in a cognitively suitable position at the given time, I could find out Emma's weight. In the jargon of possible worlds theory: I consider a world that is identical with the world of *Madame Bovary*, except for the fact that it includes myself and I occupy a cognitively suitable position (i.e. I find myself at the old Rouault's farm at the right time and I am permitted to weigh the farmer's daughter).

Objection: Even if we admit this, it does not mean anything more than that by using the same contrafactual constructions we can consider both completing the descriptions that are part of our store of knowledge about the actual world, and completing the descriptions contained in the fictional text. But there is always this basic distinction: on the one hand the descriptions that we verify and complete by examining the actual world; on the other hand the descriptions constructing a fictional world which does not contain its own source for their completion. At most it is the case that the literary function of a text requires us (in the *as if* or *make-believe* mode) to *presume* that this world is complete, and hence it contains material to supplement our descriptions – unfortunately in principle cognitively unavailable to us. The entire *reality* of this world is exhausted by the fact that the interpretation of the text requires us to *pretend* that we take it for actual. Hence its

completeness may only be a *postulate* required from us by the literary functions of the text.

Answer and proposal*: Pretence, or to be more precise, the acceptance of a belief in the *as if* mode, is indeed a significant component of our interpretation of a narrative fictional text, and thus of our stance towards the descriptions that it contains. Hence it is all the more important to correctly interpret the *content* of this pretence – the content of the belief that we have to adopt (in the *as if* mode), for the text to perform its literary functions for us.

The following interpretation, based on the theory of fictional worlds, suggests: the author creates the fictional world and the role of the interpreter includes pretending that he regards this world as actual. In the well-known version by Marie-Laure Ryan (cf. esp. Ryan 1991, Ryan 2010) it has this form: in his imagination, the reader relocates himself in the fictional world created by the author, while bringing items of two kinds with him:

a) the label "actual", in order to assign it to this world in the *as if* (*pretence*, *make-believe*) mode;
b) descriptions of various parameters of the "actual actual world", in order to complete (in the *as if* mode) the fictional world created by the author; this shift can naturally only be undergone by descriptions from the original actual world which are compatible with descriptions of the fictional world contained in the text, implied by the text and indicated in the text (in the sense of Grice's implicatures; cf. Grice 1989).

It should be obvious that not even this transport (the manoeuvre detailed in b) is sufficient to identify a complete world as the world of the novel, because the descriptions of the actual world which are available to us are just as incomplete as descriptions of the fictional world provided by the author, and even the combination of both sets of descriptions will never put together a complete description of a world. Hence it is only a matter of the multiplication of descriptions, which do not thereby acquire the status of descriptions of a complete world – since, as we presuppose, there is no fictional world *an sich*, whose determinedness could compensate for the incompleteness of our descriptions. The only thing we can do is to *postulate* or *declare* completeness: regarding a fictional world which, as we know, *cannot* be complete, because it is constituted by a limited set of descriptions, the reader is supposed to believe (in the *as if* mode) that it *is* complete, i.e. that

any possible state of affairs either is or is not a fact in that world. According to Marie-Laure Ryan, this is precisely what the reader does, if he accepts the "game" offered to him by the literary text: "The reader knows that fictional worlds are incomplete, but when he 'plays the game', when he submerges in a fiction, he pretends to believe that this world is complete" (Ryan 2006).

As I will attempt to show, such a split is not necessary. But first let us return to the manoeuvre described in point a): the separation of the label "actual" from the actual world of our lives and its transfer to the fictional world created by the author of the literary text. The problem arises if we admit that our concept of actuality or reality acquires and maintains its content (and analogically the terms "actual" or "real" acquire and maintain their meaning) in an inseparable connection to the world in which we live, the facts that constitute it and the objects involved in these facts. The following analogy suggests itself. According to an influential theory of meaning of *natural kind terms*, propounded by Hilary Putnam and Saul Kripke (cf. esp. Putnam 1975), the meaning (intension) of the term "water" is inseparably based on our contact with actual occurrences of water and so with examples of what the term "water" refers to (with elements of its extension). In Putnam's words: "intension is extension involving". For the same reason it seems natural to presume that the meaning of the term "actual" or "actuality" cannot be emancipated from the actual world of our lives. Of course we are able to consider that the world might be *different* from the way it actually is. But this does not mean considering a *different world* than the actual world of our lives and attributing actuality to it (in the *as if* mode) This means considering a different state of *this* world – admitting that this world might in some respects differ from what we presume to be the case on the basis of our evidence. Hence in such considerations we do not separate the label "actual" or "actuality" from the world in which we live in order to transfer it to a different world.

This looks like a revolt against the possible worlds theoretical jargon, but it is in perfect harmony with Kripke's proposed way of avoiding confusion that might be generated by the term "possible world" in the philosophers' heads (cf. Kripke 1972: 15). Should we wish to prevent this, Kripke advises us not to speak of *possible worlds* but of "possible states or histories of the world".

What are the consequences for the function of descriptions in a literary text? For the sake of brevity let us restrict ourselves to descriptions of persons and separately consider two cases:

1. Fictional characters (characters created by the author of a literary work)
Let us (for the meanwhile) remain with Emma Bovary. What material does Flaubert's text provide on her case? A set of descriptions that we collect as we read the novel: they concern the way she looked, what she did, what happened to her and so forth. How are we to deal with all this? I suppose we should treat it the same way as the descriptions of actual individuals that we gather in ordinary conversation. Imagine that I witness a conversation in which the name "Jan Novák" is repeatedly uttered. I have no reason to believe that the participants are discussing an imaginary character in order to pass the time or to deceive me, or that they are speaking of an actual person under a false name in order to conceal the subject of conversation. I then interpret the situation as both speakers using the name "Jan Novák" for one of the hundreds or thousands of persons that have been baptized with that name and are continuously referred to by utterances of that name. In terms of Kripke's causal theory of names, in their utterances both speakers link themselves to the chain of the uses of the name "Jan Novák", at the beginning of which some person was baptized with this name. As I have admitted, there are hundreds of such chains anchored in acts in which various persons have been assigned the phonologically identical name "Jan Novák". Nevertheless, in the situation just described I have succeeded to identify one of them (as the chain activated in the given conversation) and so I have picked out one person in the actual world – one of the hundreds of Jan Nováks. To that person I then assign various descriptions, which I collect as I follow the conversation. The set of these descriptions will necessarily be incomplete in the sense that it will not provide me with a full determination of Jan Novák in all the parameters that make up the determinedness of a human being. But of course I will presume that Jan Novák is fully determinate in all respects and that if I had reasons to do so, and if I exerted enough effort, I could add a number of missing determinations, while a number of others will be cognitively unavailable to me (and to anybody else).

As a reader of Flaubert's text I am in the same situation. If it is to fulfil its narrative functions for me I have to presume (in the *as if* mode) that sentences containing the name "Emma Bovary", which I find in the text, are records of utterances made by a real person, the narrator, who links himself to the chain of uses of this name in the actual world. Hence I can identify the person described in this narrative as an individual uniquely satisfying

the following description: "the person who has been given the name 'Emma Bovary' in the act of baptism at the beginning of the chain which includes the narrator's utterances". This description, including reference to the name "Emma Bovary" and to the narrator's utterances in which it occurs, can be labelled as "parasitic" or "derivative" or "nominal" or "metalinguistic" or "formal" in the sense that it is based on the general mechanism of the referential functioning of names rather than on factual information regarding the bearer of the name. Hence as the reader I presume (in the *as if* mode) that this formal description is satisfied by precisely one person in the actual world, and it is the person identified in this way to whom I assign informal descriptions which I collect while reading Flaubert's text. At every stage I presume that this person is fully determined even in regards that have been neglected in the descriptions hitherto. I find some of the determinations that interest me in the descriptions contained in the following text, while others remain hidden for ever: even in this respect the reader's position does not differ from the situation that we experience in ordinary conversation.

From the philosophy of language point of view it is important to note that the functions of the literary text do not require us to approach the names included therein as abbreviations for descriptions or sets of descriptions. For those who presume that in case of literary characters we have to make do with descriptions contained in the literary text, it is natural to conclude that the only identifying principle we can associate with the name "Emma Bovary" is the set of these descriptions. What we get as the referent of the name is then the individual uniquely satisfying all these descriptions, or at least their relevant part.[5] According to the view I am defending here, we are not dependent exclusively upon the descriptions contained in the text when determining the referential function of the name of a literary character. As the basic instrument for identifying the bearer of the name "Emma Bovary" we presuppose (in the *as if* mode) the general mechanism of the referential functioning of names. We take it as granted that this mechanism is the same as in ordinary communication (just as we expect fictional characters to have the same respiratory or digestive systems as we do, their

5 This mitigating clause enables us to take into consideration the unreliable narrator, i.e. to account for the possibility that in some descriptions the narrator is mistaken or is even deliberately confusing us (fortunately, Flaubert's narrator is constructed as reliable).

movements to be subject to the same physical laws and so forth). As for the description of this mechanism, I draw on Kripke's causal theory of names (cf. esp. Kripke 1972), as I believe that it best portrays the actual function of names in ordinary communication, as well as the principle of the referential functioning of names that we *rely on* in ordinary conversation (even though we are not usually able to explicitly describe it in terms of Kripke's theory).

Generally speaking, as participants in everyday communication we assume that the referential function of names is bound to certain conditions (whether Kripkean, as I believe, or of any other kind), and if there are no indications to the contrary, we expect these conditions to be met. The same assumption (in the *as if* mode) is activated in our interpretation of a literary text. Speaking from the author's rather than the reader's point of view we can say together with Saul Kripke: "[…] when one writes a work of fiction, it is part of the pretense of that fiction that the criteria for naming, whatever they are, are satisfied. I use the name 'Harry' in a work of fiction; I generally presuppose as part of that work of fiction, just as I am pretending various other things, that the criteria of naming, whatever they are, Millian or Russellian or what have you, are satisfied. That is part of the pretense of this work of fiction" (Kripke 2013: 17).

2. Historical figures

If sentences of a literary text include names like "Robespierre", as in the case of Victor Hugo's novel *Ninety Three* or Anatole France's novel *The Gods are Athirst*, we deal with it in the same way as with the name "Emma Bovary". We presume that the narrator is speaking about a person who satisfies the formal (parasitical) description: "the person who has been given the name 'Maximilien de Robespierre' at the beginning of the chain which includes the narrator's utterances". Nevertheless, in comparison with the name "Emma Bovary" there is something else here too. We assume (in the *as if* mode) that the chain to which the narrator has linked himself when uttering the name "Robespierre" is the same chain which the editors of Hugo's and France's novel joined in their historical notes and the same chain which my history teacher joined when uttering the name "Robespierre" in his exposition of the French revolution, and the same chain that I joined when I was tested on this subject at school. As I interpret Hugo's or France's text, this assumption enables me to attach to the name "Robespierre" not only

descriptions that I have gathered while reading, but also descriptions that I find in the editorial notes, as well as those which I manage to put together from my schooldays – in all cases on the condition that they are compatible with the descriptions provided by the literary text. The predominance of the latter (i.e. narratorial) descriptions within the interpretation of the text has precisely the form just mentioned: the descriptions from sources other than the literary text in question are only usable in the interpretation of the text if they are compatible with the descriptions explicitly contained or indicated in the text and with the implications of what is explicitly stated or indicated.

Summary*: The starting point of our reflections was a certain contrast concerning the function of descriptions. In ordinary communication regarding the actual world there is a clear difference between the incomplete description of an entity and the description of an incomplete entity: our descriptions of actual individuals function as incomplete descriptions of complete entities. We assume that whatever our descriptions leave underdetermined is fully determined in the actual world. In contrast, if we approach fictional world and its entities as the author's creation in the straightforward sense, i.e. that the material from which they are built are the descriptions which we find in the text (possibly supplemented by descriptions that we import from the actual world), we are left with the exact opposite. What we are inclined to interpret as incomplete descriptions of complete individuals (people, cities, mountains and the like) are in reality characteristics of incomplete (unsaturated) entities: functions from possible worlds to individuals.

The situation radically changes if we opt for a different understanding of the author's achievement. Descriptions offered to us by the author participate in the constitution of the fictional world and its inhabitants, but not in the sense that they together make up the world of the work and all that is contained in it. The author's performance consists in creating a text whose literary functions require us to relate it to the actual world as a narrative of what has taken place in that world. In this context the descriptions that we find in the text have the function of incomplete specifications of the state of the actual world that we have to assume (in the *as if* mode) for the text to perform its literary functions. The descriptions that we have available *beforehand* in our store of knowledge of the actual world are incorporated into the world of the work without having to be exported from the actual world

elsewhere. Nor does their standard function of incomplete characteristics of complete entities alter. The same applies to descriptions contained in the text even if they relate to fictitious entities. They function as descriptions of entities that we have to assume (in the *as if* mode) in the actual world, if we are to allow the text to perform its literary functions. Their presumed existence in the actual world then naturally includes the ontological completeness of actual entities – full determination in all respects belonging to their ontological type, including those which the descriptions contained in the text leave underdetermined.

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The trajectory of ancient ekphrasis*

Heidrun Führer – Bernadette Banaszkiewicz

Introduction

This trajectory of the conceptual contours of ancient *ekphrasis* aims at denoting the historical ramifications of ekphrasis and their advantages within and beyond the field of interartial relationship. However, this study does not attempt to establish a new, overarching theory of ekphrasis and its relation to description. Rather it is at pains to survey the praxis and theory of ancient rhetoric according to modern philological studies, and to prompt exploring its differences from the modern concept of "interartial ekphrasis" of the twentieth century as well as to open it up for alternative thinking at the same time.[1] One problem is that only a restricted canon of ancient literary and visual sources is filtered in search for poetic and more or less detailed descriptions of visual and mimetic works of art defined according to modern aesthetics.[2] As claimed before, "the booming literature on ekphrasis

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1 Already the scholarship on the interartial line of literary ekphrasis is exhaustive and beyond the scope of this article. A good overview can be found in Lindhé 2013. In general, most authors follow Scott's definition of ekphrasis as "the poetic description of a work of art" (Scott 1996: 315).

2 Peter Wagner summarizes this canon as stretching "from the description of Achilles's shield in Homer's *Iliad*, to the ekphraseis of the tapestries of Minerva and Arachne in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and down to Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn", W. H. Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts", William Carlos Williams's *Pictures from Brueghel*, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *When I look at Pictures* (1990)" (Wagner 1996: 12).

outside classics […] rarely knows the classical material adequately" (Goldhill 2007: 1). The literary device ekphrasis often seems only adorned with an ancient pedigree. Therefore, we mean to give this concept more substance by fitting a motivated temporal trajectory. Yet, the aim of this paper is not so much to add examples from historiographers and philosophers as to outline the different concepts of *mimesis*, *phantasia*, and perception, which would explain ekphrasis in those days, and might help us to understand the modern set of terms and its limitations.

The modern, literary concept of ekphrasis is defined most clearly as "the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art, which description implies […] the reproduction through the medium of words of sensuously perceptible *objets d'art* (*ut pictura poesis*)" (Spitzer 1962: 72; highlighted by LS); or shorter as "the verbal representation of visual representation" (Heffernan 1993: 3).[3] Questioning the mimetic precondition in the term "representation",[4] Claus Clüver extended the definition of ekphrasis to "'verbal representations of texts composed in a non-verbal sign systems', because the objects of such representations need not to be representations and are often in other media besides painting or sculpture, and the manner of such representations tends to depend more on the function served than on the non-verbal medium involved" (Clüver 2007: 23).

Despite these seemingly general definitions it is most clear that, firstly, ekphrasis understood as "double representation" tacitly implies many traditional ideas about mimetic art works and about the historical *ut-pictura-*

3 In general, ekphrasis copes with dual representation on the slippery ground of the historically changing concepts of *mimesis* and 'works of art'. Stephen Cheeke expresses a common attitude to ekphrasis: "We expect with an ekphrasis some commentary upon or an interpretation of an artwork that is simultaneously open to interpretation or appreciation as an artwork of its own right" (Cheeke 2008: 3).

4 Mario Klarer argued that the focus on representation in the current theoretical debate privileges mediated forms of expression, meaning the materialised form of documentation, and excludes oral and performative acts (Klarer 1999: 2). Although the intermedial discourse on ekphrasis replaced the questionable categories of "fine art" and "literature" with the broader notion "representation", most analyses focus on static "realistic" figurative mimetic works of art of affirmed aesthetic value ("qualified media"). However, as Ankersmit puts it: "Precisely because there is no longer any difference between representation and what is represented, the question of what makes a representation a representation now becomes extremely urgent. Danto's own reading of this revolution is that the art we are so familiar with has come to an end and has become a *thinking* about art (about the nature of representation)" (Ankersmit 1994: 154f).

poesis-discourse; secondly, that, with the benefit of hindsight, the interartial ekphrasis discourse seems to be cut out.[5] At stake there are also methods and classifications applied when discussing the interrelationship of word and image.[6] A survey of the much broader ancient concept of verbal ekphrasis that rather deals with "visibility"[7] than with "visual arts" might be able to illuminate these "transcendent" preconditions as an "ideologically-burdened categorical framework" (van den Berg 2007).[8] We believe that in concentrating on the term of *enargeia* we can solve many problems of the modern discussion about ekphrasis, which comes along with often decontextualized intermedial questions of defining image vs. picture, mental, verbal and visual representation as aesthetic works of art or as "qualified media".[9]

Contextualised in the historical frame of rhetoric, philosophy and its performative practice, we can say that ekphrasis, esentially and above all,

5 Ekphrasis is most often confined to a verbal, even poetic text without regard to a changed medial landscape. Apart from modernism's tenet to consider poetry as a special and privileged form of discourse, the interartial discourse often excludes descriptions of man-made objects like "commodities" (lamps etc.), which are not classified with lasting or autonomous aesthetic qualities ("qualified media"), because they cannot easily be described as physically closed objects with an accepted pedigree of a traditional artefact.

6 To shortly illustrate the hasty confusion of "vision" and "painting", I quote from Mitchell's *Picture Theory*: "[T]he notion of 'visible language' imports the discourse of painting and seeing into our understanding of verbal expression: it tempts us to give terms like imitation, imagination, form, and figuration a strong graphic, iconic sense and to conceive of texts as images in a wide variety of ways. If there is a linguistics of the image, there is also an 'iconology of the text' which deals with such matters as the representation of objects, the description of scenes, the construction of figures, likenesses, and allegorical images, and the shaping of texts into determinate formal patterns" (Mitchell 1994: 112). Moreover, when stating: "If writing is the medium of absence and artifice, the image is the medium of presence and nature" (ibid.: 114), the traditional, less helpful dichotomy of arbitrary verbal signs vs. "natural" iconic signs is repeated against better knowledge.

7 "Visibility" is a quality of the seeing *subject*, who dramatizes the moment of looking as interpreting, as reading and seeking meaning, and of the mind of the audience imaging the absent, see Bartsch 2007, Chinn 2007, Elsner 1995, 2007, Francis 2009 etc. To the interrelation of ekphrasis in the frame of visibility see Bal 2006: 124.

8 We have in mind the narratological dichotomies of "description" and "narrative" and topoi such as speaking of "narrative pause", "natural signs" or "giving voice to an otherwise mute object".

9 For the term "qualified medium" see Elleström 2012: 12. It refers to the more differentiated reflections on the different aspects or modalities constructing a mediated artefact. To a differentiated view on the polysemic term "image" see van den Berg 2004.

invites to an intensified mental experience of imagery encompassing events, objects or concepts. The topos of artistic vividness, grounded in different linguistic modes or styles, emphasizes in particular a mental involvement. Despite the shifting models of perception, imagination and understanding in the framework of social codes, ekphrasis demonstrates most of all the performative ritualised practice of how mental seeing can be produced. Thus, we have to trace back also the philosophical thoughts about the concept of *phantasia*, where we find the idea of ekphrasis embedded in a cluster of connected expressions like *enargeia*, visual vividness, *energeia*, potentiality, or *sapheneia*, clarity, and the varying concepts of *mimesis* with a shifting claim on verisimilitude, veracity or truth. Far from bluntly replacing the discussion of "interartial ekphrasis", which restricts itself to an "aesthetic double representation" of a limited group of qualified media, we rather emphasise a reading of ancient concepts of ekphrasis, which differ with respect to their function, genre and form of mediation. Yet, all types of ekphraseis are linked together by the overarching criterion of *enargeia*. Therefore, we argue that by freeing ekphrasis from its object-bounded and referential frame, we can win a general model to describe it as a verbal invitation to imagine and to enter a scene evoked by the speaker. In a dynamic relationship the recipient is cooperatively engaged as spectator and plays the role designed for him.[10] Such a revised ekphrasis concept does not obscure the cooperative and interpretative character of the recipient as viewing subject and the impact of both the mediated and mental representations.

Ancient rhetoric in a historical timeframe

Rhetoric, or *ars bene dicendi*, is concerned with the philosophical ideas and practical means of persuasion in form and content depending on the situation or text genre, the orator's intention and audience's heterogeneous preconditions.[11] The rhetorical knowledge of eloquence and the skill of persuasion flourished in the theoretical considerations, in the praxis of speaking, the rhetorical, didactical and /or literary writings (*rhetorike technike*) and the

10 A literary ekphrasis does not have to be harder to identify than other rhetorical or literary techniques, even if the impressive description of an object or scene does not belong to the classical canon.

11 Aristotle defines "rhetoric" as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (*Rhet.* 1,2; transl. Rhys Roberts).

literary practice of the Hellenistic period and of the Roman Empire. The Hellenistic period corresponds to the time after Alexander the Great (d. 323 BC) to the death of Cleopatra after the Battle of Actium (31 BC), and the Roman Empire from the post-Republican period to the fifth century AD. The Second Sophistic, the period, which offers us the first formal definitions of ekphrasis in rhetorical handbooks, covers the second and third century AD.[12] We talk of a time, when highly popular men, sophists,[13] lawyers and authors, supported their clients directly in court or discourse during other public events where they could thrill and influence their audiences with their political, ethical and philosophical declarations in various genres. With more or less stagy gestures (*actio*) they performed powerful speeches in different artful styles, which corresponded to their specific speech situations (*kairos*) or to the divergent expectations and backgrounds of their listeners, on whose approval they were dependent. Many of them both practiced and taught philosophy and the art of rhetoric to the attracted students in several regions of the Roman dominions.

Many educated members of the Greek and Roman audience recognized and appreciated a sophisticated rhetoric both in public speeches and in different literary genres (Goldhill 2007: 2). To the common "cross-pollination of oratory, drama, and historiography, and between politics and theatre" (Kremmydas & Tempest 2013: 11), they assumingly responded with "an intense imaginative involvement" (Webb 2009: 19). Anchored in this historical context of flourishing rhetoric skills in Hellenistic and Roman culture, *ekphrasis* is one of the rhetorical exercises and (literary) practices, in which the speaker or writer and the audience were engaged in bodily and mental coexistence of an interactive performance.

12 The term "Second Sophistic" is coined by Philostratus the Elder (c. 170 – c. 247 AD) in his work *Lives of the Sophists*, in which he collects the most charismatic Greek and Roman Sophists, literary-historical writers, philosophers and teachers in rhetoric from the early first century to the late second century AD. He himself is one of the leading orators or sophists of his time who witnesses the rich rhetorical culture in the Greek and Latin speaking domains of the Roman Empire.

13 Prominent sophists are Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 60 BC – c. 7 AD), Dio Chrysostom (c. 40–112 AD), ps.-Demetrius (perhaps teacher of Cicero in the first century BC, perhaps much later), Lucian (c. 125–180 AD) or Cassius Dio (163–235 AD).

Ekphrasis is irrevocably linked with the rhetorical ability to evoke an immediate image in the audience's mind and thus to provoke the intended emotional response. A communication is only successful when the audience is involved in what is said on the basis of *pistis*, i.e. the faith and benevolence a recipient is willing to accord to the speaker within the relative frame of *doxa* (culturally accepted norms and knowledge). In short, ekphrasis is the art to provoke a vision. Dealing within the context of the Hellenistic and Roman period we could say ekphrasis is a "rhetorical vision" embracing "the complex ways that words – oral or written – form perception" (Hawhee 2012: 140).[14] There was no doubt that language could directly interact with vision depending on the rhetorical style.

Ancient philosophers have all mused about the impact of human visual perception and mental imagery when being concerned with epistemology, aesthetics or arts. The discourse about the importance of sight and vision as reliable sources of truth can be traced back to Plato's and Aristotle's thinking, as well as to Stoic philosophy.[15] In difference to the modern focus on a word-image dichotomy, the ancient discourse about visual perception implied also an impact on other senses, elicited in a form of "communicative synaesthesia" (Hawhee 2009: 140; Zanker 1981: 307f). Indeed, in Hellenistic culture the discourse about viewing is already made to a "theory-laden activity" (Baxandall 1985: 107) within the context of the visual-rhetorical notions of *phantasia* and *enargeia*, a context, in which the later coined and less theorized term ekphrasis is embedded. Rhetorical vision reflects about how the speaker shapes the imagination of the audience on all cognitive levels. In fact, *enargeia* grants not only lively verisimilitude to a representation, but concerns also the (differently assessed) epistemological basis of eyesight and vision. It is most important for the understanding of the historical debate not to bring the Romantic belief in the power of imagination as a faculty that calls on the inner eye rather than mere outward vision.

14 In the framework of this historical background the modern dichotomy of oral vs. written text, or "performance" vs. "text" does not seem to be a sensible classification (Nagy 2010).

15 The notion *enargeia* or *enarges* as technical term can be traced to Aristotle (fourth century) and the Stoics some time in the second century BC (Zanker 1981: 309).

The coinage and formal definition of the term ekphrasis

Although theorizing about the concept of vivid speaking is embedded in epistemological and rhetoric reflections from earlier sources, formally, the life of the term *ekphrasis* begins with its denomination in the rhetorical handbooks, the *progymnasmata* from the first to the third century AD.[16]

The *progymnasmata* of the so-called Second Sophistic, which are handed down to us, encompass "a series of preparatory exercises, arranged in order of difficulty" (D'Angelo 1998: 439), in which the surprisingly shorthanded and consistent definition of *ekphrasis* is introduced.[17] These manuals led rhetoric students through several rhetorical exercises and *declamationes* on their way to success in public.[18] Being able to perform in different styles and (also literary) genres of oral and written persuasive rhetoric and to cope with topics of different sorts, they could improve their social position even during the Roman Empire, when epideictic discourses became more important than "free" political speeches.[19]

16 The sophistic authors of these school manuals are Ailios Theon in the first century AD, Hermogenes of Tarsus in the second century AD, Aphthonius of Antioch in the fourth AD, Menander Rhetor at the beginning of the fourth AD, or Nikolaos of Myra in the fifth AD. For a critique of this often quoted dating and an alternative timetable see Heath 2003: 129–160.

17 Apart from the *progymnasmata* with collections of sample texts, sophists used also other forms of didactical works of style like *hypomnemata*, commentaries on special topics, and *onomastica*, a type of lexicon (Haase 2009: 39). According to Ruth Webb's seminal study (Webb 2009), the *progymnasmata* gathered parts of a living culture of the Roman Empire. They inform about how to participate in a learned listening, reading and speaking by recalling, imitating and creatively changing the older authoritative sources belonging to different genres like the epic texts of Homer (perhaps in the eighth or seventh century BC) or the historiographical texts by Thucydides from second half of the fifth century BC.

18 In preparation for juridical and political speeches in "real life", rhetorical students were trained in fictional speeches, *declamationes*, which were mostly set in classical Greek past. This genre demanded an argumentation "with skills that we would consider to be 'literary' such as the mastery of style, characterization, narration, and, of course, the vivid use of language" (Webb 2009: 132f) and developed "into a performance art in its own right" (ibid.: 133).

19 To the Greek sources, usually Latin texts from the first century BC are added, which either theoretically or practically underscore the importance of rhetoric and philosophy. In particular the theoretical texts by the Roman Rhetorician Cicero are concerned with the integration of rhetorical praxis into a philosophical and ethical background, whereas the handbook *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, supposedly written by an unknown author from Ciceronian time, contains more dry applications and practical examples in a highly structured form. Another standard schoolbook is Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* from the first century AD of the Roman Empire. It differs from the above mentioned because it not only focuses on theory and practice of rhetoric but

The earliest author of these surviving school manuals is Ailios Theon. At least he himself claimed "to be the first to provide definitions" (Webb 2009: 43). In his *Progymnasmata* he defines *ekphrasis* as a trope (a figure of thought) and "descriptive speech (*logos perihegmatikos*) that brings the subject matter vividly (*enargos*) before the eyes" (*Prog.* 2,118,7–8 Spengel; Chinn 2007: 267).

Rhetorical vision and performativity as a constituting pattern of ekphrasis

Already the etymology of *ekphrasis*, a compound made up from the Greek verb *phrazein* ("to speak", "to show") and the prefix *ek* ("out", or even "in full", "utterly"), leads to the conclusion that *ekphrasis* should unfold or tell something in all details. In a similar etymological direction points the technical term *logoi perihegmatikoi*, "words leading around" or "showing in words". It suggests that characters and actions are led on stage scenery[20] to perform before the eyes of the recipients transforming into spectators, *theatai*.

In a verbally performed *ekphrasis*, the speaker or writer attaches great importance to the manner of rhetorical vision to negotiate mental imagery, most often for persuasive purposes. Rhetorical vision does not prioritise the essential properties of an object seen, it is rather concerned with how a creator of a scene guides the viewers in their mental imagery to make sense of these images. The intended impact of rhetorical vision and visibility benefits from the analogy to the concept of a theatrical performance and its dynamic interrelation between the spectators involved in an intentional arranged performance. By means of distinct artistic language a visual or, more general, sensory imagination is elicited in the mind of the receiver, if he is able to and involved in the performative process of mentally staging the de-

also on the necessary education of an orator in language, philosophy and other relevant cultural knowledge. Since Cicero and Quintilian were both familiar with Hellenistic rhetoric and interested in exploring its philosophical implications, they embedded their teaching and explanation of *enargeia* and *ekphrasis* in a larger theoretical background than most of the rhetorical handbooks. Other authors like Plutarch (c. 46–120 AD), for example, or Pliny the Younger (61–112 AD), to name just two, echoed similar judgements about the concept of *ekphrasis* as defined in the *progymnasmata*, and can also be used in this trajectory.

20 "Stage" and "performance" are understood in the broad meaning of performance studies, not limited to the institutionalised and artistic form; see McConachie 2010: 26–43 and Iser 1993: 281–295.

scribed scene. Rather than being an arbitrary metaphor, the cognitive frame of a theatrical event stresses the intensity of a scenic experience and illuminates that both parts, actor and the audience, are interactively engaged in this co-operative process of showing, telling, and seeing or listening, and of imagination. This performative relationship is not reducible to a one-sided transfer of information about a mimetic object to an audience. Rather, the speaker invites the audience to process mental images and is interested in the feelings that arise with these images that are also used as a means of persuasively blaming or praising a "staged" scenery, objects or persons. This is why one can talk about a rather complex relationship between various speakers and listeners. Indeed, this relationship may reflect on the representation of a sight, of an object or a scene, and, often self-reflexively, on the matter and manner of their relations to each other.

At the same time, the author shows his rhetorical skills, since ancient culture is throughout competitive. Granted that "our cognitive capacities are of necessity bound up within some kind of mediality" (Mahler 2010: 112), the cognitive model for ekphrasis would be the qualified medium of a dynamic live performance rather than a static mimetic artefact like a painting. In its intention to make a past and absent scene mentally to an absorbing *hic et nunc* effect, ekphrasis is deeply concerned with the concept of mimesis, which is traditionally applied to the qualified media of literature, painting, sculpture, visual arts, dance, performance and "their putative real-world equivalents" (Halliwell 2002: 15).[21] This communicative act of an interactive rhetorical performance is easily lost when understanding ekphrasis in the modern sense of "description" and in semantic contrast to "narration".

According to Theon, *enargeia* is the first of the two "virtues [*aretai*] of ekphrasis" (*Prog*. 11), the other is *sapheneia*, clarity. The latter amounts both to a stylistic quality like right wording, grammar, style, and to the quality of perception conditions, but also to the effect of clear and striking mental images (Zanker 1981: 307), whereas the former aims at the intended mental

21 Most interestingly, it is Lessing who suggests a "modification of a fundamentally mimeticist position by a stress on imaginative expression and suggestiveness" (Halliwell 2002: 119), when he insists in his prologue of the *Laokoon:* "Beide [Künste] […] stellen uns abwesende Dinge als gegenwärtig, den Schein als Wirklichkeit vor; beide täuschen, und beider Täuschung gefällt." Rather than the reference to reality, mimetic art stresses the process of mental imagination in general.

effect of language impinged on the receiver. Both qualities together elicit mental imagery, namely the illusion of absent things or ideas being present by making the audience "almost become viewers" (Nikolaos 68,II,20). This formulaic definition of ekphrasis is repeated almost unchanged throughout the rhetoric tradition (cf. Webb 2009: 51, 103). However, as will be shown below, since the philosophical concepts of perception, mental imagery and mimesis do not totally match, different variants of *enargeia* and ekphrasis are found between the fifth century BC and the fourth century AD.

In other words, in order to make the audience feel present within in a mental spectacle, ekphrasis has to be considered as *figura in mente* ("imagined shapes and forms"). "Designed to *produce a viewing subject*" (Goldhill 2007: 2),[22] ekphrasis embraces the creative activity of imagination by both the speaker or writer and the recipient to bring about a fictive presence of an absent object or scene. Both terms, ekphrasis and *enargeia*, are often used synonymously. Vivid presentation as a figure is addressed under a variety of Greek and Latin terms, which coincide in their effect to create the feeling of presence and to underscore the relevance of rhetorical vision.[23]

Ekphrasis and objects vividly explored

In general, transforming language into mental images, ancient ekphrasis is at its core, yet it is not concerned with mapping the interrelations between different works of art or semiotic medium-specificity. Rather, within a framework of persuasive rhetoric, ekphrasis vividly evokes certain roles and mobilizes others (listeners, readers) to play these roles, to be involved, to be charmed and thus to be moved. To Theon, the trope ekphrasis subsumes a descriptive unfolding or exploration of four object groups, which can also be mixed. He classifies 1) people (*prosopa*), exemplified with characters from the texts of Homer; 2) events or actions (*pragmata*), like battles or plagues; 3) places (*topoi*), like cities or wilderness; and 4) times (*khronoi*), like spring or summer (*Prog*. 2,118,8–14 Spengel). As mentioned before, although the categories of listed subjects are relatively open, "works of art" (however

22 See Scholz 1998: 73–99; Scholz 2007: 285.

23 Apart from *enargeia* we find in Greek texts terms like *hupotuposis* or *diatuposis* (Webb 2009: 52, 77, 100f). Roman rhetoricians either applied the Greek technical terms or translated them, creating Latin neologisms like *evidentia*, *representatio*, *illustratio*, *demonstratio*, *descriptio*, and *sub oculos subiectio* (Vasaly 1993: 90).

defined)[24] are not singled out as a distinct group of its own, although "such objects certainly *could* be evoked in ekphrasis" (Webb 2009: 2; highlighted by RW).[25]

Rhetorical vision is an attention-evoking and persuasive device surpassing the traditional narratological classifications of description and narration as well as the generalising semiotic categories of word and image when considered as two conventionally distinct media of oppositional character.[26] Neither Genette's opposition between (spatial) description and (temporal) narrative, Chatman's dynamic "events" comprising action, opposed to static "existents" comprising settings or characters (Genette 1969: 59; Chatman 1978: 32),[27] nor Barthes's definition of ekphrasis as "a brilliant detachable morsel [of description], sufficient unto itself" (Barthes 1968: 88),[28] are classifications that do justice to the variety of ekphraseis with different rhetorical functions in different genres. Ekphrasis focuses on the impressive

24 Halliwell defends an early ancient understanding of artistic representations (Halliwell 2002: 8).

25 The same is still true of ekphrasis in Renaissance rhetoric; see Plett 2004: 297–364; Scholz 2007: 286. According to Zanker (2004: 6f), Nikolaos established the *ekphraseis agalmaton*, the descriptions of statues and pictures, as a category of its own. However, Francis holds that the "fairly ambiguous" language of Nikolaos does not allow for a clear decision, since these objects could just have been used as illustrative examples rather than as category (Francis 2009: 2).

26 See the quote in note 6.

27 Due to an interest in medium-specificity in the interartial discourse ekphrasis was not only regarded as a figure of amplification, and "digression", but also as a "set-piece description", as a "narrative pause". Even today ekphrasis can be praised or blamed with such generalising epithets (Fowler 1991: 26f). For revision of this restricted concept of narration see for instance Ryan 2005, Martens 2007 or Jedličková 2010: 14. Fowler in his essay "Narrate and describe: the problem of ekphrasis" points out that "description is rarely 'pure', because the way that narrative impurity is introduced is often through the figure of an observer" (Fowler 1991: 27). Ruth Webb takes another perspective: "Rather than being an optional extra which could be inserted into a narrative, ekphrasis was a process which could be applied to it, in which the basic idea was expanded by reference to its perceptible characteristics. The object of the exercise was to have an imaginative impact on the viewer which, in a rhetorical context, meant contributing to the persuasive effect of a speech" (Webb 2009: 75).

28 In a larger context Roland Barthes was interested in the linguistic "reality effect", in which you could find historical reality in the seemingly banal descriptions. To Barthes ekphrasis or *hupotuposis* were just descriptions for its own sake breaking away from "predictive language". In these parts, he assumed, reality could reveal itself, since he, following de Saussure, did "not differentiate between language and reality as far as the reference of the sign is concerned" (Ankersmit 1994: 141).

imagination of something absent in the mind of the listeners or readers and is alien to Genette's inherent degradation of description (*ancilla narrationis*). According to the rules of rhetoric, *narratio* provides the larger cognitive structure to organize "'persons, places, times and events' as rhetorician-speak[29] for practically everything" (Webb 2009: 63). Consequently, we find that Theon classifies ekphrasis as "showing" of both, objects and actions, so to say of description and narration. Furthermore, we find ps.-Hermogenes recommending ekphrasis as a part of exercising narration (*On Types of Style*, 244–245). Likewise Nikolaos explains ekphrasis: "'Vividly' is added because it is in this respect particularly that ekphrasis differs from *diegesis* (narration). The latter sets out the events plainly, while the former tries to make the listeners into spectators" (Nikolaos, *Prog.*, 68,II,9–10).[30]

Theorising this frame further Quintilian divided *narratio* (*diegesis*) into simple and into vivid narrations.[31] The former sets out the events plainly to inform about the "what", i.e. "telling" the facts, whereas ekphrasis, the latter, is outlined as vivid and convincing visualisation of details or circumstances with the function to "show" a scene more elaborately, since *enargeia* is "a quality, which makes us seem not so much to be talking about something as *exhibiting* it" (*Inst*. 6,2,31; highlighted by HF – BB). Quintilian states also that, when crafting a believable and compelling argument or narration, ekphrasis can be applied as useful, but sophisticated technique of persuasion. It does not only stir emotions, but also metonymically evokes a cause or a larger context, which otherwise had to be enfolded rather in propositional terms of argumentation.

By definition, ekphrasis deals with the *how* and the intensive effect resulting from a provoked mental imagery. This is often provided by describing possible details or through unfolding a performative "eventness",[32] equiva-

29 To the ancient rhetoricians the Latin term *narratio* does not mean "story", but any discourse or semiotic "text" according to the rules of a specific context.

30 Nikolaos's *Progymnasmata* provides different types of narration. He "distinguishes a type of narration (*diegesis*) that is told in the narrator's persona as opposed to a dramatic narration told by a character, as in comedy or tragedy" (Webb 2009: 55).

31 Ps.-Hermogenes also distinguishes between different forms of *diegesis*, whether they were plain or more elaborate in their description (Ps.-Hermogenes, *On invention* 3,15; Webb 2009: 72).

32 The notion "eventness" is used by Bakhtin: "Insofar as I have thought of an object, I have entered into a relationship with it that has the character of an ongoing event" (Bakhtin 1993: 33). These thoughts do not allow for a pre-given and self-evident presence (in the Husserlian sense),

lent to the sensorial experience of a spectator. Since ekphrasis, as a product of mimesis has "a significant capacity to shape the ways in which people view and judge the world, and can therefore reveal things about the nature of the human mind itself" (Halliwell 2002: 27), to the readers or listeners it can admittedly be difficult to recognise and distinguish ekphrasis from similar devices.

Thus, ekphrasis does not only make something like objects, persons or scenes visible by means of detailed description; it can also be employed to intensify the audience's engagement in case of representing action. Moreover, some forms of ekphrasis exemplify metonymic or metaphoric conceptions of provoking 'hidden' ideas by describing objects. When, for instance, Cicero begs his audience to imagine the statue of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill (Cic. *Catilina* 3), he elicits at the same time a complex series of thoughts and feelings, of which he knew that the audience had collected and stored them. Rhetorical vision is not limited to describing an object *per se* but it should also evoke its social meaning, as grounded in personalised narratives, connotations, ideas and, most importantly, in its emotional impact. All this "invisible" background is intentionally attached to enhance the meaning of the visualised object. The ancient mnemonic technique of concentrating ideas around a place (*locus*), which the rhetorically educated audience was familiar with, helped to guide the process of semiosis and to provoke both general linked conceptions and individual associations. Hence, *enargeia* and ekphrasis make something – to use the modern signification of the notions – intelligible rather than only visible, understood rather than imagined.

To illuminate the concept of ekphrasis as developed so far, we can recall the classical example of the "first" ekphrasis, Homer's (dramatic) description of the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18,478–608; D'Angelo 1998: 442; Heffernan 2004: 10ff; Francis 2009: Bram 2011: 1ff, etc.). Mentioned by Theon as a specific subtype of ekphrasis dealing with processes, this example visualises brilliantly a mimetic object as a miniature narrative inside a larger one. Overriding the formal categories of descriptions and narration, the poet, as builder, builds "not actual but only sublime monuments, monuments grander than anything ever witnessed in history" (Porter 2012: 692). He evokes in an ekphrasis

but as an event formed in a process with an intentionally wished or stipulated direction. "Eventness" is also fundamental to Sauter's concept of the "theatrical event" (Sauter 2006).

the illusion of experiencing and taking part in a multi-sensorial action.[33] Its celebrated position in the discourse of interartial ekphrasis does not result only from the highly skilled artistic language and rhetoric of Homer, constructing a *mise en abyme*, but also from the long tradition of quoting exactly this passage as a form of allegorical mimesis,[34] which parallels the making of the shield, held to be an *eikon* (symbol) of the cosmos, with the act of creation and Homer's creating of the poem. Moreover, the topos of making arms, *hoplopoiia*, is a recurrent literary motif, employed by writers like Vergil and Statius in a comparative and competitive intention, making this ekphrasis to one of the well-known (but not solely) imitated ekphraseis of Homer. Self-reflexively and in constant oscillation, amidst of the descriptive and narrative parts of the *hoplopoiia*, Homer draws attention to the importance of illusion by making the audience aware of it, and, at the same time, he also submits the spectator to the illusion (Becker 1995). "This movement between absorption into the mimetic world of the representation and awareness of the artistic and material means by which that representation is created is seen as characteristic of the response to the visual art in Homeric ekphrasis" (Webb 1995).

As said before, ekphrasis is a complex literary device of rhetorical vision referring to the capacity of language to evoke mental pictures. By means of its artistic language and the intra-diegetic performance of its creator, spectator and the shield as "stage", the Shield of Achilles invites the recipient to accept the role suggested and to imagine a multi-sensorial spectacle of emotional impact. Moreover, it stipulates the viewer/listener to go beyond what can be seen optically and what is described or narrated. This example, always used in the interartial discourse on ekphrasis, gives no evidence for drawing a line between narrative and description, as grounded in the linguistic material (like static verbs), in the structural entities, in the teleological movement, nor in the medium-specificity of the object or scene it refers to.

33 *Prog*. 2,118,21–24 Spengel: "There are also ekphraseis of processes, such as implements and weapons and siege engines, describing how each was made, as the making of the arms [of Achilles] in Homer [*Il*. 18,478–614]" (Chinn 2007: 276).

34 Crates of Mallos is the ancient source that parallels the making of arms, *hoplopoiia* with the making of the cosmos, *kosmopoiia*, with Democritus as his predecessor (Porter 2011: 689).

The power of language and emotions

The ancient concept of ekphrasis and *enargeia* is – as we have seen in the last section – embedded in larger philosophical and rhetorical theories about perception, imagination, memory and mimesis. As said before, ekphrasis foregrounds consistently the speaker's performative capacity rather than a specific object. Thanks to his experience and imagination the speaker is able to visualise a scene, which sparks a corresponding scene and affect in the minds of the audience. By means of *energeia*, i.e. a special type of clarity, the speaker elicits *enargeia*, the audience's performative capacity to imagine, and provokes emotional effects linked to these culturally influenced mental images.[35] Ekphrasis evokes and imitates the emotional effect of the audience's mental representations or *phantasiai* rather than a real object or scene.[36] In addition, ancient ekphrasis is palpably built upon the trust in language as power and action, in performative interactivity and the imaginative engagement between speaker and listener. What reaches the ears is also displayed to "the eyes of the mind". Even more, it is the artistic and vivid, i.e. sensorial language which can force its "powerful, physical imagery" (Webb 2009: 98) with its emotional impact on the listener.

Theoretically Quintilian and ps.-Longinus (1st or 3rd century AD) draw strongly on the power of affective rhetoric in the act of intersubjective signification: "A particular image (*visio*), summoned to mind, sets in motion a predictable emotional response (*pathos*)" (Vasaly 1993: 97). Quintilian goes as far as to state that plain facts or arguments stay only on the surface of the mind, whereas vivid speech penetrates inside, since "*enargeia* derives from the innermost recesses of the speaker's mind and works its way inside the listener to produce its intense effect" (Webb 2009: 99). To ps.-Longinus

35 Aristotle uses *enargeia* or the adjective *enarges* in closely linkage to sight and vision in difference to *energeia*, meaning the capacity of an entity in its specific function. To say it with Aristotelian words, *energeia* is "the representation of things in a state of actuality […] in opposition to *dunamis* [the] potential latent existence or capacity for action" (Zanker 1981: 307). The term "representation" is the modern translation of the ancient term mimesis and refers to the capacity of a mythos to do a work, or task (*ergon*), meaning to have an intellectual and emotional impact on an audience. In emphasising the parallel effects of the process and results of *enargeia* (*phantasiai*) and the process and results of direct perception (*phantasiai*), Aristotle describes these *visiones* alike a sensation. They "can be contemplated either as equivalent to what they represent, or as likenesses" (Webb 2009: 112).

36 See the following paragraphs about *phantasiai*.

enargeia has even an enslaving emotional effect, which only a good listener can resist: "What then is the effect of rhetorical visualization (*phantasia*)? There is much it can do to bring urgency and passion into our words; but it is when it is closely involved with factual arguments that as well as persuading the listener, it enslaves him" (ps.-Longinus, *On the Sublime*, 15,9; Webb 2009: 98). An emotional visualisation impresses, astonishes or amazes, even dazzles the listener or reader both in poetry and juridical rhetoric. In such an emotional confusion, facts can be concealed and the listener or reader is absorbed due to the artistic quality of language.

As we know from recent research (Massumi 2002: 24), and from our daily experience of, for instance, commercials, emotional language is more persuasive and memorable than long and dry explanations. No wonder that *enargeia* and *phantasia* have been considered a violent power meant to be used as "a weapon of rhetoric" (Goldhill 2007: 5). A strong link between the writer's words and the reader's expected imaginative reaction seems to be a predictable given in this particular cultural context. Quintilian boasts that he, like everybody else, can not only evoke the image of Cicero's enemy, the Roman governor Verres, but also supply further details to Cicero's short outline of his appearance (*Inst*. 8,3,64). Quintilian's mental image is not so much enhanced by real visible details but more by his memorised knowledge and emotions toward Verres. To provide a similar vivid, emotional effect, Quintilian advises his rhetoric pupils "to follow the nature" (*Inst*. 8,3,71). The listener's capacity to create images out of the speaker's words depends, as obvious from this example, plainly on a store of remembered *phantasiai*, i.e. memories. Consequently, the recipient of an ekphrasis is to be understood as prompted to mental effects, since the transfer of imagery is aroused rather automatically: The good author knows how "to follow the nature" to cause this effect. Therefore, the process of the addressee's imagination depends on the familiarity of the described scenes. The familiarity again results from the addressee's personal experience and the author's dramatic or artistic quality in representing: i. e. genre expectations, cultural codes, or "the discursive quality of culture" (Mahler 2010: 109). We know that "the storage and processing of imaginal mental representations" (Thomas 2014) play an essential role in cognitive functioning, the way of understanding images, language or ekphraseis.

Rhetorical vision and phantasia

Rhetorical vision operates on a sensorial and metaphorical level when making the reader "see". This will be made obvious by taking a closer look on Aristotle's thoughts about *phantasia* and on different philosophical models of perception and cognition. Contrary to modern understanding, ancient epistemological philosophies always embrace the double-sided aspect of mental and material representation. They are responsible for the fact that ekphrastic descriptions are evaluated on a spectrum that runs from the true to the fictional, and from hyperbolically praising the "truth" or "lifelikeness"[37] to blaming its effect as "deception" when comparing the representations with the perceived and memorised referential object.

When ps.-Longinus defines *phantasia* as "what some people call *eidolopoiein*, image production" (15,1), meaning that it embraces both, the word *logos* and the images *hup'opsin* (15,1), he applies the Aristotelian concept of *phantasia* (just like Quintilian) as applicable to poetry and rhetoric speeches, although poets are considered freer than orators in placing fantastic scenes before the eyes (ps.-Long. *On the Sublime* 15,1; Zanker 1981: 303).

Aristotle explains the concept of *phantasia*[38] as being "the process by which we say that an image [*phantasma*] is presented to us".[39] To him, the sensations from everyday life imprint themselves on the soul (like representations in wax or on paintings), where they create memory images, that is, the material for making judgements (Hawhee 2011: 144). Since *phantasia* is also a kind of thinking, which orders sensations, it increases the efficiency of words (*Rhet*. 1370a28–30). *Phantasia* provides also the capacity of conceptual thinking which relies on the cumulative effect of memorised images, its

37 Halliwell terms this effect the "quasi-vitalitistic quality of mimesis" (Halliwell 2002: 123).

38 In contrast to fancy, Aristotle's *phantasia* does not emphasise "the unreality of what is 'presented' to the mind; the focus is rather on the cognitive process that consists in entertaining a given notion or idea, a process that brings pleasure or pain to the one who engages in it" (Gonzales 2006: 125). Aristotle defines *phantasia* at *Rhet*. 1370a28–30 as "'a kind of weak perception' (*aisthesis*), connected not only with the sense perception but also with the mental faculties of memory and hope" (Gonzales 2006: 106).

39 *De Anima* 428a 1–4, transl. according to Hawhee, who argues strongly against the strict metaphorical reading of "seeing" standing in for understanding as initiated by George Kennedy (Hawhee 2012: 144). It is also argued that *phantasmata* would be better translated as "appearance" or "presentation" rather than as "image". Mental images and percepts are not to be distinguished sharply (Thomas 2013).

"animated gathering of both future and past images into the now by rendering them lively, vivid, and kinetic", in particular, when expressed through metaphor and style (Hawhee 2009: 153). This concept of *phantasia*, linked with memory, emotions and the capacity to differ between right and wrong (Gonzales 2006: 106), provides a background for understanding the power of ekphrasis. To Aristotle linguistic meaning stems from imagery, making spoken words to symbols of inner images (*De Interpretatione* 16a 5–9; *De Anima* 420b 29–32; Thomas 2014). Different from the modern concept of perception is the interconnection between inner pictures and their active role in perception which makes the distinction between the modern terms "seeing of" and "seeing-in" collapse (Thomas 2014).

Important for *enargeia* and ekphrasis is Aristotle's belief that the beauty of words lies in the appeal to the senses, to that of sight, of hearing or of both, all implied in the "bringing-before-eyes". *Phantasia* is responsible for a vivid depiction of scenes also beyond the realm of actual reality. Employing perceptual modalities mimetic art (such as dance, tunes, gesture, colours, lines etc.) offers therefore a set of entities to perception just like the "real world". In this way, performed among the makers, performers and audiences, mimetic art is embedded within the relational connection of culturally accepted rules of communication.

Rivalling concepts

Rivalling philosophical concepts complicate a simple comprehension of ekphrasis since it is dependent on the terms *enargeia*, *sapheneia* or *mimesis*. In general, the Stoics argued that the mind (the soul) is something corporeal and following the laws of physics. Their sophisticated theory of perception, which belongs to logic as opposed to physics and ethics, differs from our contemporary thoughts working with a sharp contrast between mind and body.[40] While the Stoics held that language, as a technique of *mimesis*, could

40 Ancient theories of vision insist on a direct contact between viewer and object with the result "that what is seen also enters into the mind itself because its images continue to recur in the 'mind's eye' even after the thing has been seen" (Stansbury-O'Donnell 2006: 64). Moreover, Francis argues, that "vision, whether mental or ocular, is invasive and tactile, its impact concussive. What is seen, once it is touched by, taken into, or has invaded the mind, can have a life (and perhaps a will) of its own" (Francis 2009: 17).

give a correct picture of reality,[41] to Aristotle, *mimesis* is not informed by the actual but by the potential. Rather than imitation, *mimesis* "must be understood as actualization of what is possible (of that which could or should be) rather than as a simple representation of nature (of that which is)" (Landgraf 2000: 555).[42] According to Peripatetic psychology, a symbolic but pre-linguistic awareness or apprehension is "supposed to carry information even though they do not belong to language proper" (Spruit 1994: 10). The Stoics do not accept any metaphysical reality of concepts. To them, passions do not result from a distinct irrational faculty but from errors in judgement.[43] By contrast, Plato and Aristotle explain mental conflicts as a battle between the rational and irrational parts of the soul. Independent from the body's goal, perception provides information to make inferences and theories about the world possible. Interesting for modern cognitive theories is the fact that Peripatetic cognitive psychology allows for "positing a fundamentally non-discursive, cognitive stage" (Spruit 1994: 9). Yet, since Stoic epistemological philosophy grounds in language, the Stoics reject the Peripatetic differentiation according to the level of details (clarity) in an ekphrastic description. In short, these emulating epistemological concepts about "how to theorize the regime of the visual and rhetorical performance in society" (Goldhill 2007: 7) are responsible for divergent types of ekphraseis.

At the same time as Aristotle, but differently from his idea of *phantasia* and mimesis, the Greek philosopher Epicurus (341–271 BC), father of the Epicurean school, taught – more like the Stoics – that knowledge of the world could be gained by relying solely upon the senses and that all

41 The Stoics believed in "cognitive presentation" (*phantasia kataleptike*) as a criterion for knowledge (Halliwell 2002: 265). The sole criterion of truth is a striking conviction produced by means of real objects. "The strength and vividness of the image distinguish these real perceptions from a dream or fancy" (Rubarth 2006).

42 Landgraf concludes in his review the convincing re-reading of Aristotle's mimesis concept by Arbogast Schmitt (in Kablitz – Neumann 1998). To Schmitt, Aristotelian mimesis includes the perceiver's creative subjectivity and involvement in constructing realities, which are represented in the aspects of actuality and *dunamis*, potentiality (see note 35). In modern term, mimesis implies "an understanding of reality which posits the real as attainable only within the ideal, not within the empirical" (Landgraf 2000: 555).

43 See the example of a stoic ekphrasis by Seneca.

sense-impressions are inscribed in the mind.[44] He defined *enargeia* in line with his "linguistic speculations" (Zanker 1981: 310) as "the clear view", i.e. in close relation to clarity in sense impression, which "all true opinion must be based upon" (*Ep. Hdt*. 52). Only striking language of evident clarity (*perspicuitas)* promised "true representations" and the only ones that are made available to memory contrary to "false images" (*visiones inanes*) (Vasaly 1993: 94).

The same line of argumentation is held by ps.-Demetrius in his book on styles and literary criticism, *De Elocutione.*[45] He also demanded the completeness of details, which were paired with *sapheneia* (clarity of sight) to entail *enargeia* and truth. This is because to him, no distinction can separate inner objects of mind from the outer reality, and therefore he "grounds knowledge solely in the mechanism of perception" (Spruit 1994: 54).[46] Based on the Stoic concept of language as *mimesis*, "every representation (*pasa mimesis*) contains some measure of *enarges*" (*Eloc*. 219; Walker 1993: 354).

All these above-mentioned early concepts, apart from the Peripatetic (Aristotelian) one, make clarity of sight, *sapheneia*, responsible for the true accordance of the "*visiones*", *phantasiai*, with the perception. Clarity in this sense is a summa of conditions, all ascribed to the object in question and to the process of perception: In this way, we talk about a shared sensory experience as a result of the brightness of the light, of the accuracy of the object, of good working senses of a creature and so on. Since language is understood as a tool to induce such "*visiones*" with the same clarity, the term *enargeia* links sensory perception and truth. In the modern discourse, we often follow the Stoic concept of a prior and ontological given reality, to which

44 To Epicurus, perception is "the reception of and the commitment to information about what is perceived. Therefore, perceiving and thinking are not separate faculties, for a full-blown sense perception includes judgement" (Spruit 1994: 55).

45 Ps.-Demetrius is an author who is hard to date; he lived either in second or first century BC or perhaps in the first or second century AD (Zanker 1993: 305).

46 To Democritus "all knowledge derives from sensation, which originates in the *eidola* effluent from external objects and impinging on sense organs" (Spruit 1994: 50). In a direct contact with external objects, the incoming atoms of the *eidola* or *imagines* cause the mental representations. To Democritus "the object of perception is the outcome of the interaction between the sensible thing and the sense organ. Thus the medium in which the interaction takes place has an essential role to play in perception" (ibid.: 32), since the things transmit strings of atoms representing them and communicate their structure to the medium. "These representational atom-strings are called *eidola* or 'images'" (ibid.: 32).

verbal representation in mimetic intention should refer by carefully describing realistic details, demanded to recognise ekphrasis (Bernhardt 2007: 131f). However, this is just one of other rhetorical styles depending on which functions and expectations an ekphrasis responds to.

Truth or deception

Depending on the mimesis concept applied, ekphrasis can be conceived of as deception as long as one compares the referential source with its mediated representation under the precondition that an objective reality may be perceived. This deduction, which resulted in Barthes's understanding of ekphrasis linked to a "reality effect" (Barthes 1968), is built on Stoic rather than on Aristotelian concepts of perception and mimesis. However, after a modern revaluation of the status of "reality" from an objective given to a more constructivist view on it, also mimesis assumes an increasing autonomy with regard to the "reality". Rather, it is understood as being itself involved "in the construction of *representational realities*" (Landgraf 2000: 554; highlighted by EL). Since the contents of literature are never just a source of information and evidence about past social condition, any differentiation between factual and notional ekphrasis, as introduced by John Hollander (1988: 209) and grounded in a modern distinction between *fiction* and *faction*, does not equal the different philosophical concepts which strived to develop epistemological knowledge or even truth from language (*logos*), sensorial experience and *phantasia*.[47]

Contrary to the concepts above, the Roman rhetorician Cicero (106–43 BC) follows a more sceptical philosophical opinion mistrusting truth or knowledge derived solely from sensory data. To him, clarity as mode of perception is not any longer a distinctive criterion for representing the real. Thus, ekphrasis and *enargeia* are not restricted to mimetic realistic description of perfect perception via *eidola*. Rather they imply – as we have seen before – the impact and possibilities of shared conventions, including

47 I assume this distinction between factual and notional ekphrasis is a relict from the times when ancient texts were rather read as if describing historical facts or as a tool to reveal "the aesthetic norms of the period" as Wendy Steiner puts it (Steiner 1982: 18). It is ironic that this modern restriction of ekphrasis, which centres mostly on poetry and figurative art, points back to the ancient mimesis concept. Such referential reading is neither adequate to ancient nor to postmodern thinking.

"the judgments and emotions of the describer" (Becker 1995: 11). These shared conventions include also fictive descriptions – just as we nowadays share conversations about a set of fictive stories, Hollywood-blockbusters everybody has seen. Quintilian explains in *Inst.* 8,3,70: "We will obtain vivid clarity if we remain very close to reality (*verisimilia*), so that we may invent fictitious elements (*falso adfingere*), which did not occur, if they usually occur in the situation we are describing" (Francis 2009: 6). Given that the modern distinction between fiction and non-fiction does not exist in Hellenistic and Roman culture, we understand *sapheneia* denoting the condition for perfect perception (but differently defined in different schools) and *enargeia* signifying the condition for perfect imagination, or as Vasaly puts it, *enargeia* is the "verbal counterpart to the sensory reception of clear and striking images" (Vasaly 1993: 94).

Seneca (4 BC – 65 AD), the philosopher, writer and educator of Nero, gives another variant of ekphrasis, which shows that evoked mental imagery does not principally aim at emotional stimulation. Rather, *enargeia* depends on the function of ekphrasis in text and context, and on the cooperation of the recipient to perform as an optically and mentally viewing subject according to the speaker's intention. Stoic ekphrasis, as exemplified by Seneca, is a means of didactic artistic communication. Like Stoic philosophers who trained their students to free themselves from the delusion of the incoming impressions (images) and value judgments, Seneca's ekphrasis aims rather at freeing the audience from emotions and habitual modes of perception. In general, the Stoics held that one could train oneself to hold back with an emotional reaction and opinion resulting from a certain perception.

The following example shows how Seneca's ekphrasis of the city Syracuse teaches the reader in the stoic restriction of the gaze: After having described and praised the most salient natural and artistic qualities of the beautiful and opulent city Syracuse (*Cons. Ad Marc.* 17,2–4) for a vividly addressed audience, he turns the aroused admiration of a delightful place (*locus amoenus*) into the opposite (*locus horribilis*) by inviting the audience to reflect the other side of the town, i.e., the memorised and stored images linked to this place as rhetorical *locus*, the inhospitable climate, the cruelty of its barbaric tyrant Dionysius II, who invited and, consequently arrested Plato (Bartsch 2007: 85). The description aims not only at turning the praise into blame by rendering striking words inducing the opposite emotion and soul-stirring

enargeia. Rather, when gruesome spectacles are sketched, usually making the reader react strongly and emotively, the correct and intended response to Stoic ekphrasis would counteract such an emotional reaction by virtue of conscious reconsideration. Stoic ekphrasis does not limit itself to evoke a "viewing subject", but strives "to initiate viewers out of their ordinary assumptions into a new exegetic reality, a truth that brings salvation" (Elsner 1995: 47). In doing so, Seneca shows his awareness of the gaze's inclination for failure and deception in the ekphrastic performance of occluding the purported visual objects (ibid.: 68). Moreover, he also emulates the intertextual tradition of praising Syracuse by representing an invisible world-view with regard to his 'pedagogical model' and ethical concept.[48]

Staging a view when describing historical events

To demonstrate the difficulty of drawing a strict borderline between reality and fiction, objectivity and ideology or rhetorical manipulation, or mediated and mental representation, I take an example of ancient ekphrasis from the historiographer Thucydides (c. 460 – c. 395 BC). Although we can find similar rhetorical techniques to prompt emotions, engagement and mental imagery as in Homer's Shield of Achilles, this description of an historical event is not counted as belonging to the modern concept of a "double representation". Yet, the historiographical or literary text is unfolded as performative process to stimulate an – in modern terms – inner- and extradiegetic audience to experience a scene in a dramatic setting. Thucydides dramatizes the act of interpreting visually framed scenery in the same rhetorical technique like Hellenistic epigrams describe works of visual art (Goldhill 2007).

According to the rhetorical handbooks, Thucydides' descriptions of the sea battle and defeat, which the Athenians suffered in the Syracusan harbour (Thuc. 7,71), is repeatedly quoted and praised as a type of ekphrasis. Thucydides enfolds the event in the cognitive frame of a tragic spectacle by delivering perceptual details of the circumstances of the place, the agents, the process of action and the observers. Although being players involved in rules of war games, the warriors are not aware that they are being observed

48 Seneca competes with the tradition of the so-called *laus Siciliae*, the praise of Syracuse, see Cic. *Verr*. 4,117–119, Quint. *Inst*. 4,3,12–14. Rather than to an interartial rivalry, ekphrasis invites here to the same intertextual competition as in the case of the shield description.

as actors. All that happens is presented through different spectators' point of view, from the Athenian shore. As a consequence of their limited view, these spectators react with different and strong emotions. Furthermore, reflecting on the sympathetic response of the eyewitnesses, the narrator allows that different voices can be heard to give different perspectives on the event. Identifying with the described viewers, the listener or reader can either follow the experience of the engrossed witnesses of a live performance, or the narrator's reflecting comments on the limits of perception and the authenticity of eyewitnesses.

Thus, this ekphrasis both imitates and encodes *the vision* of an outer reality mimetically. In doing so, the text combines facts, visual perception, imagination, emotional subjectivity and self-reflexivity.[49] Additionally, on the linguistic and semantic level this verbal representation is conditioned by a teleological configuration, as it is the case of tragedy,[50] a code or frame that points to the conscious blend of "fact" and "fiction". Moreover, only the reader of the whole texts can imagine this scene as a self-reflexive *mise en abyme*, by hindsight, "since the spectators who watch the scene (of ships embarking or at battle) are themselves part of a larger scene that includes the first" (Walker 1993: 362). Thus, rather than a transparent encounter and imitation of past reality or facts, this piece of the historiographical work of Thucydides provides insight in the limited perceptual and emotional experience of a historical scenery.[51] Although this ekphrasis is not concerned with a conventionally defined artefact mediated in a static materialised form but with a performative event framed through vision, it "can call attention to

49 "Thucydides turns our attention from the spectacle itself, to the psychology of the spectators who look on, and he draws into relief the disparity between the incidents (*ergon*) and their visual perception (*opsis*)" (Walker 1993: 356).

50 It had been said that Thucydides' narrative technique "owes more to the dramatists of the fifth century than to his generic predecessor Herodotus" (Walker 1993: 356).

51 Walter Bernhart explains the difference between descriptions made by "professional historiographers and forensic lawyer-orators aiming at 'veracity' in contrast to 'verisimilitude' strived for by literary writers" (Bernhart 2007: 130). Reading Greek and Roman historiographies by authors like Thucydides or Lucian, to name just two, makes obvious that the poetic writers do not only blur the modern borderline between fact and fiction, but also muse self-reflectively about their seeing and genre specific writing. A very good introduction is given by Walker 1993: 353–377. By the way, Thucydides is a good example for the dramatizing history according to Aristotelian understanding of tragedy.

the artificialities (and shortcomings) of representation, creating as a consequence a text concerned with discourse over and *against* representation" (Walker 1993: 363). The reader can create different mental spaces, provided from different input spaces: the war scene located in a simulated space of the past on the level of reality is superimposed by a space constructed according to the rules of a spectacle. The mental space of the spectacle, then, is furthermore determined by more specific genre conventions of a tragic ending, demanding a specific emotional response in another, mental body space. These superimposed mental spaces allow, when neatly mapped, for a reflection on the imaginary act of the "world-creation" as a form of verbal representation and virtual imaginery.

This example is, like the Shield of Achilles, constructed as a *mise en abyme*, and refers self-reflexively to the author's poetico-rhetorical strategy to present himself as creator. Moreover, it does not only override the distinction between *mimesis* and *diegesis*, but also between different rhetoric, literary and historiographical genres.

Rhetorical vision in interartial ekphrasis

Rather than from the *progymnasmata*, the tradition of choosing works of art like paintings or sculpture for ekphrastic descriptions considers its origins to come from other prose works of the Second Sophistic. Philostratus the Elder is called the father of a specific "literary genre" because of his ekphrastic descriptions of sixty-five art works. Yet, not the fact that Philostratus chose paintings for displaying his poetry-rhetoric makes this type of ekphrasis more exceptional than others. He used the same technique of *enargeia* that can be shown for ekphraseis referring to towns, gardens, houses and so on. Nevertheless, the manner how he provided fully realised scenes, how he transformed the reader into a spectator by means of *enargeia*, and how he introduced a performative and educational communication between a teaching "sophist" and a child to demonstrate *how* to view and *how* to understand art work, fulfils the poetic-rhetorical rules.[52] However, what seems to be more important, is the potentiality and functionality that this type of ekphrasis shares with others. Facilitated as embedded and framed narrative,

52 See Zeitlin 2013b: 61–87 or Miles 2013: 123–141.

ekphrasis may also be understood in an interpretative play as *mise en abyme* or complex argumentative technique beyond the surface description.

Admittedly, Philostratus had many successors emulating in the same field. Already his son-in-law Philostratus the Younger (c. 300 AD) who wrote the *Imagines* did so, as well as the sophist Callistratus (the fourth or third century AD) with his *Descriptiones*. Other authors like Pliny, Vitruvius, Lucian or Pausanius, applied their rhetorical skills in describing works of art in a similar way, and integrated them into their further argumentation. These texts together are traditionally considered a literary genre, the beginning of a "Roman catalogue of pictures, and the Roman viewing of pictures" (Bryson 1994: 225) and supposed to anticipate the discourse of modern art catalogues and their critical analysis (Cheeke 2008: 15).[53] However, gathering all these different texts in one group because of the same object of reference makes it seem as if all texts were ekphraseis, fulfilling the same function, that is, to provide a (more or less detailed) description of a work of art. Moreover, Mitchell assumes that the texts would be principally in an agonal relationship to the items of art they describe: He talks about a rivalling mode between image and text, of "ekphrastic hope", "fear" or "indifference" (Mitchell 1994: 152–168). When following this modern concern, the central act of translation from a mental interrelation into words and the stipulating act of rhetorical persuasion and delight are shifted to a more scientific perspective of how to translate visual objects into verbal expressions and how to draw cultural information of historical evidence from the literary texts, as if literature could offer "a simple window into the past" (Stark 1990: 21). When doing so, we lose sight of the different styles of languages, different functions and genre expectations of the texts, in short of the dynamic interrelation of communication and cultural expectations. What we can learn from ancient tradition is that ekphrasis depends on the rhetorical skill of *enargeia*, a capacity that comes only to life in a performative engagement between the author's intentions pinged upon a text assuming and anticipating the

53 Independently of the mental qualities of *enargeia* singled out above, Jaś Elsner subsumes all admittedly different verbal expressions of ekphrasis under the category of description to be transferred to art history (Elsner 2010: 12). However, modern museum catalogues have a specific cultural function different from that of literary genre; these modern texts do not need to arouse the reader-viewers mental imagery in the same way, in particular not when published as iconotexts.

reader's preconditioned mental images, his knowledge, cultural codes, and emotions. Ekphrasis and *enargeia* cannot be mechanically found by exploring linguistic material. The intra- and extra-textual context and a stipulated affective engagement are likewise relevant. Ekphrasis is not a static rhetorical trope formally related to autonomous art, but deeply imbricated with the historical and social individuals who are engaged in combining acts of perception with acts of imagination in a communicational act of response. The Greeks embraced this mental activity with the concept of *enargeia*.

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Time is of the essence: temporal transformations in ekphrasis

Emma Tornborg

Ever since the days of da Vinci's *Paragone*, the focus when discussing the relations between various arts and media has been on their differences. I say this even though there have been numerous attempts over the centuries to minimize those perceived differences: take for example the pictorialist movement among poets in the 18th century, encouraged by Joseph Addison (Lund 1992: 96) and despised by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, or the romanticist longing for the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the 19th century.[1] Those attempts to bridge over what were seen as natural differences – the "naturalness" of the iconic sign versus the conventionality of the symbolic sign, the *stasis* of visual arts versus the temporality of poetry – in many ways can be said to have had the opposite effect: based on the assumption that the differences between the arts were inherent, the attempts merely underlined the issues they were meant to overcome.

However, today the study of intermedial relations seems to have another focus: the similarities of arts and media. One of the earliest modern advocates for this view is W. J. T. Mitchell. In 1986, he wrote that "there is no *essential* difference between poetry and painting, no difference, that is, that is given for all times by the inherent natures of the media, the objects they represent, or the laws of the human mind" (ibid.: 49), and in his essay "There are

1 The notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* can be described as a wish to unite all arts into one (Bisanz 1975: 38), and a genre that met the demands of the romanticist poets to be able to represent the whole internal world of emotions and imagination.

no visual media" (2005) he underlines that a pure media product, free from traces of other media, does not exist: "all media are mixed media":

> That is, the very notion of a medium and of mediation already entails some mixture of sensory, perceptual and semiotic elements. There are no purely auditory, tactile or olfactory media either. However, this conclusion does not lead to the impossibility of distinguishing one medium from another. What it makes possible is a more precise differentiation of mixtures. If all media are mixed media, they are not all mixed in the same way, with the same proportions of elements. (Mitchell 2005: 260)

The differences thus lie in how media products are mixed, the fact that they are is not in question. Claus Clüver agrees and states that intermediality

> concerns such transmedial phenomena as narrativity, parody, and the implied reader/listener/viewer as well as the intermedial aspects of the intertextualities inherent in individual texts – and the inevitable intermedial character of each medium. (Clüver 2007: 32–33)

The insight that all media are mixed in some way demands, according to Jørgen Bruhn, a new term. Since the term *intermedia* implies that the focus should lie between media, a fitting notion for the focus of relations within various media or media products should, according to Bruhn, be *heteromediality*:

> This new, multimodal definition of medium raises not only a number of analytical and epistemological questions but also a basic terminological question: is 'intermediality' still the best term to describe the multimodal character of all media and, consequently, the *a priori* mixed character of all conceivable texts? The term intermediality is too limited to satisfy the demands of the new multimodal theory of medium. Therefore I will suggest a new umbrella term, heteromediality, to describe any conceivable text, whereas I reserve the term intermediality to parts of heteromediality. (Bruhn 2010: 229).

What consequences are there for the research field of intermediality if we begin to focus more and more on relations inside media and media products

and less on relations between them? One answer is that we need to find new analytical tools to be able to capture these internal relations. The four *modalities of media* (*the material modality*, *the sensorial modality*, *the spatiotemporal modality* and *the semiotic modality*), as suggested and introduced by Lars Elleström (2010), have proven themselves to be fine-tuned instruments that meet the demands of a more nuanced analytical approach. Basically, the modalities answer the following questions: *What is a medium made of? How do we experience it? How does it manifest itself in time and space? Which main sign system does it use?* If we understand how a media product, for example a photograph, works on a modality level, it is easier to see what it has in common with other media or media products, and what separates them.

Thus, I am convinced that there *are* essential differences between media, but that the differences do not always lie where we think they lie, and that is the starting point for this essay, where I will look into the relations between two kinds of media products, namely visual, static, iconic media products such as painting or photography, and verbal, printed text, and how they relate to each other in one specific genre: *ekphrasis*, and in one specific mode: temporality.

Temporality and stasis

Since Gotthold Ephraim Lessing wrote his immensely influential essay *Laocoon: An Essay Upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (*Laokoon oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*) in 1766, static, visual, iconic media and verbal, printed media have been distinguished from each other by means of spatiotemporality, since Lessing claimed that poetry is a temporal art, unraveling in time, and the visual arts are spatial, existing as shapes in space. Lessing formulated the problem that we all still have to deal with, whether we agree with him or not.[2] One of the problems is that in this discussion, "spatial" seems to be equivalent to "static", as Mitchell points out:

> "Spatial form", as it is defined in a recent anthology on the subject, "in its simplest sense designates the techniques by which novelists subvert the

2 Mitchell writes: "Those who attack the confusion of genres entailed in a notion of literary space regularly invoke Lessing's authority, and the proponents of spatial form pay him homage by making his categories into their fundamental instruments of analysis" (Mitchell 1986: 97).

> chronological sequence inherent in narrative" – a definition which suggests that "space" means little more than "atemporal", and which confirms Lessing's claim that chronology is "inherent" in literary art. "Spatial form" in this sense can have no strong theoretical force; it can only be what Frank Kermode calls a "weak figure" for a certain kind of suspended temporality, and there doesn't seem to be any compelling reason for thinking of this phenomenon as "spatial". (Mitchell 1986: 96)

Thus, my intention is to avoid the (false) dichotomy *space* and *time*[3] and concentrate on *time* and *timelessness*. What, then, is timelessness? And what does it mean that a medium is either temporal or static? Elleström stresses that materially, both a book and a painting are static, but because of the "conventional semiotic aspect of language" – the fact that we decode printed text in a certain order – temporality is automatically incorporated in the reading, as well as fixed or partly fixed sequentiality, according to Elleström (2010: 19). Even on the level of the word, the letters must be read in a certain order to be understandable. Thus, given the predetermined order in which we decode most conventional literature, there is a temporal difference between verbal printed text and visual, static, iconic media products. A painting can basically be decoded in any given order; often there is no absolute beginning or end: when are you "done" with a painting? At what exact moment have you seen everything?[4]

This does not mean, however, that a painting cannot represent temporal flow, or that a poem cannot represent stasis. What is interesting is that different media have different means of expressing or representing temporality. Elleström introduces the notion of *virtual time*, which is the time we include in our interpretation of a media product: "Interpretations of still images of

3 False because space and time are not opposites, and because all media exist and manifest themselves both in space and in time.

4 There are of course exceptions, for example religious icons can represent several images in one, describing a narrative, and in the case of simultaneous succession (Nikolajeva – Scott 2006: 140), common in children's picture books, the same figure is depicted multiple times on a page, representing the figure's way in the room. There is also the case with comic strips, but as Elleström points out, the way the comic strip represents time is not an example of virtual time, but of "an instance of pictorial sequentiality produced by merging conventions of decoding symbolic and iconic signs" (Elleström 2010: 21).

what we, on iconic grounds, take to be moving objects or creatures always include an interpretation of where the object or the creature were 'before' or 'after' the frozen time in the image" (ibid.: 21). The concept of virtual time is also valid for "all sorts of time represented by verbal narration" (ibid.: 21). Virtual time is thus something that we infer when we take part of a media product.[5] Imagine seeing a photograph where a girl is two feet up in the air. Your immediate interpretation would probably not be that she is flying, nor that she is standing on something invisible, but that she is jumping, and that the photograph has captured her movements at the precise moment when she is up in the air. When you decide that you believe that she is jumping, you include the whole act in your interpretation of the depicted moment: Leaving the floor, being in the air, and returning to the floor again. When someone acts, the act occurs in time, and thereby, depicting a moment of an action is one way for a static image to represent time.

A static image cannot say, as the verbal text can, "time is passing". The static image has to *show* that time passes, and can do so by representing actions or indexes of movement, for example blurred lines in a photograph (ibid.: 21). Other examples are high waves in a sea or trees bowed in one direction, both indexes of wind that in its turn creates movement.

A narrative text presupposes temporal flow: If something happens, it must happen over the course of time. Many actions described rapidly after one another give the text an air of haste, of motion, while fewer actions reduce the speed. But if a text can represent motion and time passing, it must also be able to represent stasis and time *not passing*. If the text totally lacks narrative elements, if nothing happens or no one moves, it is characterized by what I call *virtual timelessness*, the experience that no time passes in a text. There are many ways to achieve virtual timelessness in a text: it can be done by using few dynamic verbs and a lot of concrete nouns and adjectives, but also by means of stylistic devices such as repetition, which we will see later on. Dynamic texts that describe motion and static texts that describe stasis are the two main categories focused on in this essay.

5 Elleström comes to the following conclusion: "virtual space and virtual time can be said to be manifest in the perception and interpretation of a medium when what is taken to be the *represented* spatiotemporal state is not the same as the spatiotemporal state of the *representing* material modality considered through the spatiotemporal modality" (ibid.: 21; highlighted by LE).

Two types of image descriptions

In her research on picture description, cognitive researcher Jana Holšánová (2008) conducted an experiment where twelve participants got to look at a picture from Sven Nordqvist's famous Swedish picture book series about the old man Pettson and his cat Findus. After the participants had looked at it, the picture was removed and they had to describe it from memory. Holšánová identified two different descriptive styles: *the static description style* and *the dynamic description style*.[6] The former is characterized, among other things, by "dominance of spatial perception", "numerous and precise localisations", "a detailed description", "static description", "no temporal expressions", "many and exact spatial expressions", "a high frequency of presentational expressions: 'there is', 'there are', 'it is', 'it was', etc.", "mainly nouns, few dynamic verbs, mostly auxiliary and position verbs" (Holšánová 2008: 62).

The latter is characterised, among other things, by "dominance of temporal perception", "many temporal expressions", "sequential description of events according to a schema", focusing on temporal differences in the picture", "dynamic descriptions", "temporal verbs, temporal adverbs, temporal subordinate clauses, prepositions", "few spatial expressions, less precise", "many dynamic motion verbs" (ibid.: 62).

Holšánová (2008: 69) connects the dynamic description type to verbalizers and the static description style to visualizers, but also agrees that there is evidence that speaks in favour of a distinction between *spatial* and *iconic* (*object*) *visualizers*.[7] Thus, apart from the *visualizer/verbalizer description style*, there is one other distinction to be made: the one between spatial visualizers and iconic or object visualizers. The spatial visualizers focus more on the spatial relations and the object/iconic more on shapes, colors and nuances.

From a modality point of view, the difference between verbalizers and visualizers can be described as either focusing on the static materiality of the image (what Elleström calls "the material modality considered through the spatiotemporal modality", Elleström 2010: 21), or on what narrative impulse, to borrow an expression from James A. W. Heffernan, the image triggers:

6 The two styles have been investigated and discussed earlier in the research field of cognitive science; see for example Kozhevnikov – Hegarty – Mayer 2002 and Kozhevnikov – Kosslyn – Shephard 2005.

7 A distinction also made by Kozhevnikov – Hegarty – Mayer 2002 and Kozhevnikov – Kosslyn – Shephard 2005.

describe what you see, or describe the "story" of the picture (the virtual time of the image).

The ekphrastic choice

It has been debated, however, whether *ekphrasis*, commonly defined as "a verbal representation of a visual representation" (Heffernan 1993: 3), is a static or dynamic phenomenon. Heffernan considers it to be mainly narrative, focusing on the pregnant moment and including the virtual time of the image in the ekphrastic transformation:

> The "pregnant moment" of an action is the arrested point which most clearly implies what came before the moment and what is to follow it. [...] ekphrasis is dynamic and obstetric; it typically delivers *from the pregnant moment* of visual art its embryonically narrative impulse, and thus makes explicit the story that visual art tells only by implication. [...] the instability of the boundaries between description and narration makes it implausible to identify ekphrasis with anything like pure description, or to define it simply as a brake on narrative progression. (Heffernan 1993: 5, 6)

Other scholars, such as Wendy Steiner and Murray Krieger, consider ekphrasis to be static in its nature, or at least, to strive towards stasis:

> Dependent as it is on literary sources, the pregnant moment in painting has in turn generated a literary topos in which poetry is to imitate the visual arts by stopping time, or more precisely, by referring to an action through a still moment that implies it. The technical term for this is *ekphrasis*, the concentration of action in a single moment of energy, and it is a direct borrowing from the visual arts. (Steiner 1982: 41)

According to Krieger, stasis is the purpose of ekphrasis: "to use a plastic object as a symbol of the frozen, stilled world of plastic relationships which must be superimposed upon literature's turning world to 'still' it" (Krieger 1992: 266). Hans Lund in his turn argues that there are two kinds of ekphrasis: the dynamic, "narrative ekphrasis", and the static, "the ekphrasis of the frozen moment" (Lund 1992: 186, my translation). I agree with Lund that ekphrastic texts can be both dynamic and static; the question is *why* some

of them are dynamic and others static. Is it a matter of choice, or is there another reason? In her investigations of the two description styles, Holšánová gives some cognitive and contextual explanations to the difference in description modes that are not due solely to personal inclination in the describer. One of them touches upon what has been said earlier, that the describer can choose either to focus on the material stasis of a media product or on the story it tells: whether the participants verbalised "the picture as a representation" or if they focused "on the content of the represented scene" (Holšánová 2008: 65). Another explanation that she points to is familiarity with the described picture. If a participant in the experiment was familiar with the picture or the characters, the description tended to be more dynamic (ibid.: 65). A reason for this is probably that the image is a reminder of what the describer already knows about the characters and their adventures, and the tendency to tell a story rather than describe: "One could expect that if the informants have read the book (to themselves or to their children), the picture will remind them of the story and the style will become dynamic and narrative" (ibid.: 65).[8] In another part of the experiment the effect of the so-called *priming* was investigated. The participants listened to a pre-recorded description of the image, which focused on its spatial relations, and to some degree it influenced the participant's own descriptions, so that they became more spatial. In the narrative priming, the task was to "tell a story about what happens in the picture" (ibid.: 73). The narrative priming affected the descriptions, which became more temporal and narrative (ibid.: 75).[9]

Another factor, according to Holšánová, is the characteristics of the described picture: "[…] this particular picture, with its repetitive figures, may have affected the way it was described" (ibid.: 65). In my opinion, the characteristics of the represented image constitute a very important factor. Some visual, static, iconic media products contain more indexes of movement and temporality, more virtual time, than others: Compare the static composition

8 One might wonder if the outcome would have been the same if the chosen picture did not come from a picture book that includes both pictures and text.

9 Another contextual explanation for the two styles is suggested: that they only occur when someone is listening to the descriptions, that the styles are "conversationally determined" (ibid.: 76). However, I do not believe that the two styles only exist when someone is listening, I cannot see any reason to make that hypothesis, but of course it has to be tested in order to be determined true or false.

of da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (1503–1507) to Degas' *Café-Concert at Les Ambassadeurs* (1876–1877), where the lady in red makes a gesture towards the audience, the movement of the arm is represented by means of blurred lines. We tend to interpret virtual time – and thereby be more narrative in our description – into pictures where characters seem to be in the middle of an action (the pregnant moment) to a higher degree compared to portraits or static scenes. However, as mentioned above, the describer has a choice: she can either describe the picture's virtual time or focus on its material stasis. Thus, it is not correct to talk about the stasis of images or the temporality of texts, unless it is clear what modalities are involved: is it the virtual time of the medium (the spatiotemporal modality) or the temporal properties of the medium's materiality (the material modality) that is discussed?

In order to describe the different temporal relations between source image and target text,[10] I propose a model that covers the various aspects of the issue:[11]

1. An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing stasis] resulting in a static effect

2. An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing stasis] resulting in a temporal effect

3. An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing temporality] resulting in a temporal effect

4. An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing temporality] resulting in a static effect

In the following section, I will discuss the four relations and give examples of how they work.

10 Tamar Yacobi's terms for the two basic ekphrastic components (1998: 25).

11 It is important to remember that not all ekphrastic texts are descriptive, either in a narrative or a static way. Some ekphrastic texts simply hint to or mention static, visual, iconic media products in passing (what Elleström calls "simple representation"; 2013: 120). In those cases, it is difficult to apply the temporal model.

An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing stasis] resulting in a static effect

Wisława Szymborska: "Landscape"

In the old master's landscape,
the trees have roots beneath the oil paint,
the path undoubtedly reaches its goal,
the signature is replaced by a stately blade of grass,
it's a persuasive five in the afternoon,
May has been gently, yet firmly, detained,
so I've lingered too. Why, of course, my dear,
I am the woman there, under the ash tree.

Just see how far behind I've left you,
see the white bonnet and the yellow skirt I wear,
see how I grip my basket so as not to slip out of the painting,
how I strut within another's fate
and rest awhile from living mysteries.

Even if you called I wouldn't hear you,
and even if I heard I wouldn't turn,
and even if I made that impossible gesture
your face would seem a stranger's face to me.

I know the world six miles around.
I know the herbs and spells for every pain.
God still looks down on the crown of my head.
I still pray I won't die suddenly.
War is punishment and peace is a reward.
Shameful dreams all come from Satan.
My soul is as plain as the stone of a plum.

I don't know the games of the heart.
I've never seen my children's father naked.
I don't see the crabbed and blotted draft

that hides behind the Song of Songs.
What I want to say comes in ready-made phrases.
I never use despair, since it isn't really mine,
Only given to me for safekeeping.

Even if you bar my way,
even if you stare me in the face,
I'll pass you by on the chasm's edge, finer than a hair.

On the right is my house. I know it from all sides,
along with its steps and its entryway,
behind which life goes on unpainted.
The cat hops on a bench,
the sun gleams on a pewter jug,
a bony man sits at the table
fixing a clock.

Wisława Szymborska's poem "Landscape" (first published in 1967) represents an actual or fictional landscape with trees, a woman and a house to the right. Since I am not familiar with the source image (if it exists) I cannot, obviously, be certain about its temporal characteristics, but based on my experience with classical landscape painting, my guess is that it has a static composition with few indexes of movement. Therefore I will treat this poem as an ekphrasis that represents a static source image that in its turn represents stasis, and that the result is that the ekphrasis itself represents stasis. Before I begin my analysis, I want to make clear that there is one argument against this conclusion, and that is the woman's monologue. Sound can only exist in time and unravel in time, and is thus an index of temporal flux. However, in this analysis I place the woman's voice on a meta-level, as a part of the description or interpretation of the painting: not as emanating *from the painting* itself, but as an imaginative voice created and heard by the poetic I, the onlooker. One of the reasons is that the things the woman reveals about herself make it clear that she has no depth; she is only surface, oil paint on a canvas, and so is her environment: "the trees have roots beneath the oil paint" and "the signature is replaced by a stately blade of grass": her knowledge of a possible signature implies that she knows that her world is an artifact. The poem underlines

her two-dimensionality by letting her describe herself as such: "My soul is as plain as the stone of a plum." She has children, but she has never seen their father without clothes: her life is not real; her body is not made of flesh. Even her phrases are ready-made. She does not concern herself with the mysteries of life or with feelings of despair. She is not a woman – she is a visual representation of a woman, that in the target text is given corresponding characteristics, but in words instead of in colour and shape.

This representation is placed in a landscape where it is always almost May and always five o'clock in the afternoon. The woman is very aware of how limited her world is, that she is stuck both in time and space, but it does not seem to concern her. She knows that in her house, "life goes on unpainted",[12] but the painting cannot show ongoing life, it can only show one frozen moment of it, and that is the paradox of the ekphrasis: if she is stuck in time and space, how can she know what is going on in the house? She cannot even make a gesture:

> Even if you called I wouldn't hear you,
> and even if I heard I couldn't turn,
> and even if I made that impossible gesture
> your face would seem a stranger's face to me.

The unpainted life in the house is the one thing that gives us a glimpse of motion and time, but it is solely an abstract possibility, a hint; there is no narrative progress in the poem, nothing happens, nothing changes. It also almost totally lacks dynamic verbs, most verbs are of a less dynamic type, such as *linger*, *detain*, *rest*, *see* and *stare*. There is no focus on temporal differences and the only temporal marker is that it is "a persuasive five in the afternoon", which seems to be the case in all eternity. However, we find spatial expressions, such as "In the old master's landscape", "under the ash tree" and "on the right". The virtual timelessness, the experienced stasis, is also underlined by anaphors, which are repetitive and thus help create a sense

12 Szymborska seems to be fascinated with the things a painting does not show. For example, in "Rubens's Women" she writes: "Their skinny sisters woke up earlier, / before dawn broke and shone upon the painting. / And no one saw how they went single file / along the canvas's unpainted side" (Szymborska 1998 [1962]: 47). In "Frozen Motion" there is a similar motif, which we will see later on.

of motionlessness, as Wendy Steiner points out in connection with a poem by Edward Estlin Cummings: "Another feature of the poem increases its claim to atemporality: the constant repetition of words, rhythmic units, and phrases in a pattern that strongly resembles permutational poetry" (Steiner 1982: 44). "Landscape" ends with a man fixing a clock, and the broken clock is one more sign that time stands still in the world of the painting.

An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing stasis] resulting in a temporal effect

Tomas Tranströmer: From *Baltics*

Here are figures in a landscape.
A photo from 1865. The steamer is at the pier in the sound.
Five figures. A lady in a bright crinoline, like a bell, like a flower.
The men are like extras in a rustic play.
They're all beautiful, irresolute, in the process of being rubbed out.
They step ashore for a little while. They're being rubbed out.
The steam launch is an extinct model –
high funnel, sunroof, narrow hull –
it's utterly foreign, a UFO that's landed.
Everything else in the photo is shockingly real:
the ripples on the water,
the opposite shore –
I can stroke my hand over the rough rockfaces,
I can hear the sighing in the spruces.
It's near. It's
today.
The waves are topical.

Tomas Tranströmer's poetry book *Baltics* (first published in Swedish in 1974) consists of a number of sections, not separated by titles or chapters, but the ekphrasis discussed here can clearly stand for itself. The source image is unknown, but from the description it is clearly a photographic portrait, taken in 1865, representing a group of people dressed up for the occasion. As we know, the photographic technique back then demanded that people stood

very still for a long time; otherwise it would all just be a blur, which is generally not what is desired in a portrait. We can thus establish that the source image represents stasis. How is it treated in the target text? The poem begins with the introduction of the depicted scene: "Here are figures in a landscape." Then a detailed description of the group follows: "Five figures. A lady in a bright crinoline, like a bell, like a flower. / The men are like extras in a rustic play." The similes are concrete in the sense that they provide us with images that we can apply to the description. The short sentences make it easier to structure the inner image; there is no redundant information.

The next two sentences focus on the impermeability of the photographic medium. The photograph is faded, which is a sign of time passing, not the time represented in the photograph, but the time in which it exists; our time: "They're all beautiful, irresolute, in the process of being rubbed out. / They step ashore for a little while. They're being rubbed out." Here, it is the materiality of the photograph that is changing, but it somehow changes the motif as well: the characters become "irresolute" because they are beginning to disappear, to fade away, at the same time as they "step ashore for a little while" (probably to have their photograph taken). Thereafter, the boat is described: it is both extinct and a UFO: from another time and another place. The poetic I cannot relate to it. But then, the photograph comes to life:

> Everything else in the photo is shockingly real:
> the ripples on the water,
> the opposite shore –
> I can stroke my hand over the rough rockfaces,
> I can hear the sighing in the spruces.
> It's near. It's
> today.
> The waves are topical.

The landscape is the same; it bridges over time and gives the poetic I a sense of presence almost comparable to the symptoms of the Stendhal Syndrome: He can feel the rocks, he hears the sighing in the spruces, and he experiences the landscape as if he were there. The photograph comes to life, it is filled with temporal flux, sound and motion, the waves are the same as today:

a connection between then and now is established, and the represented stasis of the photograph is transformed into temporality in the target text.

The poem starts out with virtual timelessness and develops into temporality, without using either narrative techniques or a lot of dynamic verbs. However, there are two events taking place in the ekphrasis, which makes it temporal: First the temporal "process of being rubbed out", which concerns the materiality of the source medium, and then the opposite experience that the photograph is alive or is coming to life under the hands of the poetic I, who can hear and feel the represented landscape and notice movement; waves, ripples on the water.

An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing temporality] resulting in a temporal effect

Natalie Safir: "Matisse's Dance"

A break in the circle dance of naked women,
dropped stitch between the hands
of the slender figure stretching too hard
to reach her joyful sisters.

Spirals of glee sail from the arms
of the tallest woman. She pulls
the circle around with her fire.
What has she found that she doesn't
keep losing, her torso
a green burning torch?

Grass mounds curve ripely beneath
two others who dance beyond the blue.
Breasts swell and multiply and
rhythms rise to a gallop.

Hurry, frightened one and grab on – before
the stitch is forever lost, before the dance
unravels and a black sun swirls from that space.

The translation from temporality in an image to temporality in a text is quite common in ekphrasis, and it is not difficult to understand: a source image that conveys motion and temporal flux should inspire to a more temporal description, which we can see in Natalie Safir's poem "Matisse's Dance" (1990), even though the poem actually begins with a "break": "A break in the circle dance of naked women". The letting go of the hands between two of the dancing women is perhaps one of the first details one notices when looking at Matisse's paintings *Dance 1* (1909) and *Dance* (1910). The break is also described as a "dropped stitch", where the hands have let go of each other; it is as if the painting is compared to a piece of knitting. One woman stretches out to the other, to be able to reach her hand again, and the pose is filled with virtual movement and time; it is as if the painter has captured the women's movement when the dance is at its climax, when it is going so fast that it is hard to hold on. The woman's effort is emphasized in the poem: she is "stretching too hard". The other women's joy is emphasized, leaving the stretching woman out: is she not happy, is she left out? The fact that she is trying so hard might point to that.

The tallest woman, who I believe is the one farthest left, sends out "spirals of glee" and has a fire that keeps the dance going:

> Spirals of glee sail from the arms
> of the tallest woman. She pulls
> the circle around with her fire.

This stanza is full of motion and life: "spirals of glee" emanate from the tall woman, her fire "pulls the circle around", and she is filled with inner energy and power, manifested as "a green burning torch" in her torso. The two final stanzas increase the sense of motion and temporal flux. "Breasts swell and multiply", "rhythms rise to a gallop" in the third stanza and in the last, the one who lost her grip is urged to hurry: otherwise she might not catch up. Here the knitting metaphor is back: "the stitch is forever lost", the dance will "unravel". In its place a black sun – some kind of black hole or antimatter? – will swirl.

The poem is filled with dynamic verbs, such as *stretching*, *hurry*, *swirl*, *grab*, *dance* and *pull*. The only spatial description is that of the grass mounds. The temporal expressions in the last stanza ("before the stitch is forever

lost", "before the dance unravels") underline the accelerating tempo of the poem.

An ekphrastic text representing [a static source image representing temporality] resulting in a static effect

Wisława Szymborska: "Frozen Motion"

This isn't Miss Duncan, the noted danseuse?
Not the drifting cloud, the wafting zephyr, the Bacchante,
moonlit waters, waves swaying, breezes sighing?

Standing this way, in the photographer's atelier,
heftily, fleshily wrested from music and motion,
she's cast to the mercies of a pose,
forced to bear false witness.

Thick arms raised above her head,
a knotted tree knee protrudes from her short tunic,
left leg forward, naked foot and toes,
with 5 (count them) toenails.

One short step from eternal art into artificial eternity –
I reluctantly admit that it's better than nothing
and more fitting than otherwise.

Behind the screen, a pink corset, a handbag,
in it a ticket for a steamship
leaving tomorrow, that is, sixty years ago;
never again, but still at nine a.m. sharp.

The poem "Frozen Motion" (first published in 1975) begins with a presentation of its object: "This isn't Miss Duncan, the noted danseuse?"[13] Isadora Duncan was a famous dancer who lived between 1877 and 1927. In many pho-

13 An exact translation from Polish of the first line reads "Miss Duncan, the danseuse".

tographs, she is depicted in the middle of a dance with shawls, long gowns, and long pieces of cloth, a style that is also represented in the poem: "drifting cloud, the wafting zephyr, the Bacchante, / moonlit waters, waves swaying, breezes sighing?" The description refers, I would say, both to her appearance and her way of dancing, which was unusual in its time, inspired by Hellenistic ideals and an idea of natural movement.[14] Even though we do not have the source image, it is not a wild guess that it is similar to many photographs of her dancing, and what they have in common is that they try to capture either movement or a frozen moment, or movement *through* a frozen moment. The poem however concerns itself with what is actually taking place in the atelier, where the picture is taken.

The described creative process strives to show an arrested moment, but we now know that it is a lie: There is no dance taking place, no music:

> Standing this way, in the photographer's atelier,
> Heftily, fleshily wrested from music and motion,
> She's cast to the mercies of a pose,
> Forced to bear false witness.

Her whole posture becomes a lie, since she is taken away from the dancer's natural environment, forced to imitate her own movements without moving at all. Thus the camera did not capture a moment in time, rescued from motion; it captured an *imitation* of such a moment. It is perhaps not the same thing to begin with, but it *becomes* the same thing: a dancer's frozen motion. Therefore, I think it is correct to define this ekphrasis as a static source image representing temporality, resulting in a static effect. We would definitely include motion and virtual time in our interpretation of such a photograph, but the ekphrasis focuses on the opposite: the stasis of the whole situation. It even underlines the transformation: "One short step from eternal art into artificial eternity". The poem ends with a paradox that puts focus on the issue of the "eternal now" that is often associated with photography: "leaving tomorrow, that is, sixty years ago; / never again, but still at nine a.m. sharp."

14 Cf. http://www.isadoraduncan.org/the-foundation/about-isadora-duncan [accessed 31. 1. 2014].

This paradox also points to the contradiction of a temporal expression that does not promote temporality but enhances stasis.

There is no narrative drive in the poem; it consists of a description which first names the subject matter of the photograph and then the associations the poetic I makes in connection to the dancer: a drifting cloud, waves, moonlight et cetera. In the third stanza her pose is described:

> Thick arms raised above her head,
> A knotted tree knee protrudes from her short tunic,
> Left leg forward, naked foot and toes,
> with 5 (count them) toenails.

The description of the dancer is detailed and points to her immobility: her "thick arms" that are lifted above her head, her protruding kneecap, and the left leg with its five toenails (the specific detail with the toenails underlines the detailed character of the photograph and is probably not something one would notice or think of if one looked at her while she was dancing).[15] In contrast to the associations with motion in the first stanza, and something that drifts and sways, there is no representation of movement in the description in the third stanza; here she is already "wrested from music and motion": the photograph has turned her into a static object.

Concluding remarks

Clearly there are differences between media, but the difference between verbal printed text and visual, static, iconic media is not simply that one is temporal and the other atemporal. On the modality level, they are both materially static, and they can both represent temporality, although by different means. The describer's choice regarding static and dynamic texts must once again be emphasized. Even though some images are perhaps more suitable for a narrative description and others more suited for a static description, there is always the choice of resisting the narrative or static impulse and doing it differently. Research has shown that there are different types of describers, but I do not think that we are limited to our own cognitive inclina-

15 In the original language, the word "five" is put in brackets after the number 5, which underlines the detailed character of the photograph, also captured in the translation.

tions, especially not in the aesthetic process of transforming pictures into words.

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Description and its subject: through the eyes of the observer*

Stanislava Fedrová

"We depend on the 'eyes' we are seeing with – narrator, character, implied author," writes Seymour Chatman in his analysis of the narrative space (1980: 102). If we think his hypothesis through to the end then we clearly ought to introduce the category of the descriptor, i.e. the one who watches, or from whose point of view the description is presented. This way the description might rise in the esteem of narratologists… But let us admit straight away that a category of this kind, ranging from the perspective of an omniscient narrator to that of a psychophysical character in a fictional world, would inevitably have such fuzzy outlines that it would ultimately not help us too much. However, what clearly does make sense is to distinguish between the "manner of seeing" and the extent to which these "eyes" are deployed, including the subtler distinctions between full utilization of the character's point of view and its seepage into the predominating voice of the omniscient narrator, together with the processes whereby these perspectives alternate. The subsequent text will analyse cases involving the differentiation of the observing instance and the strengthening of the role of the observer / perceiver's character, resulting in the subjectivization of the act of perception.

The very words observation and seeing or mental visualization refer to the predominating (although certainly not the only) sensory feature of description, and the visual characteristics in particular will also be the subject

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of subsequent analyses. Nevertheless, seeing and the observation method are definitely not just something "innocent" or "natural", as they are influenced, or directly determined, by cultural codes, period fashion, philosophical roots (we will observe a case like that using the example of a text by Josef Čapek) or the ideology and changes in the techniques and technologies of seeing as well. We must always keep this aspect in mind.

If the matter is considered from a narratological basis this usually leads to a truncated view of description: in an attempt to define description on the basis of opposition to the chronological order of narrative, Ruth Ronen excludes the observer's standpoint from it (Ronen 1977: 277). On the other hand, Werner Wolf and Marie-Laure Ryan, who focus more on the effects of description in the process of mental visualization of the world being depicted, admit the institution of the observer or even understand it as a possible procedure that leads to the enhancement of the experiential qualities of description. *Experienciality*[1] as an evocation of our experience of perception from the actual world (in the words of Wolf) evokes an *aesthetic illusion*, i.e. the impression that the perceiver is experiencing the object or world described as credible (Wolf 2013: 32), both in a sensory and an emotional way. Both lead to successful mental visualization of that which is described, which was considered to be a basic function of description even by ancient theoreticians of rhetoric and ekphrasis.[2] Ryan shifts this "quasi-experience" to different forms of *immersion* in a fictional world experienced by a reader. She believes that spatial immersion is enhanced by inter alia the fluid blending of perspectives, e.g. the sense perception of the observer on the scene with the reflections presented by the narrator (Ryan 2001: 132).

Additionally, Wolf refers to the relationship between the observer's perspective and the motivation behind placing the description in the text and the linking of "descriptions to the internal perspective of 'focalizers' or 'reception figures'. Characters looking out of a window, men gazing at themselves while shaving in front of a mirror, tourists admiring a scenic landscape,

1 This subject is dealt with in detail by Alice Jedličková's study on pp. 154–172 of this publication.

2 For more details cf. the study by Heidrun Führer – Bernadette Banaszkiewicz on pp. 45–75 of this publication.

all of this can serve as a justification for a plausible insertion of a description into a narrative whole" (Wolf 2013: 93).

Taking the observer's instance as her nodal point, Ellen Esrock then proceeds furthest from the aesthetic illusion and immersion towards cognitive exploration in her monograph *The Reader's Eye: Visual Imagining as Reader Response* (1994). She bases her research on a combination of empirical research involving cognitive psychology and neurology together with readers' introspective testimonies. Esrock believes that the visual effectiveness of the text and the visualization effect in the reader's mind is not so much encouraged by the frequency or by the extent of individual descriptions of landscapes or characters, as by much subtler detail, including an emphasis on *acts of visual perception* and the associated words (e.g. look, observe, follow, glimpse) expressing the fact that something is to be seen. She says that if we translate the "seeing is believing" rule into the act of reading then the reader's mental visualization of what the character sees is realized, not because the reader identifies with the character, but because displaying the process of seeing and that which is seen in the fictional world help to individualize the fictional world (Esrock 1994: 184).

The observer and the simultaneity of perception

In this excerpt from "Procházka" ("The Walk") by Josef Čapek, published in *Almanach na rok 1914* (Almanach for 1914, 1913), we can point to the accumulation of several processes expressing the observer's perspective and leading to an enhancement in the experiential nature of the description. The plot component in this short fiction is limited to a kind of synecdoche of love: the character "taking the walk" meets a girl, they exchange a couple of comments, for a while they continue together and then go their separate ways. The dominant feature in the text structure is its descriptive function, the description of the *process of perception* of the landscape.

> Along the bright way, place after place, moving forward on the dusty road I proceed on my walk:
> the ditches of dirty water run alongside the road, while further along to the side there are daisies, swaying white flowers in the grass, and in the ditches and round the receding telegraph poles the sparrows cry, under

> the metal arch of the sky a great bird traces its path as it sets down its raucous call;
> Bearing down on each point with each ray, and on each atom with all its rays, the sun warms the entire space until it is filled up to the very last place –
> To right and to left I leave things behind: hillocks, houses, a speeding train, one glance, one gesture and on again and then here they are again,
> trees with gushing leaves, quiet greenery in shuddery motion, as a gentle wind moves across it, sharply serrated leaves with subtly cut indentations, as if made of paper, while everyone recognizes one tree by its lack of motion – the linden,
> and then again greenery merging into the distance –
>
> (Čapek 1913: 39)

At first glance two techniques for expressing the immediate experience are revealed: the first-person narration, by using which the narrator identifies with the individualized and subjective perspective of the observer-character, and present-tense narration, which Ryan classifies among the procedures that enhance the effect of immersion (Ryan 2001: 135–137). In the context of prewar modernism the present form is not yet hackneyed, and may also be associated with Henri Bergson's philosophy, which was very fashionable at that time,[3] inspiring not only the Čapek brothers, but also other authors involved in the loose grouping around *Almanach*. We can interpret the meaning of this fiction by Čapek by using Bergson's concept of time as duration, a continuous flow which bears previous instants within itself, on the basis of the "event of love" at the end and the leave-taking of both characters. The event is a instant on the way and the walk-way continues, it goes on. "This is the present which endures" (Bergson 2003: 165).

But what are the other, subtler nuances in the formation of the observer's perspective? One basic aspect here is the inclusion of several senses in the act of perception. Visual stimuli certainly predominate, but in addition the

3 In a review of the Czech translation of Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, accompanying an analysis of this work to mark the philosopher's birthday (1920), Karel Čapek recalls the crowds that thronged Bergson's lectures at Collège de France, when he and his brother were staying in Paris (Čapek 1985: 186).

auditory (the sparrows, the large bird, by implication a train) is also stressed and besides the traditional five basic senses there is also perception of heat (the sun) and the movement of the air (or its effect on the movement of flowers and leaves). The inclusion of the last two in particular leads to the realization of experientiality as a quasi-mimetic evocation of our experience of perception from the actual world. The landscape description in this excerpt is clearly formed through the *optics of the observer* in motion, i.e. the experience of the walker, who is not engaged in any other mental activity, but simply fully perceiving the space around himself. This dynamized perception involves ditches that "run", and "receding" telegraph poles, which is a metaphorical expression for the convergence of perspective lines, which change in line with the moving observer's viewpoint. It is also matched by the rapid shift of attention between the individual sections of the route and the phenomena that attract the observer's eye. The walker's gaze does not omit highly detailed observation, e.g. of the tiny indentations on the linden leaves, which is then immediately followed by a view of the distance, in which the green tree shadows merge together – i.e. the change of focus that is associated with distance. Even, or especially, within this descriptive passage, we are following a literary reference to the Bergsonian concept of time as the simultaneity of instants. For movement and perception of change in general, Bergson stresses the division of this process into states, as only this "enables us to act on things. In practice it is useful to be more interested in states than in change itself" (Bergson 2003: 158). Representation of the perception of the act of walking in Čapek's prose is determined by the depiction of the simultaneity of states, which only form change – perception of space in motion, and thus in Bergson's words, in duration. This text construction technique evokes an experience in the reader's mind and aims to make him share this way of perceiving.

It should be added that the previous example shows the perspective of an observer as it were "in full regalia" and at many levels. Hence it would be useful to follow individual literary devices even in cases where they are not so evident, and in their more subtle hues. Čapek's later fiction *Stín kapradiny* (Shadow of the Bracken, 1930) is always referred to in the same breath as the most epic, the most eventful of his often meditative texts. Without wishing to cast any doubt on this, I would add that the quantity, the important role and the impressiveness of the descriptive passages cannot be denied.

This clearly follows from the role of the forest area in the storyworld – for the couple of poachers fleeing from the justice of the human world it is first of all a refuge and a safe place, subsequently turning into a labyrinth and a prison from which they cannot escape, a source of fear and punishment. In the narrator's basic diction in the text, he is clearly defined as an omniscient and all-seeing instance. The descriptive passages thus seemingly do not have their observer within the fictional world and are presented from the point of view of the narrator. However, this technique is systematically disrupted. At the first level by the active perception of the characters, particularly their perception of space. It is these references to the characters' standpoints that are frequently framed by the descriptive passages, as the narrator's voice depicts their perception of the surroundings. "Exhilarated by the beauty and the power of the forest, Ruda looks for ways to show his blood-deep understanding" (Čapek 2005: 107); "The forest they had entered struck Vašek as somehow strange. What do I find so strange about this forest? Something – but what is it? Why, it's as if I've already been here" (ibid.: 197). The boundary between the character and the narrator is actually breached by the dialogue (cf. Opelík 1980: 195–199), which pervades the entire text – what this means regarding the shift of perspective towards the character is evident in the second excerpt quoted. Besides, the actual distribution of descriptive passages is determined by the movement and action of both characters.

> Ruda and Vašek *run up* to the skirts of the forest […] and hop, they *put* the forest *behind them*.
> These forest skirts are often curious and pleasing in their own way. On the one side you have open landscape, while the forest looms up on the other […] Beneath the bushy border the yellow primrose and liverwort blooms in spring, and then in summer the bluebell, briza and dianthus. Here and further down among the festuca and thrift, the two wild runners came rushing at a rough gallop like a wild wind, like stampeded cattle, like two rolling stones. Look out! *hisses* Ruda and they *are already there*, where the cornflower, tares and field scabious begin; watch out! You poor world of mine! Oh, we have taken on more than we could chew: hey, why don't you look round better! Old Čepelků comes *shuffling along here* after all with his little hoe under his arm.
>
> (Čapek 2005: 100; highlighted by SF)

This passage indeed leaves a dynamic or even dramatic impression (as shown by the presence of plot elements highlighted in the excerpt), but its basic gesture is descriptive (while the descriptive passage has been abbreviated in the excerpt). It might even be said with only some exaggeration that here it is more a case of the narrative "cutting into" the description rather than the other way round, i.e. that the description halts the narrative flow or slows down the tempo of the narrative, as is suggested by the narratological simplification based on Genette's classification of narrative tempi (cf. the fifth chapter of his *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 1988). We can easily see the boundary between the description and the narration, but of course this does not mean it would be possible to remove it without doing harm to the development of the plot. And who is "observing" in this descriptive passage? It is clearly constructed within the narrator's mode: the time of the narration does not match the time of the narrated, and the focus on the details of the plants and the transition between the forest and the sunbathed meadows resists the speed of movement of the potential observers. And ultimately the narrator here is not just all-seeing, but also all-knowing. He does not only present the text from the standpoint of the present moment of observation, i.e. what grows in that environment at that moment, but he distinguishes the plants that bloom in different seasons. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a descriptive passage here is motivated by the plot development – in simple terms, the description of the skirts of the forest is not inserted directly into the character's speech,[4] but definitely in the passage where the character is depicted running up to the forest skirts in the story. Together with the aforementioned dialogue form of the text in the speech between the characters, or just in the character's reflective monologue, emphasis is placed on the observer's standpoint and the motivation behind the inclusion of the description in the text.

The excerpt also makes another narrative device clear that holds the reader's interest with the effect of "immersion", as depicted by Ryan: "For immersion to retain its intensity, it needs a contrast of narrative modes,

4 This is clearly evident for the first descriptive passage, while in the case of the second, shorter one ("where the cornflower, tares and field scabious begin") the mode of dialogue between the characters is only separated by a semicolon.

a constantly renegotiated distance from narrative scene, a profile made of peaks and valleys"(Ryan 2001: 137). In the text as a whole present-tense narrative indeed predominates and there are significantly fewer verbs in the past tense, but change is always very dynamic, often with the seam between the two narrative tenses located in one sentence. Alternation of time levels from the past to the present draws the reader from the *now* moment of the narration to the *now* of the storyworld, thus again restoring the aesthetic illusion of present perception.

Between the perspective of the narrator and the character, or: Who is actually doing the seeing here?

We can often follow the onset of perspectivized observation even where an omniscient third-person narrator clearly plays the leading role in traditional realist prose. Even here the perspective of the (potential) observer's character seeps in subtle hints into the narrator's discourse. One example of this can be found in Jirásek's Chronicle *F. L. Věk* (1890–1897): the second chapter of the second volume (1895) is an open scene set in Příkopy in Prague; the all-*seeing* narrator has a panoramic view of the muddy snow-spattered street. Eventually a man enters his field of vision, whose age and social background are identified in the thorough description of his rustic garb, his lined face and hunched figure. Contrasting with this figure there are subsequently some fleeting glimpses of other figures in the street, but only selected items of their clothing, i.e. those meant to represent the characteristics of "town dwellers".

> The farmer did not notice them so much as the horses and carriages, particularly a noble, glazed, yellow one with a black roof and a crimson-bedecked, golden-tasselled coach-box, behind which two servants in gallooned hats and fine long fur coats stood on a board between the rear wheels, holding onto shiny rings on the carriage roof. At this moment a man about town also crossed the street, holding an extended umbrella above his hat, which was obviously new and in the fashionable "en pain de sucre" style, and above his double-collared overcoat. (Jirásek 1951: 27)

Thus the observation implicitly and by suggestion shifts to the horizon of the character – the change in perspective is justified by the character's inter-

est both in the horse and carriage, and in the umbrella, a thing that was "still quite rare at that time" (ibid.), as the narrator immediately adds, indicating the distance in time between his discourse and the character's standpoint. The very choice of objects to be described is in some sense "directed" by the character's point of view – the farmer is naturally interested in horses and carriages, and he sees an umbrella for the first time. Moreover, the farmer's interest becomes a source for the transformation from mere ongoing action to an event: he fastens his gaze to such an extent that he does not notice the traffic on the street and almost has an accident with a passing hackney carriage.

Besides the hidden perspectivization and the description brought about by the subjective choice of objects observed, the character's horizon also emerges in the depiction of his mood, his personal assessment and the involvement of the circumstances of his perception. It is in this way that the first, or rather the first more perceptive, meeting between Věk and his future bride Márinka is presented at a Sunday mass in the gallery:

> There was the sopranist now, a slim girl, as handsome as could be, barely sixteen years old, with slender shoulders and in a bright, new dress with ribbons on the shoulders, a fresh-faced doll, groomed in a way that her fine, still almost childish forehead could be fully seen. Holding a small bunch of southernwood, reseda and opening roses in her left hand, *she proceeded a little on tiptoes, to see over the lectern* on the loft balustrade down into the church, on the baroque altars of which the abundant linden branches shone green, while vases of live flowers stood out simply, most of them with roses, peonies and golden lilies. And *down there on the pews* and amongst them it was like a poppy field full of coats of various colours.
> Above at the main altar on reserved benches the Sunday best cloaks of the councillors and foremost neighbours shone white, while below the local women's golden caps glittered with their broad starched ribbons, while among them the rustic pinners, decorative kerchiefs, motley scarves and vivid tones of the young town and country women's clothes stood out white. *The echo of steps of people continually arriving, the coughing of the old, the hum of the dense crowd, as well as the sounds from the instruments being tuned in the gallery* carried through the empty space of the church, which was *lit up*

> *mostly in the chancel by the long bundles of spring rays*, which fell on it through the old Gothic windows.
> *Because of this hum and the mix of voices,* old Snížková's granddaughter, standing by the soprano, did not immediately hear that somebody next to her by the tenor had stood up. *Věk's gaze fixed on her. Her appearance pleased him*, and then, *having turned round*, she pointedly stopped still, a sudden flush spilling over her young face, as he greeted her affably without meaning to do so, and then *continued to pay her attention and address her, which he would hardly have been likely to do any other time*.
>
> (ibid.: 199–200; highlighted by SF)

The perspective of the omniscient narrator is disrupted here not only by the repeated references to the observation itself, but also to the emphasis on the horizon of both characters. The introductory careful description of the girl's appearance is justified by the man's liking for her, and the passage otherwise concludes with an indication of the subsequent plot development in the awakening feelings between both protagonists. The presence of the two characters in the scene makes one of them, i.e. Věk, who arrives later, the implicit observer.[5] However, the steadfastness of his gaze is also justified by his own actual mood – in the previous scene he is excited by the observation (and description) of awakening nature in springtime and so arrives at the gallery in a joyous, festive mood, even though originally he "very much did not want to" (ibid.: 199). The shift towards the other observer is also impressive: after she has been described, she herself becomes an observer and it is from her viewpoint on tiptoes "to see over the lectern", that the atmosphere of the holy mass in the church is evoked. Characteristically, we are not provided with a full description of the persons, but together with Márinka we only get to see their headwear, which viewed from above forms something like colourful smudges. This description from the girl's viewpoint is also affected by the circumstances and conditions of perception, her mood and concentration: both her preoccupation itself and the hum in the church mean that at first she does not even notice the new arrival. The visual sphere is again affected by the sunrays, thanks to which attention is focused primar-

5 For other examples of this technique, which is typical of Jirásek see the article by Alice Jedličková in this volume, pp. 154–172.

ily on the illuminated areas – thus, mainly white pieces of clothing (e.g. the cloaks, pinners, ribbons and kerchiefs) and golden ones (the caps) are paid attention, and the "vivid" nature of the colours of the young girls' clothes is highlighted.

Another nuance of detail which highlights the role of the character as an observer might be the alternation of perspectives. In Rais's *Západ* (Sunset, 1899) many of the descriptive passages are "seen" from a panoramic narrator's overview (cf. Fedrová – Jedličková 2011: 36–37). In places, however, a character's viewpoint intervenes, particularly in observations of the landscape – whether it is perceived during movement through the terrain, or in views from a window. Towards the end of the text the number of these situations increases, due to the increasingly weakened health of the old parish priest, whose contact with the region he loves thus remains limited to a slice seen through his window (e.g. Rais 2004: 168, 180, 237–238). And this slice or observer's viewpoint, not the overview of an omniscient "all-seeing" narrator, truly determines what is to be seen. From the bed the priest sees through the window "the school walls, the skeletons of trees in the garden and at the back a part of the forest, all in the jolliest sunlight" (ibid.: 168), and it is only when he limps with assistance to a chair by the window that the view opens out wide and in contrast to the previous uniform sunshine, the details now emerge, with colours and their hues and changes ("he looked out onto the forest, whose green played out into yellow", ibid.). The aforementioned alternation of perspectives within a short section, an important element of narrative dramatization, is evident, for example, in the scene where the old priest and his young relative, a theology student who has come to visit, bask in the morning sunlight on a bench. Again the framework for the scene is provided by an omniscient narrator, with a truly panoramic view from the church tower across the crowns of the trees to the detail of the wagtail that "flew into the garden, scurried closer and closer up the trampled path and lowering its little grey-white head, eyed both of them blackly" (ibid.: 208). This focus on detail within the characters' field of view changes the perspective, as is confirmed in any case by the dialogue of both characters based on their observation:

> The priest looked at the wagtail and laughed drily.
> "It's a pleasure to behold," the theologian continued. "In our part of the country almost everything would have withered by now – here I see a new spring and I rejoice."
> The old man made a more energetic motion and clasped his arm. "But then everything here is poorer than over there, isn't it? Oh, I remember how the blossoming trees covered all the roofs and the slopes were just a mass of white. […]" (ibid.)

The description temporarily settles in the character's mode of speech, and the priest continues to describe the springtime landscape both as a whole and in detail. The character moves from the detail currently being observed to a description of the landscape in his memory, i.e. the description of a kind of "mental landscape", formed by his experience and his capacities of recall. As a result not only the spatial, but also the chronological element of his perspective is altered.

Ekphrasis: between the observer and the interpreter

The following focus on ekphrastic texts and ekphrastic passages in modern fiction will enable us to comprehend another aspect associated with the deployment of an observer character as a mediator of experientiality and the creator of the potential for reader's immersion, i.e. with a distinction between the *mode of observation* and the *mode of interpretation*. The main task of the observer in the ekphrastic text is to provide the reader with a world of visual representation. However this vision is not objective or mediated by an "innocent eye": it is always necessary to ask regarding the intention of the ekphrasis.

There may be a dual reason for the more subtle distinction in perspective between the observer characters in the ekphrastic texts. In the first place the texts themselves in my view give rise to a need to follow the angles of observation associated with the way the nature of the character is presented or the interpretation of the text as a whole comes across. This distinction also appears to be of fundamental importance from the standpoint of the more general literary theory discussion on the opposition of description and interpretation. The sharp distinction between the mode of observation versus interpretation is typical of arts history discourse, simply because ekphrastic

texts are found in the very origins of that discipline. Of course, here ekphrasis is understood to be "pure" uninterpretative description. Art historian and theoretician David Carrier even postulates a possible line of development in discipline *from ekphrasis*, which evokes a work (Giorgio Vasari), *to description* associated with the analysis of a style (Heinrich Wölflin) and *interpretation* (modern art history). He associates ekphrasis primarily with subjects that have a verbal pre-text, which ekphrasis of a work of art basically just renarrate (ekphrasis as "verbal recreation of a painting" – Carrier 1987: 20), while interpretation also deals with the composition, visual sources and symbolic meaning of the work. However, the following examples will show that ekphrasis need not at all relate to a verbal pre-text of a visual work of art, and may deal in detail with composition and semantic issues resulting from visual representation. And from the standpoint of the area of interest of this study it can be confirmed that a dividing line cannot be drawn between ekphrasis and interpretation, because ekphrasis has or can have a strongly interpretative nature closely bound to the viewpoint of the mediating character, i.e. the person who is describing the visual work in the text.

In his monograph *Patterns of Intention* (1985), focusing on historical changes in the way pictures are interpreted, Michael Baxandall writes that "description [of a picture] is a representation of thinking about a picture more than a representation of a picture" (Baxandall 1985: 5), thus reacting inter alia to the broader discussion on the relationship between description and interpretation, which is also recapitulated by Werner Wolf, who notes that in the humanities (apart from philosophy), description is more frequently placed in opposition to interpretation than to exposition (Wolf 2007: 12). Out of Wolf's distinction between three basic functions of descriptivity what is of primary importance for us here is the third, description as a procedure mediating objective information rather than interpretation or exposition. Hence literary description not only strengthens the aesthetic illusion, but it also gives the impression that "the possible world in question refers to *the* reality as we believe to know it" (ibid.: 17; highlighted by WW). However, by introducing this pseudo-objective function, Wolf is also reacting to the previous discussion, in which one extreme position entails a requirement for descriptive objectivity, which excludes any interpretation. The opposite extreme position is taken by Michael Riffaterre, who says that the main function of literary description "is not to make the reader see

something […], and it is not [an attempt] to present an external reality […], but to dictate interpretation" (Riffaterre 1981: 125). Wolf takes issue with Riffaterre's denial of the experiential function of descriptivity, but basically agrees that in view of the nature of the text as an intentional construct, descriptive representation is not an "innocent matter", but serves some objective and is thus incorporated into the text structure.

Ekphrasis as a verbalization of the perceptive act is thus always a description with a certain intention, and as such it clearly cannot be purely uninterpretative. However, the question arises as to when its diction is explicitly interpretative and when it merely "programs" the reader's interpretation – even though here we should obviously speak of points on an imaginary scale rather than of clear opposites.

The pole of "pure observation", in which the character of the observer in an ekphrastic passage withdraws to a maximum extent from the interpretative mode, can be followed in an example taken from Hrabal's novel *Harlekýnovy miliony* (Harlequin's Millions, 1981). The situation is determined by the environment of an old people's home, which is located in the baroque building of a one-time chateau. "I have been in this old folk's home for a week now and I never stop being amazed" (Hrabal 1994: 197). The chief protagonist Maryška, who provides her voice for the first-person narration, is a character in a permanent state of astonishment. Her position as a newcomer is of course predisposed for the role of an enchanted observer: "Everybody who comes to the chateau as a pensioner has to see everything and go round everything in the first days," (ibid.: 227). With excited absorption she discovers the allegorical statues of the months and the seasons amongst others in the garden and likewise she refers to the frescoes on the chateau ceilings. The ekphrastic passages associated with the frescoes are distributed throughout the text – not, of course, at random, but in places where they serve as a foil for "mundane" events or situations, i.e. for events and happenings of the "actual fictional" world, or their interpretation in the mind of the protagonist.

We can describe *Harlekýnovy miliony* – at least from that viewpoint – as an *observation novel*. All the occupants of the home follow one another, and there are repeated scenes in which characters lean out of their windows, so as not to miss what is taking place in the courtyard, while those lying enviously follow those walking and the like. It is basically not possible to avoid the mutual surveillance. However, this many-sidedness of the observation relates

exclusively to the human world, whereas the inhabitants of the home are entirely indifferent to the space in which they live. To be more precise, that is the way they are perceived by the narrator, making her peculiarity stand out all the more. In relation to the frescoes the Maryška character is their only observer, or the only one who really perceives them. She herself repeatedly points out her privileged and isolated position: "nobody looks up, not even Francin. I am the only one who looks and marvels at what I see, what I witness" (ibid.: 266). For example, this is the way of introducing the ekphrasis of one of the frescoes depicting a group of naked women surrounded by flying cupids (ibid.: 262–263) and located on the ceiling of the room for the elderly who cannot walk any more. For women who are much closer to death than she is, the picture above their heads does not break through into other time levels as it does for Maryška. They simply do not notice it. The difference in their vision is determined by the absence of preoccupation or involvement: the elderly see, but they do not observe, they are not involved – in contrast to Maryška's steadfast, enchanted, compassionate observation.

The role of the observing character in Hrabal's novel is associated with her physical affectivity, for Maryška's observation and description of the frescoes is almost always associated with physical movement, in which the individual details of the picture only gradually emerge, or the observer only gradually notices them. I believe it is this *power of the affectivity of the body in association with an emphasis on the observer character and the act of observation, as well as the multifaceted sensory nature of the description stimulating the reader's imagination.* The reader is confronted with a situation involving sensory perception just as the observer is, thus becoming a second-degree observer.

The observer in Hrabal's novel describes the visual representations and experiences his observation, *but does not interpret it, does not explain and no longer allegorizes what is seen in her report on what she sees*. The represented fresco scenes are rather unclear from the iconographic viewpoint: some raise questions regarding what they might be about ("above them there were dozens of naked women floating and drifting in pure sensuality" – ibid.: 261), while in others such as the dances of fauns and nymphs it can be assumed that a scene of this kind might have a mythological pre-text, but need not necessarily. The fresco descriptions are really detailed, including colour, expression and interrelations of the characters, composition of scenes and spatial arrangements – the mental visualization of the picture

represented in the reader's mind, i.e. the basic requirement from the old rhetorical tradition of the genre is easily fulfilled in this case, but the observer protagonist is not in the least interested in the story that is the mythological or literary pre-text for the scene, which would be a fairly common ekphrastic gesture, as well as a didactic and semiotic one, i.e. programming culturally conventional meanings, whereas Maryška employs a projection of her life experience.

The reason behind the lack of interpretative bias in Hrabal's descriptions lies in the fact that the primary foil, which determins the visual representation, is the either contrasting or in some way harmonizing action going on beneath the fresco, in the "mundane sphere", or in another, at the level of the story, in the "actual" fictional world; another alternative foil is an opening onto the past of the storyworld. For example, arching above the reclining women who are now close to death, there is a fresco depicting nymphs who are looking out for their groom. Such scenes observed in parallel, are just added next to the ekprases of the frescoes, like any other observed scene. From the standpoint of the main observer character, this connection or possible allegorization is not in any way postulated. Hence it is left to the reader to interpret and link up the two levels.

In opposition to the example of Hrabal's non-interpreting observer there are ekphrastic texts where the role is highlighted of the observer character as interpreter, gradually building up and layering an interpretation of the picture. This position is decidedly more frequent and certainly comes closer to the tradition of the ekphrasis genre – as not even Philostratus was concerned with a thorough and vivid description, but ultimately also with an interpretation and exposition of the picture. In the novel by Jaroslav Maria *Světice, dámy a děvky* (Saints, Ladies and Girls, 1927) Giorgione's famous painting *The Tempest* is the focus of the plot – as the observer and mediator of the ekphrasis is a psychophysical character of the story, the chief protragonist Antonie, whose gradually forming interpretation of the picture reflects back on her own conduct and self-perception, with the story developing and unfolding from her interpretation of the relation between the two figures in the picture. This interpretation of a real work of art is offered to the reader as the key to interpreting the psychology of the characters and the story as a whole. (For more details see the interpretation in Fedrová – Jedličková 2010: 45–53.)

In Maria's novel we may – if only allusively – follow the subtle shift in the description of the visual work associated with an interpretation involving the characters of three different observers of the painting. The possibilities of this technique are in a way taken to the limit in a short story by František Langer "Muzeum tety Laury" (Aunt Laura's Museum), which comes at the end of the posthumously published *Malířské povídky* (Painter's Stories, 1966). Here, too, the observer's interpretative viewpoint is not only given an important place, but there is also a confrontation between the perception and interpretation of one and the same work of art in the minds and expositions of several observers. Langer's story is a rather exceptional example of an ekphrastic relationship towards abstract art;[6] much more frequently ekphrastic texts present the representation of the art of mimetic, traditional figurative painting, whether relating to scenes, landscapes or still-lifes. This very fact is the basis for highlighting the role of various interpretations: e.g. of a painter who is to assess the work of a dilettante abstract painter, and the children from the neighbourhood, who liked to look in at Aunt Laura's pictures and listen to the life stories that she told as she painted. It is only thanks to their observation and exposition that the painter begins to consider the pictures differently. (For more details see the interpretation in Fedrová 2010: 253–256.) All the characters in the story are modelled in such a way as to tell in some way of their subjective observing experience of abstract art, and to present alternatives for interpretation. Langer's story – and here he moves the function of the character observing and interpreting the visual representation in an ekphrastic text a step further in comparison with the previous example from Maria's novel – and presents three different approaches. Basically, these correspond more generally to the fundamental options whereby an observer forms an ekphrastic text (in other words, whereby we too as onlookers in our general human experience relate to visual representations): the correlation with another visual representation or pictorial model, the underpinning of the narrative foil and the associative play with the form of the seen. The choice of any one of these options basically depends on the intention of the specific ekphrasis within its context, as well as on the observer's general proclivities.

6 Another example of this limited set of texts might be the poem by Nancy Sullivan "Number 1 by Jackson Pollock" (1965).

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The chariot of Thespis*

Zdeněk Hrbata

The journey topos

A symbolic leitmotif appears throughout the film adaptation (1943) of Théophile Gautier's famous novel *Captain Fracasse* (*Le Capitaine Fracasse*, 1863), directed by Abel Gance. To the dramatic accompaniment of music by Arthur Honegger, a sequence repeats in which a wheel turns on a vehicle, which is somewhat theatrically and exaltedly referred to in the novel as the "Chariot of Thespis". What is important and essential to the plot here is that this metaphorical association has been used in modern times to designate any band of strolling players, and equally importantly within this narrative, this is also an actual vehicle travelling from Gascony to Paris in the 17th century in the reign of Louis XIII.

The vehicle is both the figurative Chariot of Thespis and an actual means of transport with all the actors' property – a wagon loaded with props, sets and costumes. First it is drawn by slow oxen, then by four horses, then by a single half-dead horse and finally by two strong draught horses, which are well equipped, as the novel stresses, and fine beasts. This detailed list may appear pedantic, but by quoting it I hope to indicate the finely-tuned semantic sophistication behind the actors' journey in Gautier's novel.

Of course, the changing draught animals clearly illustrate the actors' living reality and the Wheel of Fortune, which perhaps in their case turns a lit-

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tle too quickly. The relentless cycle of hope – happiness – decline – death – rebirth often moves the story forward towards naturalistic scenes. However, these disrupt the effects of what Gautier in his study of Baudelaire calls "un rayon à la Rembrandt" or "un trait de grandesse à la Velasquez" in the context of "la difformité sordide" (Gautier 1868: 22). And in accordance with the principle behind these poetics, a kind of double exposure of the landscape is made, along with a kind of double image of the being or event concerned. In brief, the cruelty of individual fates and stories framed or affected by the landscape is imbued with poetry.

The actors' wagon enters this landscape with a different role to its usual function as a means of transport and a dwelling, or to that of its figurative meanings: a) it "is" the actor's troop; b) it is a "vehicle" for the story in the sense that for some time it "carries" it through space-time. The wagon is closely associated with the journey, not only with its grimness during winter travels, but above all with the symbolism, for which the vehicle becomes the core. Bakhtin's journey chronotope as a higher structural level is of exceptional import here, facilitating and staging meetings, confrontations and adventures, and showing the direction, the destination and effort; but then the vehicle itself on the road is also highlighted.

> Ce chariot poursuivant son voyage symbolisait la vie, qui avance toujours sans s'inquiéter de ceux qui ne peuvent suivre et restent mourants ou morts dans les fossés. (Gautier 1922: 223)

This figurative characterization at a specific place in the plot, amidst bitter moments of travelling, both summarizes retrospectively and anticipates manifestations of the remorseless energy of life and times of courage and death.

Episodes co-determined by three sujet components, the vehicle proceeding with difficulty with all its aforementioned meanings and functions (people/actors, transport, symbol), the journey and the environment/landscape, indicating the chief romanesque genres in the structure of *Captain Fracasse*. Events on the journey, extreme situations and space-time all have a share in the atmosphere of confessions, decisions and death. It is in just such an environment that the central elements of the plot are outlined, while the descriptive sections, which we might refer to as aesthetic microstructures, are built up within this framework.

Intertextuality and the genre ground plan

Because in the next few comments the multi-layered nature of the novel conditioned by its intertextuality should always be borne in mind, we firstly highlight two of these levels:

The frequently occurring word "adventure" (*l'aventure*) recalls a key strand in the novel, even though the old epic tradition of the Arthurian cycle, where this motif word is one of the most prominent, is brought to mind no less. Adventure fills the lives of King Arthur's knights, wandering around and seeking it out, wherever it may emerge. Empirically, their quest is linear (apart from the more magical adventures, when cyclic time takes over, and providing we do not take into account the vertical initiation dimension of the quest), as seen in the direct trip made by the central character Captain Fracasse to Paris. The reader of Arthurian tales is overwhelmed by the number of journeys that the knights have to make, and the countries that they have to go through. These are literally expeditions in search of adventure – ritualized expeditions, often associated with a road of trials. The guiding principle of the Round Table heroes is: If the adventures, dangers and worldly tests in which valour and devotion to the knightly code alone prove themselves do not come to us, then we will go out to seek them. – Without the actors' crowds, i.e. without the fateful confrontation and the external impulses to stimulate desire and to drag him out of lethargy, and likewise without the courage to leave his dilapidated little chateau, the parallel of the enchanted palace, Gautier's chief protagonist, the youthful and impecunious Baron de Sigognac, would have been unable to enter the novel of his life.

A second strand – sometimes a stratum that maintains a distance from the heroic epic, and then again sometimes a complementary element inciting adventurousness – is the genre of the actors'/theatrical novel. This level is inspired by some content structures from the well-known *Le Roman comique* (1651–1657) by Paul Scarron. The beginning of the wanderings, i.e. the story about a nobleman who sets out from his "Castle Misery" ("Le Château de la Misère") with a band of strolling players into the world immediately recalls the fickleness and poverty of the acting profession, which will all be part and parcel of the journey. Likewise, the farcical elements will be strongly and repeatedly highlighted in the stories, as will the multi-level masquerading games (with make-up), the disguises and the disturbing illusoriness, constantly referring to the theatricality of the novel, the actors and the acting.

In addition to the mimetically presented performances, the narrative also includes theatrical scenes, discourses (courteous, swashbuckling and libertine) and sets, both with a comic slant and with serious diction.

The characters' speech is often exalted, allegorical and full of similes. In some cases this theatricality is reflected even in their civilian speech, which is distinctive both for its rather poetic nature and for its comically conspicuous thespian rhetoric, its exclusivity inappropriate to the situation and its "actorliness" in any situation. The actor Blazius, usually referred to as Pedant in accordance with his role, says: "[Ces] paroles débitées avec l'emphase grotesque qui lui était habituelle et qu'il transportait de ses rôles dans la vie ordinaire" (ibid.: 142) Theatrical discourse uttered for whatever reason, e.g. awareness of difference, fusion with the role or posturizing, distinguishes the actors from the other characters with the language of other worlds, which also occasionally merges with a reflection of reality, i.e. with some kind of mastery of it. However, this universe is also associated with clichés, stereotypes and minor roles. The elevated heights of art are beset by ham acting, though even that brings with it likeable signs of humanity. In this sense the stage is also an image of the world, as highlighted in the novel, which plays with the mirror connection between life and the theatre (cf. Hrbata 2013).

Pedant formulates a maxim regarding the borrowed nature of the actor's existence: the actors are shadows of human life. Indeed they cannot be the individuals they represent, but they can at least appear that way and thus exert a considerable power from the stage, particularly with regard to fashion and behaviour. The strength of this illusion lies in a combination of clothing, speech and attitudes. Because the novel about actors and acting is also a story of disguises and masks of various kinds, both theatrical and metaphorical, the adventures and love affairs also involve the question of being (essence) and imitation (simulacra), with a wittily serious or refreshingly grotesque (entertaining) slant, without the narrative going over into moralizing tones.

Ambiguity in the novel is all part of the actors' *modus vivendi*; it primarily emerges from the theatricality of the actors' lives, as the roles and masks frequently grow onto them. The characters of *Captain Fracasse*, primarily just performing under their theatrical character names even long to become their own mask. They identify in their appearance and conduct with roles at the boundaries of absurdity or tragedy, as demonstrated by the efforts made

by the lover Leander, and at the opposite extreme, there are the tragicomic endeavours made by the representative of the grotesque Matamore:

> [...] grimaces de matamore étaient devenues, à la longue, sa physionomie habituelle, et, sorti de la coulisse, il marchait fendu comme un compas, la tête rejetée en arrière, le poing sur la hanche et la main à la coquille de l'épée. (Gautier 1922: 49)

An even more significant expression of ambiguity among the actors – because in the historicizing novel discourse it is a sign of existence – seems to be the coincidence between popularity and contempt, i.e. the contiguity between love and beating. The actors are welcomed and admired (as providers of entertainment and physically attractive mediators and creators of other worlds), persecuted and excommunicated.

The tragicomic parallel to the actors is personified by a couple of highway robbers, a man and a girl, recurrent figures associated with the chief protagonists. Here the actors have to face other actors, because the robbers' trap consists in the fact that their "troop" is represented (played) by suitably deployed, threateningly masked and armed strawmen, which in the twilight make credible substitutes. For a moment the theatrical illusion is successful, as it is brought about by the combined effect of the costumes, the poses, the props and the lighting, before this bizarre scene collapses in the attack on the non-existent actors. This confrontation turns into a parody of an armed struggle, i.e. with its covert theatricality, its feints directed as theatrical performances, the obviously theatrical showpieces, when the robber-actors take off their masks and admit their difficult lot, which is actually to some extent that of an actor.[1] This encounter is not quite a true event from the kind of swashbuckling novel known as *de cape et d'épée*[2] (although it is identical to the grotesque *extempores* of its romantic plots). The robbers are also actors in their own way, with their masks and simulacra, as if they came

1 "Hélas! répondit Agostin, je n'ai pas le choix d'une autre, et suis plus à plaindre que vous ne pensez; il ne reste plus que moi de ma troupe aussi bien composée naguère que la vôtre; le bourreau m'a pris les premiers, seconds et troisièmes rôles; il faut que je joue tout seul ma pièce sur le théâtre du grand chemin, affectant des voix diverses, habillant des manequins pour faire croire que je suis soutenu par une bande nombreuse" (Gautier 1922: 12).

2 I.e. a thrilling "popular" historical adventure.

from the picturesque underworld of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831). The adventure begins as something of a farce.

Actors appreciate actors, and so in transparent *sujet* sequences, as it were, the sophisticated and increasingly profound text work is suddenly revealed. This is indicated by parallelisms, along with thematic orchestration, i.e. accompanied by supplementary narrative structures, as well as the self-reflectiveness of this "histrionic" novel with numerous intertextual elements. Not infrequently does the kinship of the protagonists' tales bring to mind stories from novels or the stage. At the end of the half comic skirmish the chief protagonist Isabela turns to Signognac and says:

> Vous vous êtes conduit comme un héros de roman. (ibid.: 122)

He answers:

> Ce péril était bien peu de chose, à peine une algarade […] pour vous protéger je fendrais des géants du crâne à la ceinture, je mettrais en déroute tout un ost de Sarrasins, je combattrais parmi des tourbillons de flamme et de fumée des orques, des endriagues et des dragons, je traverserais des forêts magiques, pleines d'enchantements, je descendrais aux enfers comme Énéas et sans rameau d'or. Aux rayons de vos beaux yeux tout me deviendrait facile, car votre présence ou votre pensée seulement m'infuse quelque chose de surhumain. (ibid.: 123)

The narrator, referring to Longinus, describes this discourse as "asiatiquement hyperbolique, mais elle était sincère" (ibid.). People are prone to go overboard with the language of love. However, this sincerely meant pompous declaration does not only come under the psychology and lexicon (of historical codes and courtly rhetoric) of lovelorn nobles, for it seemingly referred to Baron Sigognac's next role in his story, the adopted acting role (mask) of the swashbuckling Captain Fracasse. Nonetheless, this omen relates to the bombastic, swaggering side of his theatrical performance, not to the dauntlessness, courage, vigour and forthrightness of the Gascon cadets, as they have been created by legends and literature, in connection with their model, their historical patron Henry of Navarre, King Henry IV, whose supposed summons ("or order of the day") before the Battle of Ivry, referring

to the "white plume" (*le panache blanc*) on his helmet, the white feathers as a symbol of courage, could be their slogan: "Si vous perdez vos cornettes, ralliez-vous à mon panache blanc: vous le trouverez sur le chemin de la gloire et de l'honneur". Let us recall here that the final words of the theatrical Cyrano de Bergerac are: "Quelque chose que sans un pli, sans une tache, / j'emporte malgré vous, / et c'est […] / *Mon panache*"; highlighted by ZH).

Using Gérard Genette's terminology (1982), Sigognac's story could be a *mezotext* in view of the story of d'Artagnan (*the hypotext*) and Cyrano (*the hypertext*). Disregarding for now the fact that they are essentially related by their poetics and the idealism of romanticism, the mirroring or linkage clearly emerges in the context of the shared signs of swashbuckling Gasconades, which are characteristic of it at various levels and operating in tandem with *mise en abyme* metaphors and figures. Sigognac ultimately embodies the figure of Captain Fracasse-Matamore; in Rostand's *comédie héroïque*, a melange of romantic histrionic heroism and comic scenes apparently from *commedia dell'arte*, heroic grandeur (valour, talent, devotion and noble-mindedness) and grotesquerie (physical ugliness), Cyrano de Bergerac selflessly represents/plays his lifeless rival in love. Along with their swaggering in several senses of the word (boastfulness and courage), the Gascon cadets are also under the influence of the Don Quixote tradition. As soon as D'Artagnan appears for the first time in Dumas's novel, the narrator is prompted to mention his courage, poverty and quixotic tendency to confuse wishes for reality. Sigognac's cited tirade against Isabela intertextually (i.e. as a quote) includes Cervantes' rhetoric from the resourceful knight, immediately afterwards supported by specific references to Amadis of Gaul and other protagonists from the knightly novels out of which Don Quixote created his imaginary world. And ultimately impoverished and pitiful, with Don Quixote's armour and d'Artagnan's old nag, he sallies forth to fight for his ideals, or at least for those from novels.

Descriptions and evocations

The prologue to the winter scene is an episode presenting the troop of actors' performances at the rich country nobleman's chateau. The chapter "Chez monsieur le marquis" is outstanding for its vivid visualizations. These descriptions evoke, or to be more precise they verbally reconstruct, space in accordance with several models, to which the architecture in the text

is compared (the palaces on the Place Royale in Paris, or the geometrical French garden, i.e. at the time of the story, the landscape gardening "selon la dernière mode" – these clear extratextual references offer the reader a way to visualize and concretize), or form a space with certain objects based on three components: materials, colours and forms. However, these *descriptive pauses* (as Genette calls them, 1972), with their own specific artistic intentions, cannot be separated from the narrative or the ideas. As required by Flaubert, the description has a diegetic function. Apart from specific local moments, when the description more or less comprises autonomous images or "vivid scenes" (*hypotyposes*), the descriptive systems affect the narrative, or in some cases are coordinated with them (Ippolito 2009). With its magnificent and sophisticated appearance the La Bruyère chateau presents the architectural and decorative opposite of the Sigognac chateau, depicted at the beginning of the novel in no less detail, but in a state of total dilapidation and abandonment. The narrator pays both chateaux exceptional attention, because it is actually before the impoverished, shamefaced baron amongst the similarly astonished and impoverished actors – and likewise before the reader – that the sensory contrast between opulence and poverty, good fortune and a grim fate are meant to emerge, in parallels which anthropomorphize and zoomorphize both contrasting chateaux, with the result that the opposite is even presented physiognomically.[3]

A detailed descriptive inspection of the chateau halls and rooms,[4] where the actors are allocated as the lord of the chateau attentively directs, virtually in accordance with their roles and appearances ("Isabelle eut la chambre bleue, cette couleur seyant aux blondes"; Gautier 1922: 136–137) abounds in details, in which the precise evocation (creation) of the environment merges

3 "Ce château frais, neuf, pimpant, blanc et vermeil comme les joues d'une jeune fille, adorné de toutes recherches et magnificences, faisait une satire involontairement cruelle du pauvre manoir délabré, effondré, tombant en ruine au mileu du silence et de l'oubli, nid à rats, perchoir de hiboux, hospice d'araignées, près de s'écrouler sur son maître désastreux qui l'avait quitté au dernier moment, pour ne pas être écrasé sous sa chute. Toutes les années d'ennui et de misère que Sigognac y avait passées défilèrent devant ses yeux, les cheveux souillés de cendre, couvertes de livrées grises, les bras ballants, dans une attitude de désespérance profonde et la bouche contractée par le rictus du bâillement. Sans le jalouser, il ne pouvait s'empêcher de trouver le marquis bien heureux" (Gautier 1922: 131–132).

4 The authorial narrator whimsically identifies with the novelist, who possesses the ring of Gyges.

in the spirit of the aforementioned contrasting and symbolic representation with the careful composition of the (designatory) verbal decorations, which in Gautier's case always denote something: the autonomy and disinterestedness of art and beauty. This conception is based on two sources. From the standpoint of historical hermeneutics it would be justified to consider the author's association with the aesthetics of the ideal (Winckelmann, Schiller, Kant – not to mention Plato). If we keep to the programme declarations made by the author's characters, this one would be of fundamental importance: "Trois choses me plaisent: l'or, le marbre et la pourpre, éclat, solidité, couleur" (Gautier 1973: 226). This is indicated by the matching gold and red of Sigognac's room, where the fireplace stands out "en marbre sérancolin blanc et tacheté de rouge" (Gautier 1922: 138). This palatial decor matches the antiquity of the guest's nobility, which is not negated by his poverty, and it is also like a sign referring to his future status, i.e. the hero's prospects within the novel. Within this description, which lovingly and thoroughly presents the decorations in accordance with this aesthetic, Bohemia makes a sudden surprising appearance for us in the somewhat bizarre context of oriental grandeur:

> Les murailles […] étaient tapissées de cuir de Bohême gaufré de fleurs chimériques et de ramages extravagants découpant sur le fond de vernis d'or leurs corolles, rinceaux et feuilles enluminées de couleurs à reflets métalliques luisant comme du papillon. (ibid.: 137)

If self-reflection sometimes occurs within the narrative of *Captain Fracasse* as a corrective to the pathos and grandiloquence (romanesqueness) or as a manifestation of romantic irony, the narrator accompanying the reader very attentively around La Bruyère chateau must refer at one point very humorously – indeed in Sternesque fashion – to a certain limitation in his descriptive specialization, namely in the extensive listing, and challenges the readers to themselves fill in the "gaps of underdetermination":

> Il y avait la chambre jaune, la chambre rouge, la chambre verte […] et telles autres appellations analogues qu'il vous plaira imaginer, car une énumération plus longue serait par trop fastidieuse et sentirait plutôt son tapissier que son écrivain. (ibid.: 136)

However, there are no further limitations in the artists' descriptions, as Gautier's art is basically moulded, in his admirer Henry James's words, by a passion for material detail, which the writer succeeds in bringing to life, illuminating and interpreting (Delvaille 1968: 104). Whenever Charles Baudelaire comments on his friend's poetry, he elevates this ability to the highest aesthetic level: he believes that Gautier enhances French poetry with a thousand details, which radiate light and plasticity. In particular the author innovates by using a principle that Baudelaire calls "la consolation par les arts, par tous les objets pittoresques qui réjouissent les yeux et amusent l'esprit" (Baudelaire 1859: 61). Gautier's "evocative sorcery" (*une espèce de sorcellerie évocatoire*) creates synaesthesia: "C'est alors que la couleur parle, comme une voix profonde et vibrante […], que le parfum provoque la pensée et le souvenir correspondants…" (ibid.: 40). However much Baudelaire comes close to Gautier's creative work by means of his own poetics, this requires an idea of universal correlations and universal symbolism, and he aptly refers to the action in Gautier's description, which he says is associated with the flexible, undulating, flowery style. – Let us consider this characteristic to be a poetic definition of the process of considered selection, classification and combination of words into dynamic series.

The continuity of the structures of the theatrical novel in the environment of the chateau is particularly noteworthy during the performance by the troop of strolling players, in the reproduction / representation of the play *Captain Fanfaron's Bluster*. Besides, the noble chateau itself allows for several theatres, stages and scenes. Face to face with this luxury, the baron tries on his own poor, disintegrating wardrobe, which is just an extension of the "reality" of his disintegrating chateau. This "inspection mélancolique" (Gautier 1922: 139) crowns a series of confrontations, even though the readers, who share the young hero's painful impressions, are offered the hope that the plot of the novel will eventually reward "ce brave coeur blessé" (ibid.: 128). In the gloomy comparison of the grand interior and the contemptible personal property we again sense the anticipation of a happy ending, all the more so thanks to the fact that "[Un] charriot comique contient tout un monde" and "la friperie de l'humanité" (ibid.: 135) can with the aid of costumes and props create the illusion of magnificence and elegance with a makeshift arrangement. As he changes clothes at the chateau, the sad, wretched Sigognac turns into a magnificent nobleman and by appearance

a courtier, which ought to be his future rank in any case, as acting cannot be his entire career. However, he might accept the Chariot of Thespis as his temporary existence within the novel plot of *Captain Fracasse*: a plot full of love (being near his beloved), education (the school of life on the road to Paris, the centre of opportunities and the court), adventure and art – the strolling players are both a troop of actors expelled to the fringes of society and a community inspired by imagination and poetry.

The plays, disguises and appearances are no less associated with flirtation between the actors and noble society. In Gautier's poem "Watteau" the lyrical hero out on a sad walk in the twilit countryside comes across a park "dans le goût de Watteau" (Gautier 1932: 75) with slender elms, black yews and green hornbeams. This enchanting image awakens a yearning and sorrow within him. A similar park, an intertextual reminiscence of a poem (or its quotation) and in view of the time of the story a prolepsis of Rococo scenes, also appears in the novel as a place of frivolous entertainments, amorous dalliances and precious conversations, i.e. variations on theatrical subjects, codes and costumes. However, a tinge of sadness and melancholy is not a part or a consequence of the pleasures and gallant celebrations in *Captain Fracasse* as it is in Watteau's pictures. The adventure of the first lover in the group ends with a punishment which has more of an impact on the boastful Fanfarons than on the elegant Leanders. Instead of an assignation the chatelaine witnesses a cruel beating, which destroys the illusion of an irresistible lover, because in this way the impudent actor attempting to go beyond the limits of his inferior status is punished. The ambivalent situation again tends towards the farcical. Only the following winter stage of the journey, together with the memory of the successful performance and the merry existence in the chateau suggests a special analogy with Watteauesque nostalgia.

A Snowstorm and its consequences

The favourable period is followed by *tempus fatalis*, *tempus mortis*. In the chapter entitled A Snowstorm and its Consequences (*Effet de neige*), the playful mood of the troop is followed by more serious tones in the autumnal landscape with the falling leaves. The vehicle comes to a crossroads with great symbolic potency. A crudely sculpted crucifixion of Christ with one hand fallen from his body anticipates confessions, as well as sufferings and dismal scenes. However, at this time the place is also distinctive for a certain am-

bivalence, because there is a postscript on previous chivalrous episodes. At this crossroads a noble equipage is awaiting and one of the actors leaves the group, albeit temporarily. Another member, the virtuous and humble *ingénue* Isabela, then tells Sigognac her story as the child of an acting family, in which two concepts conflict. One is anti-illusionary, because Isabela stresses that she was not brought to her calling by any disasters, insolvency or literally *aventures romanesques*: so it might appear that the discourse of this character contradicts the *romanesque* structure and the romantic plot. However, this immediately comes to the fore in the fairy-tale-like story of the actress's background, as her real father is a prominent aristocrat. This cliché involving noble roots and a distinguished father neutralizes the class differences between the baron and the actress and thus prepares the way for a happy dénouement.

This confession is followed by an ellipsis, as no notable events have taken place for some time in the story. "Nous sauterons donc quelques jours, et nous arriverons aux environs de Poitiers" (Gautier 1922: 201). However, what is of basic importance here is the information that during this ellipsis, the troop's income has gradually dwindled and hard times have ensued. Out of the original four horses only one poor old nag survives and the road has turned into a winter wasteland, a landscape of death. This is a highly characteristic and appropriate scene, synchronized with the actors' situation, which Fortune has turned her back on. The narrator recalls that the surrounding countryside has not helped to dissipate the gloom ("dissiper la mélancolie"), and this reference to the actual world in which one's disposition may be associated with the weather or the season of the year bolsters the text and augments the images of misery and sorrow.

> Au premier plan se tordaient les squelettes convulsifs de quelques vieux ormes tourmentés, contournés, écimés, dont les branches noires aux filaments capricieux se détaillaient sur un ciel d'un gris-jaune très bas et gros de neige qui ne laissait filtrer qu'un jour livide; au second, s'étendaient des plaines dépouillées de culture, que bordaient près de l'horizon des collines pelées ou des lignes de bois roussâtres […]. Au printemps, cette campagne, habillée de verdure, eût pu sembler agréable; mais, revêtue des grises livrées de l'hiver, elle ne présentait aux yeux que monotonie, pauvreté et tristesse. De temps et temps passait, hâve et déguenillé, un paysan

> ou quelque vieille courbée sous un fagot de bois mort, qui, loin d'animer ce désert, en faisait au contraire ressortir la solitude. Les pies, sautillant sur la terre brune avec leur queue plantée dans leur croupion comme un éventail fermé, en parassaient les véritables habitantes. Elles jacassaient à l'aspect du chariot comme si elles se fussent communiqué leurs réflexions sur les comédiens et dansaient devant eux d'une façon dérisoire, en méchants oiseaux sans coeur qu'elles étaient, insensibles à la misère du pauvre monde.
>
> (ibid.: 204)

The description and metaphorization of the natural elements, their forms and their colours, and the representation of their grim, impoverished lives are highlighted by the disfavour of space and time, which culminates in the snowstorm. The description also comes close to an empirical record of phenomena, i.e. the appearance of nature and the appropriate seasons, and in parallel it recalls the harsh circumstances of the actors' lives. However, in addition to this and in tandem with the subject matter of the theatrical novel, it does not cease setting and resetting the scene for crises and peripetias.

As the ominous atmosphere begins to thicken, there is the image of the miserable horse at the front of the group as it moves forward. This creature which enables the actors to travel for their livelihood, this "pitoyable et désastreux animal" (with ambivalence between repulsiveness and compassion), in contrast to which, according to the narrator, the horse ridden by Death in the Apocalypse looks a fine beast, inevitably augurs decline and demise in the winter landscape. Apart from the fact that it embodies the actors' destitution, the exhausted horse, this raw fact of the story, the impending impossibility of travelling any further, presents one of the most important descriptive "pauses" in Gautier's novel and in his entire poetic prose work, which the narrator himself signals, when he moves from the protruding ribs, the bones, the wounds and the tumours on its body and limbs to the horse's head with this: "Sa tête était tout un poème de mélancolie et de souffrance":

> Derrière ses yeux se creusaient de profondes salières qu'aurait cru évidées au scalpel. Ses prunelles bleuâtres avaient le regard morne, résigné et pensif de la bête surmenée. L'insouciance des coups produite par l'inutilité de l'effort s'y lisait tristement, et le claquement de la lanière ne pouvait plus en tirer une étincelle de vie. Ses oreilles énervées, dont l'une avait le bout

> fendu, pendaient piteusement de chaque côté du front et scandaient, par leur oscillation, le rhythme inégal de la marche. Une mèche de la crinière, de blanche devenue jaune, entremêlait ses filaments à la têtière, dont le cuir avait usé les protubérances osseuses des joues mises en relief par la maigreur. Les cartilages des narines laissaient suinter l'eau d'une respiration pénible et les barres fatiguées faisaient la moue comme des lèvres maussades.
>
> Sur son pelage blanc, truité de roux, la sueur avait tracé des filets pareils à ceux dont la pluie raye le plâtre des murailles, agglutiné sous le ventre des flocons de poil, délavé les membres inférieurs et fait avec la crotte un affreux ciment. Rien n'était plus lamentable à voir… (ibid.: 202–203)

The last sentence of this quotation expresses a deictic intention, an objectivizing visualization, embodying the extent and signs of dilapidation and decay. This hypotyposis transforms the description into an impressive, vivid scene, while the naturalistic tendency towards bare, decaying *tranches de vie* (sections of life, or here fading life) is balanced by the poetic structure. Its *least* important aspect is the similes and metaphors, because these might generally appear in any more or less literary or challenging description. The way a repulsive "object" is aestheticized is not just an explicit mixture of compassion and respect for the one who ultimately in the subsequent chapter ("Où le roman justifie son titre") dies "il agonisait debout en brave cheval qu'il avait été" (ibid.: 235), who symbolizes the courage and cruelty of existence in connection with the strolling troop, as well as rhythmatization and the intensification of the cadence of the description with alliterative suggestions.[5] – The description of the dying horse comes close to Baudelaire's bizarre poetic images.

The spectral beast has its correlate in an actor, the most remarkable figure of Captain Fracasse, for whom the snowstorm was also *tempus mortis*. With his demise in the deserted landscape, Matamore,[6] a phenomenally gaunt actor

5 "Sa tête était toute un… […] Derrière ses yeux se creusaient de profondes salières qu'aurait cru évidées au scalpel. Ses prunelles bleuâtres avaient le regard morne, résigné et pensif de la bête surmenée" (ibid.: 202).

6 From the Spanish *mata moros*, Moor killer, a comic figure from *commedia dell'arte*, one of the numerous forms of the protagonist in Plautus's comedy *Miles gloriosus*, a braggartly but in reality a cowardly soldier.

due to the enhanced comic effect onstage, personifies the analogy between the actors' poverty and the cruel environment. In contrast to aspects of the ghost story that might have developed from this context or in such an atmosphere, however, these extreme moments present the grotesquerie of the situations and the rhetoric of the valiant actors, finding reasons for laughter "où d'autres eussent gémi comme veaux et pleuré comme vaches"; ibid.: 226) The extremely light Matamore fills his pockets with pebbles so he can proceed against the strong wind, while Blazius-Pedant comments in an ironically humorous way on the woeful contents of the food pouch and with comic comments in an exaltedly theatrical oration he apportions the leftovers just like "sur les radeaux dans les naufrages" (ibid.). The consequences of the snowstorm include traces of bravery and detachment, alongside elements of dark humour.

> [...] et de temps en temps des flocons de neige secoués d'une branche tombaient pareils aux larmes d'argent des draps mortuaires, sur la noire tenture de l'ombre. C'était un spectacle plein de tristesse; un chien se mit à hurler au perdu comme pour donner une voix à la désolation du paysage et en exprimer les navrantes mélancolies. Parfois il semble que la nature, se lassant de son mutisme, confie ses peines secrètes aux plaintes du vent ou aux lamentations de quelque animal. (ibid.: 208–209)

The mounting indications of ruination climax in the howling of a large black dog sitting in the middle of the plain. This presentation of deathly phenomena overshadowing the entire landscape culminates in this image of a lone beast with no lack of infernal touches. It is in this cruel constellation that the actor Matamore meets his end, as his frozen mortal remains were seemingly a source of deathly grotesque adornment, because the actor's face retains the comic wrinkles imprinted on it by the constant grimaces of the character he embodied. The actor's mask becomes his death mask, and the horror is permeated by the comic "car c'est une misère du comédien, que chez lui le trépas ne puisse garder sa gravité" (ibid.: 211). In *Captain Fracasse*, paradoxes and oxymorons are dramatic and thus important figures, forming the basis for the plot behind the descriptions of threats, dangers, dying and death in the landscape of sepulcral silence, where the snow becomes the actor's premature shroud. Matamore's burial outside the cemetery, in close prox-

imity to the naturalistically and even hallucinatorily portrayed cattle burial ground, with similes referring to demons and fantastic horrors, is governed by two different hypotexts (or one pretext and one code): the frenetic aesthetics of shock, to which Gautier dedicated some of his work and the period discourse at the time of the novel, i.e. church laws prohibiting the burial of excommunicated actors in consecrated ground.[7]

If Sigognac also displays fearless behaviour here, as he disperses the aggressive, ignorant villagers who suspect the group of heresy and witchcraft, beating them with the flat of his sword, this his adventure, albeit dangerous, is still a rather incomplete, half-chivalrous half-simulacrum or harbinger of real (romanesque) adventures, when in defence of honour and love he clashes with outstanding duellists in a "swashbuckling" strand of the novel. The role within the plot of the pallid, dangerous landscape with its "black dots of ravens" is mainly to put pressure on people to show signs of courage in facing ill fortune, which for the actors then slowly begins to turn into good fortune. In a situation recalling the dance of death they suddenly obtain food in the form of a stray gander, and in the darkness of the snowy landscape without signs of habitation "une petite étoile rougeâtre se mit à scintiller au pied d'un coteau à une grande distance de la route" (ibid.: 237). Characteristically, at that time hope arises and a turnaround in the actors' fortunes and the baron's life looms ahead.

In conclusion, let us change the indicative sentence in the chapter title into a question, in order to summarize the effects of the landscape and its prominent co-presence in the plot: hence "A Snowstorm and its Consequences?" The location-prop increases the drama of the journey, and in itself, or it might be said of its own accord, helps to bring people closer together, to confess and to outline the secret sides of their life and origins, or in other words it helps to create the plot for a love story in line with romantic aesthetics. The arduous journey made by the Chariot of Thespis is accompanied by a historicizing discourse describing the social marginality and otherness, if

7 The novel seems to be constantly overshadowed by the famed memento of Molière's fate and that of his troop of actors. As is well known, Molière was one of Louis XIV's favourites and one of the main authors of the royal entertainments. The king even became the godfather of Molière's child. When Molière died, only the king's power and intercession with the Archbishop of Paris allowed for the church burial of this "mere performer", albeit at night and without ceremony.

not the outcast nature (to use a romantic category for a romantic narrative) of the actors, corroborating the theatrical strand of this novel. The circumstances of the journey giving rise to *tempus fatalis* – the drama of the double death, which opens up certain possibilities for the aesthetics of ugliness and the cruelty of life, both in association with grotesquerie (theatricality), and with poetic prose. The double death, which is mirrored by the select, moulded landscape, the stormy winter night in remote locations gives rise to ominous adventurous episodes, omens of danger and adventure in stories from a *roman de cape et d'épée*, in which the protagonists have to perform acts of bravery, and in which it is necessary to show the ethics and practice of courage. And ultimately, the death of the actor Matamore made it easier for the young Baron de Sigognac to make his crucial decision, i.e. to start something new – to create anew: to overcome his aristocratic pride, not to cause the actors difficulties and to temporarily assume the role of a comic braggart in their troop (a courageous man, a noble from an ancient family and at the same time, as it turns out, a talented actor is able to embody his own antipodes, in the spirit of Diderot's *Paradox of Acting)*:

> Je plie mon titre de baron et le mets au fond de mon portemanteau, comme un vêtement qui n'est plus de mise. Ne me le donnez plus. Nous verrons si, déguisé de la sorte, je serai reconnu par le malheur. Donc je succède à Matamore et prends pour nom de guerre: le capitaine Fracasse! (ibid.: 233)

This choice is also a choice of love and hope for success in life with a half-hidden identity, with a theatrical mask that can always be put on and taken off. The result of this knight-actor amalgam is a highly available hero. The chapter entitled "A snowstorm and its consequences" (and the associated, seemingly self-reflective chapter "The Novel Justifies its Name") offers a well-composed set of sequences which open or (with several symbolic signs and plots) substantially anticipate the novel possibilities of *Captain Fracasse* and its genre, thematic and discursive potential.

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Towards an adequate storyworld and expression: description in Slovak realist fiction*

Ivana Taranenková

Point of departure: European realism and Slovak romanticism of the National Revival

Despite the ambiguity of the term literary realism (understood as a mode or technique of depicting reality as well as a specific type of literary and historical discourse) and its ontological questionability, one may not question description being its central figure. Through the varying extent of engagement in the text structure it represents the fictional world of texts, which claim to be part of realist discourse. Description, however, can go well beyond its objectivizing function and relate to deeper structures working in the text. Similarly, it can relate to various modifications and transcendences of literary discourses, within which the literary text is being realized. In our case it may help present a specific modification of realism in Slovak literature.

Slovak literary realism, which, based on literary and historiographic research, is set in the period from 1880 to the first decades of the 20th century, is a heterogeneous, divergent phenomenon regardless of the self-identifying manifestos and proclamations of the single players in the literary field of that period. It is possible to observe in it a concurrence and configuration of various aspects and the presence of different sediments and deposits (the presence of elements, as well as structures other than those characteristic of realist discourse in literary history, of lines going beyond the period of

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one literary movement or epoch and determination of literary texts using meta-aesthetic criteria, etc.). This is caused by the specific situation in the Slovak literature of those times, as well as various period realizations of the aesthetic programme of realism in the context of European (and world) literature, also characterized by some divergence (various realizations in the British, French, German and especially in the Russian context).

Relevant aesthetic results have been achieved in poetry following the codification of the Slovak literary language (1843) – an act which in fact established Slovak national culture, which represented a specific variant of European romanticism.[1] Fiction writers, establishing themselves since the 1880s were confronted not only with numerous variations of the romanticist literary tradition without any aesthetic contribution, but also with a half-finished tradition in fiction, its genres, and language. The Slovak literary language itself was a relatively young language in that period, as it was only reformed in 1851 by Michal Miloslav Hodža and Martin Hattala, who greatly stabilized it to achieve a unified version. The social stratification of the Slovak language was still teething, and its cultural base and literary functions (Miko 1972: 143) were developing slowly and gradually as well. Literary works written by the representatives of romanticist fiction failed to establish a genre and language tradition despite their qualities, and have merely outlined the tendencies and possibilities that had been developing gradually since the 1860s. Another root cause of this situation was the aesthetic opinions of the central figure in Slovak Romanticism, Ľudovít Štúr, who considered prose fiction a "lower form of art" (Štúr 1875: 190) and recommended authors focused their attention on poetry. This attitude was revised in the context of the National Revival and the resulting course of events (establishment of Matica Slovenská and Slovak secondary grammar schools). What was being highlighted at that time was the pragmatic function of fiction as a medium of interest to the reader and thus a medium that was efficient in

1 If in the case of Slovak romanticism its specificity within Slovak literary historiography in the 20th century was accepted in the long run, the idea that Slovak realism does not correspond with its realizations in western European context, was not formulated specifically in this period. Slovak literary realism was brought into connection with the positivistic aesthetic concept by Auguste Comte and any differences from this model found in the texts of single authors were explained as temporary contamination with the aesthetics of the previous literary period of romanticism.

spreading nationalistic thoughts, as was its participating role in the formation of Slovak national life.

Not even this revival brought about significant works of art and after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Slovak emancipation efforts were dampened, Slovak literature stagnated, holding on to the themes of national agitation and the theses of patriotic Romanticism. It was this crisis situation that provoked a reaction in authors establishing themselves in Slovak fiction from the beginning of the 1880s. They tackled it by applying the principles of realist aesthetics, the realization of which, however, was influenced by various factors. Their presentations are either explicit and proclamatory in their nature, as in the case of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský, or discrete, but with even graver consequences, as was consequently realized by Martin Kukučín. These authors are the founders of two paradigmatic lines in Slovak fiction, which go beyond the 20th century. Vajanský adheres to literary realism in his programme texts, in which he presents his literary aesthetic conception. His reflections are influenced by past and contemporary discussions in Russian, Czech, and French literature. In parallel with these texts, which are actually aesthetic manifestos, his prose works were also being written. Kukučín has become thoroughly acquainted with the aesthetic programme of literary realism and the debates about it as a well established author in the student association Detvan in which he was active from the latter half of the 1880s during his medical studies in Prague. His debut in Slovak fiction was more preconditioned by a spontaneous author's gesture than by his fulfilment of any programme proclamations.

Regardless of the differences in starting points and the artistic solutions implemented, both the most outstanding fiction authors of that period had to face the same elementary problems. They both had to decide on the framework around which they would construct a credible "world" for their prose writings and about the expression they should have, or the language in which they should be articulated, whereby their choices or acts were in many aspects of an initiatory and standardizing nature. When meeting the challenge represented by the creation of a fiction model to fulfil their ideas about literary realism, both prose writers were free to take advantage of the tendencies in artistic fiction outlined in romanticism and developed in the course of the 1860s and 1870s. In this period Oskár Čepan identified two central development trends in fiction (Čepan 1984: 32–36). On the one hand

there was the romanticizing and sentimentalizing novella, which focused on fabrication, characterized by the presence of a significant authorial subject and an inclination to construct a "subjectively stylized image of individually evaluated reality" (ibid.: 33). Svetozár Hurban Vajanský followed this tendency. Martin Kukučín, on the other hand, inclined towards the development in Slovak prose writing tradition which readers considered to be on the periphery at that time. It was represented by short genre forms in political writing (ibid.: 32), which in a small area of composition focused on the reproduction of "the banal details of ordinary life" and the use of "non-literary" colloquial language. However, what was an even more powerful inspiration for both authors than the national sources was Russian literature which was obviously modified by realist discourse. The specific features of Russian realism were summarized by the literary scholar Naum Yakovlevich Berkovsky as follows: "Russian realism lacking stability, with its effort to thoroughly penetrate all phenomena of the present, but without dwelling on them, without floundering, contained something romantic in its very nature. Russian authors concentrated on life that was yet to come, depicting it always and on every occasion, engendering the feeling that real life was capable of overcoming any obstacles – which was a romanticist way of depicting it, indeed" (Berkovskij 1983: 133).

Fiction was being written by the two key personalities in literary historiography in canonized Slovak realism – Svetozár Hurban Vajanský and Martin Kukučín – in interaction with the ideal, and retrieved and confronted by various means – and not only due to the strong influence of Russian literature. The tension between the ideal and its presence in empirical reality was thus the central moment in Slovak fiction in the last third of the 19th century.[2]

Reality and projection, the "own" and the "foreign": Svetozár Hurban Vajanský

The ambition of Vajanský the fiction writer was to present the forms and possibilities of renewal and realization in national life. Those who have initiated and revitalized the national organism should be the representatives of the

2 For more detailed information see the study by Marcela Mikulová "Povinnosť k ideálu alebo romantizmus v slovenskom realizme" (Mikulová 2011: 105–113).

elite – intellectuals or members of the nationally oriented gentry. In close relation with his artistic efforts was his targeted effort to canonize the novel in the context of the literature of that period. He saw in this a suitable means to represent Slovak national society as a whole. At the same time he strived – not only as a fiction writer, but also as an extraordinarily active cultural publicist (articles presenting his aesthetic concept were published continuously for almost forty years) – to moderate contemporary literature so as to make it fulfil his ideas of "high" art (which were determined predominantly by the classic aesthetic ideal, which preferred the categories of what was integral, inevitable, and ideal to what was fragmented, coincidental, and commonplace). However, Vajanský's intent was complicated by the real situation in Slovak society, as well as the existing tools, inclinations, and phraseology of the national literature. Contemporary Slovak national reality could provide him neither with adequate topics nor heroes. This is why Vajanský changed the text-to-reality ratio and produced – to his own benefit – such circumstances and characters that should influence reality through the suggestion of a work of art: "[…] a good novella, a good novel (may God grant us one!), bursts with real life, and is capable of founding a new spiritual colony in the desert of our impoverished life" (Vajanský 1882: 2). The lacking ordinariness of the world of his fiction, which were actually becoming some kind of national utopias, led him to strengthen the ideologically based (to be specific, we speak of the ideology of nationalism) semanticizing principle therein. It puts the phenomena of the fictional world of Vajanský's fiction in fundamental opposition between the "own" and the "foreign", where the code used in this classification is the nationality of characters. It affects all text components, starting with the plot and composition, through the description of the characters to the stylistic and lexical level. What contributes to this is the presence of an extraordinarily strong authorial subject: "The suggestiveness of the demiurgic act, the desire and the will to create, which we did not have before, do not allow the authorial subject in Vajanský's fiction to blend into the unobtrusive background. Vajanský's authorial narration is not only a medium of the epic world. In this narration one can feel the touch of the demiurgic hand of the authorial subject, his directing, reflections, explanations, notes, comments, his ideological rhetorical pathos" (Miko 1972: 144). What makes a utopian impression is the decision to create a language of high literature: "when we say that Vajanský created the language of modern Slovak

prose – modern in a broad sense of the word, we mean it almost literally. While creating, he would use the cultural forces of his personality, and only then the cultural forces and resources of Slovak reality" (ibid.).

The omnipresent ideologically determined significant principle and an authorial subject which asserts it stubbornly have a significant influence also on Vajanský's description. It does not meet the idea of realistic description at all. "The presenting and representing function of description" (Fedrová – Jedličková 2011: 34), serving the need to concretize the fictional world and create a credible "realistic effect" (Nieragden 2008: 615) becomes part of the ideological persuasiveness of the authorial gesture.

"Ownness" is also a determining axiological principle of Vajanský's world – adherence thereto or rejection thereof determines the moral qualities of his characters and their environment and also affects the choice of stylistic methods present in the text. When depicting the "foreign" elements, Vajanský uses hyperbole, irony, and the methods of "low", colloquial vocabulary and, vice versa, the characters and phenomena typical of the sphere of "ownness" are presented with pathos and monumentality. Adherence to "ownness" does not only determine the features of the characters, but also influences the description of their physical appearance. The positive characters possess physical beauty and their counterparts are caricatured through descriptions of unappealing if not repulsive physical detail.

An example of an explicit connection between physical appearance and mental qualities and of the relationship towards "ownness" is the description of the character Laco Vrábel in the novel *Koreň a výhonky* (Root and Shoots, 1895–1896). His impressive appearance, which demonstrates his Slovak origins, is slowly decaying as a consequence of his growing away from his "roots". The details highlighted by the authorial narrator, such as the long nail or a monocle, which demonstrate Vrábel's theatrical attempts to appear Hungarian, his "magyaron" behaviour, seem unnatural and indicate the deformed elements of the "foreign", to which this character has succumbed:

> He surely knew how to put on the monocle to fit his right eye like the most indebted demi-magnate, throw a Gypsy a coin with great skill, demonstrate on the streets against Hentzi's Monument or against the minister, and even hold speeches at the cemetery of Korepes above the tomb of the "martyr" Jesenák, who at the time of the uprising imprisoned his family and

> even had one of the Vrábel family members hung. He dressed well, according to latest fashion, and grew a long nail on the little finger of his right hand, which he had to clean ten times a day, and scratch and cut quite often. Otherwise he was a strong, beautifully grown young lad; not even the atmosphere, – natural or moral – of Budapest could wipe the dewy healthy glow off his open ancestral face. (Vajanský 2008: 52)

Vrábel's lifestyle based around his alienation towards national life and "naturalness" leads to disease and ultimately to his complete physical decay:

> He was dressed daintily, with good taste. The more his body languished, the more elaborately he would dress. Free, in the recess of an abandoned mill he would pay even more attention to his physical appearance than in the town. His long nail was elaborately cut and cleaned. His collar was as white as snow, made stiff with starch it was rubbing against his skinny cheeks. A colourful and artfully tied scarf ornamented his skinny neck with its immaculate silky freshness. (ibid.: 152)

The ideological semanticizing principle also governs the description of the environment in which the characters representing the opposite categories exist. It is only characteristic that for example the household of the characters representing "ownness" is clean and furnished with good albeit simple taste and that in the close presence of significantly moral characters such as the teacher Holan in the novella *Letiace tiene* (Flying Shadows, 1883) and the priest Rybka in *Koreň a výhonky* (Root and Shoots, 1895–1896) there is a linden tree which is one of the Slovak (Slavonic) national emblems. In order for the exposed importance of the linden tree to be highlighted, in Vajanský's work it appears not only as an ordinary tree in the background, but becomes a temple in which the character prays:

> A quiet wind was blowing past the linden trees under the starlit sky. An old man stepped towards an old trunk of a linden tree, hollow on the inside. The core had rotten long ago, now a big hole loomed black. In its hollow hung a simple wooden cross nailed to its back wall. The old man entered the hollow – it was roomy enough – he raised his hands towards the cross and his mouth started whispering a devout prayer. The murmur

> of his words was accompanied by the rustling of the leaves excited by the midnight wind. Wide deep sky vaulted above the linden tree in extensive majesty, covered in twinkling stars. (Vajanský 1883: 96)

And vice versa, the environment inhabited by the characters who come under the "foreign" category is depicted by Vajanský as showing cheap taste, "theatricality", or having a repugnant appearance. What is characteristic is the description of a Jewish household of the Zweigenthal family in *Flying Shadows* (in the work of Vajanský, Jews are significant representatives of foreign, anti-national elements; the anti-Semitism of that period has also marked other areas of Vajanský's activities – namely his poetry and political writing). Despite the showiness observed on the outside, the narrative voice accentuates the lack of good taste of the owners, their questionable hygiene and last but not least, their speculative purchasing of the items in the household:

> Róza entered the room. Quickly she removed her jewellery, and pulled her dress off over her head. She covered her white and not particularly clean petticoat with a housecoat she found lying on the bed. On the rack next to the closet hung a pair of trousers, a vest turned the other way round, and torn braces. A bonnet was hung on top, crowning the entire composition. A proud green sofa didn't really match the deep red armchair. Three chairs made of crooked wood of different colours were a proof of the fact that the furniture was bought in at various auctions. (ibid.: 69)

In this unity of nature and environment one would search in vain for any traces of "atmospheric realism" identified by Erich Auerbach in the texts by Honoré de Balzac.[3] Vajanský cannot create a credible milieu, or suggestively fill this milieu with convincing perceptible details, indeed. The details cannot function on their own, as they are way too abstract and conventional – they are "banal details" verifying the authenticity of the fictional world in

3 "[…] jeder Lebensraum wird ihm zu einer sittlich-sinnlichen Atmosphäre, welche Landschaft, Wohnung, Möbel, Gerät, Kleidung, Körper, Charakter, Umgang, Gesinnung, Tätigkeit und Geschick der Menschen durchtränkt, wobei die allgemeine zeitgeschichtliche Lage wiederum als alle ihre einzelen Lebensräume umfassende Gesamtatmosphäre erscheint" (Auerbach 1964: 440–441).

realistic fiction. They are symbols constantly referring to the text, to the ideological principle duly organizing all levels of Vajanský's prose writings, to a higher "metaphorical and allegorical plan" of the text, which is present as an ideal in his fictional world (specifically, it is the ideal of the regeneration of national life). Specific elements of depicted reality function as "metonymic substitutes of the metaphorical and allegorical narration level" (Čepan 1984: 79). Vajanský's inclination towards allegory pointed out in the analysis of his poetry by Valér Mikula[4] is also indicated in his descriptions of natural phenomena that never function on their own. They work as anticipation motifs foretelling the destiny of characters or become a background on which the ideological image of the work can be developed.

When for example the members of the Jablonský family in *Flying Shadows* on the porch on a warm early evening contemplate the fate of their relative, the libertine yeoman Kazimír Podolský, who is on the verge of a financial and personal downfall, this scene also includes the image of infatuated moths flying towards the light of the lamp, which does not relate to any specific character, but foretells the fate of the whole family, the members of which had turned their backs on "ownness" and then, threatened by financial speculations of "foreign" forces, come to a social and economic breakdown, which in the end is also obvious from the description contextualization in the following dialogue:

> "Poor brother! He has wasted his life!" noted Anna and looked first at Herman, and then at her sister. "Did he fall deep in debt with you, then?" "Pah, real deep," answered Imro absent-mindedly, and looked at the moths hurling themselves in swarms towards the glass of the lamp and falling on the white tablecloth quivering their wings, burned. "I am in with him. We

4 "[Vajanský; completed by IT] to the facts and the reality itself he does not add allegorical significances gradually, but sometimes begins his poem straight away with an already finished allegorical character […] a natural phenomenon, for example a sunrise or dawn, does not at the beginning 'trigger' a series of images or relations, just as is the case in romanticism or symbolism, but enters the scene at the very end as natural (and thus native, organic, sovereign) acknowledgment of the ideological thread. […] The seriously 'conceptual' allegories of Vajanský meant to change reality, however, paradoxically they are the ones to respect the reality the least. […] Allegory 'says one and means the other', however, in Vajanský it not only 'means' 'the other', but 'says' it rather openly, and his allegories thus offer the reader no enigmas, but only answers" (Mikula 2010: 82).

hold half of our property in promissory notes. But I hear say they are unknown debts. Your old nest is falling apart." (Vajanský 1883: 51)

The allegorical impression of a description of natural scenery in such prose writings is not only explained in the narrative sequence, the potent authorial narrator also intervenes when the characters speak, which connects the reality of the natural world of Vajanský's fiction with the ideological level in an explicit way:

The moon was setting behind the hills. The whole valley was basking in its magic light. On the hillsides the umbrages loomed black – not standing still, but crawling up the rocky slopes. A few thin wispy clouds appeared on the horizon. Their shadows were flying above the landscape, casting shades on the silvery river stream, and then sat on Jablonovo. […] "You see – flying shadows are the image of our life, of our current period! All those beings, harmful or at least unnecessary in our opinion, with 'their hearts and virtuous will' are just like these flying shadows, perhaps shadowing the silver lining of heaven a bit, but only for a transient moment. And they have so much beauty in them! My brother, they are no pathological phenomena, but phenomena of great truth. Whilst being created, a big thing always seems to have so many odds. You only see the shadows, complain about them stealing our clear weather! We do not have real dark sides – our weaknesses, our vices, our mistakes are just flying shadows, above them rules the quiet eternal light of the ideal. General weaknesses that you may find everywhere, in all nations, in all ages, must be subtracted, for not even Slavs are free of such misdemeanours shared by all humanity. But we – the oppressed, the dependent, are really not the ones to strictly reprimand the vices of all mankind. But we do have our special shadows. Even if they cast shade on our slopes for a few moments, then a wind blows and the shadows are gone, dissolved, vanished! Look, how they are crawling on top of the majestic shoulders of the colossal Tatras always higher and higher! They have already reached the top; as if somebody cut their sharp tips – they have rolled over the mountain – the summit is basking in the dusk! That glowing light above the landscape! Oh, do believe in the ideal, believe in its light!" The moon sank behind the hills. The valleys are oppressed by darkness. (ibid.: 93–94)

Alternatives of realist description: objectivization and allegorization

Description in Vajanský's fiction is not only a functional element within the complex structure of the text, but it becomes a marker referring to the fact that his texts differ from the realist fiction model. If we accept that in the context of European literature the concepts of that period were based on the belief that realist art should concentrate on objective representation of reality, namely the reality of the 19th century, a world of objectively given empirical phenomena, "a world of actions and reactions, of causes and consequences, a world without miracles, a world without the transcendental" (Wellek 2005: 119), we see that Vajanský's descriptions constantly attack us with the hidden inherent qualities of reality, or references to the ideological level of the text.

For the purpose of comparison, I will provide a landscape description in the novella *Lipovianska maša* (1872) by Gustáv Zechenter Laskomerský, whose short prose writings published in a literary journal in the course of the sixties and seventies of the 19th century were based on the empirical experience and focused on capturing the details of everyday life (Slovak literary historiography classified him as an author with significant realist tendencies):

> In Zvolen, right down below where the waters of Čierny Hronec and Hron meet, a long valley opens up on the left. A narrow rocky route leads through the valley along the bubbling stream of Bystrá and the high pine and moss covered slopes, along the whirring saw-mills and drossy, harsh scarcely grown fields – to the iron-mill settlement of Lipová. When a man walks along the gurgling stream for three hours or so, he sees nothing but the sky above and steep limestone hills covered with red-branched pines, sad birches, and whole carpets of yellow blooming gold moss stonecrop (Sedum acre) and woolly thistle (Cirsium eriophorum).
>
> (Zechenter-Laskomerský 1969: 2)

What we can observe here is due effort to make an objective if not scientific classification of single natural phenomena and retrieved reality, to situate and name them exactly. On the contrary, in Vajanský's fiction nature is constantly allegorized, personified and full of hidden significances. The first person narrator and protagonist of the sketch story "Noc na skalách" (A Night on the Rocks, 1883), tired with "people and problems of everyday life" (Vajanský 1883: 7), seeks refuge in the woods for the night:

> Having crossed the beech wood, I entered a grove of pine and firs. Here the rule of the conifer trees began, only here and there grew an oak, as if lost on a foreign ground. The beauty of the fir tree is deeply engraved in the soul of every Slovak living in the hills. Along the linden tree, the songs of our people also celebrate the fir tree. On their rocky bosom, the monumental Tatras nurture firs and pines. A fir tree is the true image of a satisfied Slovak. It is beautiful, soft, and filled with sap, even though it is rooted in rocky soil. […] A sickle moon peeped out from behind the mountains. The sky is densely covered with stars. Bemused, moved by impressions, I sit on the rock under an old crooked pine. I feel so free I want to open my wings and fly. Slowly the falling asleep of nature has lulled my spirit to peace. But does nature fall asleep at all? Not completely, a bat flew swiftly above my head; in the moss the lightning bugs are flashing their bluish lanterns. […] Nature never fully falls asleep. Eternal movement gusts out of it, but maybe it is just her dreams. No, even that is life, the secret mythical life of the night. (ibid.: 9–10)

Vajanský's description is constantly dynamized – and that not only by the (explicit) connection established by the authorial narrator between the description and the metaphorical and allegorical level of narration – in front of our very eyes an ordinary fir becomes part of the national mythology. What accentuates the dynamization of the description is the interconnectedness of the mental state of the protagonist and the natural phenomena (peaceful nature – peaceful soul), with the focus on the invisible but constantly present "eternal" movement giving nature her soul. Apart from representing the usage of tools typical of romantic poetics, with nature being the room for "authentic (natural) existence" (Hrbata – Procházka 2005: 28), a place of contemplation, it represents the development of Vajanský's problem of how to adequately and credibly represent reality in its complexity in his fiction: "Vajanský does not focus on the epic complexity and causality between the elements of the narration, but presents a situation in its illusive and dynamic tension" (Čepan 1984: 68). From static description, he is heading towards the "principle of epic representation", where the "mediating stage is the objectification of the metaphorical and allegorical significances through the motifs of objective reality" (ibid.: 68). Vajanský's conception of the adequate representation of reality, influenced by Hegel's aesthetics, was fulfilled

by acute situations, oppositions, confrontations of agonistic forces, the hypertrophic expression, which is not only present in the narrative structure, but also affects the description itself.

Vajanský's voluntarist authorial gesture, touching upon not only the thematic, but also the expressive elements, causes the reader to be constantly confronted with a certain excessiveness in his texts: "With him everything is lifted from its original place and placed somewhere different" (ibid.: 89). This impression points to the fact that representation in Vajanský's fiction is of a different type than realistic representation. These means preferred by Vajanský refer to the melodramatic mode of representation, in the sense in which it is analysed by Peter Brooks in his work *The Melodramatic Imagination* (1976). Brooks believes this type of imagination to be characteristic of literature in the "post-sacred era". Its beginnings are identified in romanticist literature; however, he also finds them in authors like Honoré de Balzac, Henry James, Charles Dickens and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. The presentation of strong and tense emotions, Manichaean moral polarization and schematization that we can identify in the texts written by these authors, are the result of a situation where "melodrama is a form for the post-sacred era, in which polarization and hyper-dramatization of forces in conflict represent a need to locate and make evident, legible, and operative those large choices of ways of being which we hold to be of overwhelming importance even though we cannot derive them from any transcendental system of belief" (Brooks 1995: viii.). A melodramatic gesture is an expression of urgency by a subject freed from ties, which should be given a priori. The author, creating in a melodramatic mode, constantly retrieves and with hyperbolized means amplifies the battle between good and evil, whereby both come from an autonomously determined moral world. The meaning of this world is determined by the subject, and is therefore also highlighted, unveiled and demonstrated for the price that the world he represents will not bear all of these meanings. It is a situation evoking the effects of Vajanský's fiction in many respects, which in fact represented a world without "ontological coverage" (Miko 1972: 147) and this deficit was replaced by the urgency of melodramatic expression.

"Effect of reality" as product of the search for a lost world: Martin Kukučín

Martin Kukučín also reacted to the need to create a tradition in fiction, to create a world and find an appropriate expression for it in a more discrete manner, but with more convincing solutions than Vajanský. He resorted to the seemingly ordinary world of a Slovak village in its daily life and used its colloquial language as a literary language. Epic situations just like other elements of his fiction were not organized according to an a priori ideological principle, but a "formula of epic harmony" based on a self-regulated process governing relations between man, his environment, and tradition (Čepan 1984: 143f). However, the seemingly objective determinism of the fiction which lead Slovak literary historiography to pronounce Kukučín an exemplary realist, hide subliminal subjective motivations and processes. They were the source of his objectivity and determinism, as well as his harmonizing authorial gesture. In his work, Kukučín actually retrieved the natural world of his childhood, which seemed constantly present in his texts, even though it was actually situated more in his memories. His writing on the one hand reacted to the processes of cultural modernization developing into enlightenment, where "the earlier holistic society was replaced by a society that was individualistic, inconsistent, and fragmented" (Müller 2008: 523), and on the other hand, to his personal trauma caused by the fact that he had to leave home at an early age and go study (and spend most of his life living abroad). The feelings of being unattached, uprooted and out of traditional and archaic values, which characterize modern life in general, are thematized subliminally as well as explicitly in Kukučín's texts. Their central motifs thus become, with varying intensity, the present motifs of melancholy and nostalgia connected with the unfulfilled archetypal desire to return to the "golden age of human kind". In human life it is represented by childhood (the only period in the life of a human being connected with the uncomplicated and direct simplicity of all things in life as they are given), and in history it is represented by the pre-historic period characterized by archetypal natural time (in art such situations are thematized by the topos of Arcadia). Kukučín's fiction, just like his realistic artistic method (to which he openly admitted to having an affinity), are thus compared with the ideal, however, in a different sense than in the case of Vajanský. His ideal is situated in the past – in the individual framework of childhood, and in the more general

framework of the traditional life of the Slovak ethnic group, which was becoming irreversibly obsolete. Is also present in various ways in the fiction located in an urban environment or in his travel books from France or South America. While Vajanský's ideal was determined by the ideology of nationalism, in Kukučín it shows a broader anthropologic dimension.

If Kukučín's fiction is characterized from the very beginning by a cultivated sense for detail, it will not only be part of his effort to achieve an exact and fitting expression (Čepan 1984: 127) in the re-presentation of reality. It may also be perceived as the manic desire of a nostalgic individual manifesting itself as an "incredible capacity to perceive images, tastes, sounds, scents, details, and banalities of the paradise lost which those who stayed at home have never experienced" (Boym 2001: 4). So when Adam Krt in the well known novella *Rysavá jalovica* (The Mottled Heifer, 1885) is getting ready to attend a fair, the narrative voice pays great attention to his outfit and explains them in the greatest detail, using the linguistic means of the colloquial language:

> On his back there is a scrip; in it lie folded boots, shoes, and slippers that he had made and was now going to sell. He had put them into the scrip so that they fit right, sawing each pair together with a thick waxed thread. Krt is a peasant, but in winter he makes footwear from Walach wool for the villagers. It is quite an easy job indeed. No need to pay much attention to measure, as the bigger the boot is, the better; and no need to have a selection of lasts, as Krt himself only owns three. A small one for maidens with tiny little feet; another one for the guys who need shoes as big as troughs, so that they can jump into them straight from the Russian oven. The third one is neither big nor small, middle sized it is. (Kukučín 1961a: 7)

However, Kukučín's description goes beyond the ephemeral details working somewhat statically and meant to verify his fictional world; it is functionally becoming part of the narrator's interpretation, which introduces the disinterested reader to the norms, rules, and customs of the reality depicted. The authorial narrator in Kukučín's fiction is sometimes a "guide", and sometimes the voice of the traditional community depicted. When for example the protagonists of his childhood fictions *Z teplého hniezda* (From a Warm Nest, 1885), and *Veľkou lyžicou* (With a Big Spoon, 1886) leave home

"for the world" and change their "village" clothes for a suit, the description of their appearance is neither objective nor value neutral. He can relate to the opinion and evaluation of a village community, as well as with the feelings experienced by the protagonist. In both aspects the details of his new clothes are observed and perceived as something inappropriate and foreign. They are "signs" which do not belong to this environment and alienate the person wearing them:

> Maťko Rafikovie seems troubled, as it is the very first time in his life that he got a pair of boots. Well, this alone could be bearable, could somehow be endured: but – what is worse – they took his former peasant clothes and dressed him in new apparel. Behold, Matej Rafikovie is no longer a peasant's son: let's see, let's have a look – the white trousers ornamented with a green cord lie over there under the oven, a black slop neatly embroidered and lined with red satin is hung on a rack, a broad-brimmed hat with a double ribbon and twelve new pins that he had bought on Trinity Sunday, hangs there on a nail in the corner next to the lantern. Instead of his former admirable clothes he has now received a pair of black pantaloons and a jacket made of thin cheap fabric. And how it is made! At least the jacket looks like a museum piece; it is short but so wide that another Matej could fit in; there is a big hump left on the back, and the jacket is so narrow it rubs against his armpits. On the boy's head sits a tiny little hat as light as a feather, he can hardly feel its weight. But all that he could endure in the end, if they had only left him his shirts. But no, they have taken them as well, his shirts with white wide laces and long wide sleeves, and given him muslin shirts instead, with no wide laces; just plain buttons, the sleeves do not hang loose, but are stitched above the wrists and narrowly seamed. Well, this is what happened to poor Matej Rafikovie; out of a handsome slender lad who only yesterday looked as tall as a tree, they made a scarecrow in just an hour. His fair soft hair that a day ago he would comb neatly behind his ears is gone. The miller cut it off, the only barber in the whole valley, leaving just a shock of hair above his forehead. Behold the latest fashion! (Kukučín 1961b: 73)

In those fiction narratives where Kukučín resorts to first person narration, the alienation of his heroes is expressed by means of an idealized description.

The prose work *Na obecnom salaši* (At the Community Sheepfold, 1887) thematizes the archetypal motif of the "return to Paradise Lost", "Arcadia", which, in the end is a topos that in art represents an expression of melancholic sentimentality (Chamonikola 2000: 78) compensating for the melancholic feeling of being uprooted.[5] The hero of this story does not only return to the realm of childhood but also tries to go back in time. The first person narrator, a student on summer holidays decides to return to places where he used to spend his summers. A landscape he described is not a real but a fairytale land soaked in an atmosphere of cosiness and kindness – everything here seems to have been created for a quiet human life:

> I entered a small village that today is still called Topoľany. […] As I say, I entered the village: it really was necessary to enter it. Like a garden enclosed from all sides by fences and buildings, our village was encircled by mountains dressed in the dark greenery of woods; only their peaks were bald as an old man's head. If the hills did not leave a narrow valley in between, through which a stream could make its way like a snake, with a white-dust-covered route along, it would not be possible to enter the village at all. Only in one place the valley widens so that the hollow basin can accommodate Topoľany; the slopes of the hills are less steep closer to the village, surely to allow the villagers to usurp some land a cultivate it. The village looks, well, like any other village. There is a long street with white houses and tiny little gardens on both sides; a stream flows through – surely so that the miller can mill, well, everything! But let me mention the poplars that grow beautifully along the stream – perhaps it was from them the village got its name. (Kukučín 1958: 51)

Later the protagonist goes to a sheepfold and is fascinated by the manifestations of traditional life there:

> After a two hour walk through a dense conifer forest one ends up on a meadow. The dark greenery of the woods forms a perfect framework

5 "Another aspect of melancholy probably comes from the feeling of being uprooted, expelled from Paradise, in memories of the state of happiness, although there are various projections of this happiness" (Chamonikola 2000: 77).

> for the sunlit meadow covered in tiny juicy grass. A really beautiful image! Around lie the woods like a velvet frame and with the meadow they form a green background for the yard and a shepherd's hut. As if the hut didn't feel free amid the meadow, it retreated to the forest edge in the shadow of old firs. What a peculiar house! Beavers must build such homes above the water. I try to look out for a beaver. No beaver in sight, instead, I see a giant standing in front of the hut. A real giant, a tall hunk that you don't often see even in our country. (ibid.: 62)

He sees him – because he already lives in a different modern time – as a reminder of the pre-modern archaic times and wishes to become part of this "natural" environment that he perceives as a tool to fulfil his desire to lead an authentic life. What makes an archetypal and mythical impression is the character of the shepherd ("the giant"), who is an unquestionable authority for the protagonist. In the context of Kukučín's fiction it is an extreme pole of the idyllic and mythical approach towards everyday reality in the village, in a broader context however, it may be perceived as a romantic desire to return to natural conditions, to re-establish the natural oneness of man and his environment.

Kukučín's ideal – the ideal of home (long lost forever) goes beyond the dimensions given by individual biography and becomes a generally valid anthropological constant factor in his writings. It is also present in fiction setting the story a "foreign" environment (in texts thematizing life in the "big city", i.e. in Prague, where he studied medicine, as well as in his travel books). Using this approach the "foreign world" is described by means that accentuate its resemblance to home. The narrator constantly expresses his distance, wishing to appear as a "peasant" looking at the restlessness of the big city from the position of common sense also despite the fact that Kukučín can present the urban environment (Prague, Punta Arenas, Paris) to his reader in a civil manner, as, without doubt, he knows it well and is well adapted to it. Oskár Čepan states in this connection that for Kukučín, the "silhouette of home" represents "a solid background" (Čepan 1972: 177).

In the texts by both Vajanský and Kukučín it is obvious that description does not work as a neutral and objectivizing mediator of the properties of the fictional world, but is rather a functional part of its significant principle, retrieving the unity between man, environment, and tradition, where

conflicts are solved by self-regulating processes. He uses it to compensate for his melancholic desire to live in a world that no longer exists and allows him to dwell in memories of the past. In the prose writings by both authors we observe the effects of description being an indicator of a specific realization of a realist artistic model in the context of Slovak literature.

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Experientiality: does it divide or link description and narration?*

Alice Jedličková

Yes to "dynamization" of description; no to "descriptivization" of narration

The range of explications in this volume clearly illustrates how understanding of description varies in accordance with the position from which each of these "descriptions of description" is made. From the stylistic standpoint, description defined as a textual type involves a complete listing of the characteristics of the object described, research into everyday spontaneous dialogues indicates that there is something like a "descriptive function" that can be successfully deployed both without a systematic listing and without the direct identification of the object's attributes, but just by using a very limited repertoire of compensatory linguistic devices – on the basis of shared experience and knowledge of the participants in communication.[1] Whereas both Czech stylistics and historical poetics standardly work with the concept of the *dynamization of description* (cf. Krčmová 2008: 115), expressing the overcoming of initial "staticity" through the subjectivization of the perspective and the introduction of eventfulness, text-oriented narratology, which takes the opposition between both textual types as a possible basis for the definition of narrative (description is what *suspends the flow of narrative*, thus reducing reader's suspension) robustly resists the concept of the "narrativization" of description – with the argument that after all, in that

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1 See the paper by Jana Hoffmannová in this publication, pp. 10–20.

case there would be no point in distinguishing between description and narration (cf. Ronen 1997: 279). Most narratologically-based definitions of description, whose determining parameter is the represented object, predictably places the stress on the *spatial distribution* and hence the simultaneity of the *objects* and their *attributes*. Here is an example from Gerald Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology*: "Description is the representation of objects, situations or (nonpurposeful, nonvolitional) events in their spatial rather than temporal existence, their topological rather than chronological functioning, their simultaneity rather than their succession" (1987: 14)[2]. However, an alternative intermedia approach shows that the dominance of the "coexistence of things" in descriptive representations does not mean that the chronological aspect cannot be deployed in a meaningful way.[3]

Hence it might well appear that the variety of views on the definition of description tends towards disparity, thus helping to confirm the view that we might as well give up on distinguishing description from narration. However, as the present philosophical papers also testify, this would be rather a pity with regard to the modes of constructing the individual components of a fictional world. To clarify our image and understanding of description it is enough to focus attention on which aspects of any given type of representation appear dominant. Let us take the quoted example of the dictionary definition given by narratologist Gerald Prince: despite his preference for objects or their spatial constellations as the subjects of description he admits that the representation of happenings not associated with any human intention (e.g. repeating natural processes) is more to do with *descriptive components* in the construction of a fictional world. Another narratologist, Monika Fludernik (1996), again sees the *main* subject of *narrative* representation in *intentional action* and the experience of time from a *subjective perspective*. The predominant representation of static objects (*description*) and dynamic actions and events (*narrative*) sufficiently distinguishes both modes of representation to enable them to be called autonomous. And it is possible to deal with the intersection of the set of texts employing narrative and descriptive strategies with the aid of the more subtle criteria for

2 Cf. also Herman – Jahn – Ryan (2005: 101): "Description is a text-type which identifies the properties of places, objects or persons (see EXISTENT)".

3 Cf. the paper by Emma Tornborg in this volume, pp. 76–96.

their intentionality (as presented e.g. by Fludernik). We might then more precisely determine the potential opposition that arises here with the aid of the notions of *action*, which is exclusively narrated, and *happening* (such as natural processes), which may be described as well.[4] Werner Wolf, who endeavours to provide a theoretical basis for description that is not subject to narrow narratological or somewhat prescriptive stylistic requirements, but to a broader *intermedia* perspective, emphasizes that when defining a text type it is desirable to combine the criteria *object of representation*, *function* and *formal devices*. Whereas Wolf says that narrative "consists of actantional representations implying motivated and (e.g. causally and teleologically) meaningful changes of situations" (Wolf 2007: 33), description provides representations with an "existence". Hence descriptions do not require changes in the situation as an essential element[5] and cannot in themselves be the suspension providers (though they may contribute towards the suspension in the narrative), and nor do they aim teleologically for a particular objective. The objects of description are concrete phenomena that can be fictitious or real, but are all represented with noticeable emphasis their sensory appearance. They are frequently static (spatial) and visual, but dynamic (temporal) objects can also be relevant" (ibid.: 35).

Although temporality appears to be one of the dominant features of narration, Wolf holds the view that it cannot be entirely excluded from the sphere of description either. However, we should be more precise: for Fludernik does not speak of mere temporality, but of the "experience of time" – in logical association with the fact that narrative is ascribed a fundamental role in dealing with human experience in general: she believes that narration is a "quasi-mimetic evocation of 'real-life experience'" (Fludernik 1996: 98). Hence she sees *experientiality* as a kind of essence of experience in the very basis of narration. Does it mean that we may be able to ascribe this experiential aspect to narrative as an exclusive attribute?

Werner Wolf does not believe it is possible to deny experientiality to descriptions either, or at least to those descriptions which are successful or

4 Further explication may be found also in Aumüller 2007.

5 Of course this does not mean that a description would exclude any depiction of changes.

effective.[6] He says that the experientiality of narration allows readers above all to "co-experience" or "re-experience" the events in which the characters are involved and it has the capacity to evoke in them the short-term feeling that they are re-centred in a storyworld, while striking descriptions again have the capacity to evoke a vivid image in the reader's mind. In this sense they may elicit the feeling "of being 'close' to the phenomena described" (Wolf 2007: 14). If narration imitates and suggests the experience of action in time, then description operates primarily as an imitation or as a "substitute for *sensory experience*" with fictional objective reality (ibid.; highlighted by AJ). References to phenomena in the fictional world are made thanks to (often paradigmatically structured) *attributions* of a wide range of *qualities*, particularly those perceptible through the senses, and often "surface details", which highlight the physical being of objects. The *experientiality of description* is thus anchored according to Wolf in the plasticity of representation, i.e. in the capacity of description to evoke a vivid (primarily visual) mental image.

Based on the expositions of both theoreticians it would seem that the category of experientiality as such is shared both by description and narration, i.e. it can hardly be used as a yardstick to draw a clear dividing line between narration and description. However, its proposed functions differ for description and narration; because Wolf does not go into too much detail over its function in the case of description, the interesting possibility arises of identifying the descriptive elements that contribute to the experiential function.

The other one was a slim, beardless, ruddy-cheeked young man…
Paradigmatic description

Let us first base ourselves on examples that we can consider to be more or less adequate application of model or "prototypical"[7] description, which is

6 Here, a typical evaluation category of Anglo-American fiction criticism, i.e. the category of "good" or "successful" narrative or description has affected Wolf's definition; what we can deduce from its introduction is the finding that experientiality may not be considered a constitutive characteristic of every description.

7 The concept of the prototypical description is introduced in his *Brown Book* (1934–1935) not as the subject of investigation, but merely as an aid in examining ways to describe experience, or the feeling of "familiarity" by Ludwig Wittgenstein: "In saying this, one takes as *the prototype*

usually ascribed staticity (identification of the state of a thing or states of things), the construction of an object from its individual parts and the attribution of qualities, plus the construction of the simultaneity of these things and their qualities, and – if it is at all taken into account – an anonymous (and thus "objectivizing") observational subject.

This kind of "prototypical description", which "pieces together" the object being described from its individual components and qualities often proceeds in accordance with an easily identifiable paradigm. Again this is mostly based on the internal hierarchy of the object and from the way objects of the same class are usually arranged in the cognitive process and the typical way they are observed. For example, an individual is first characterized in general from his or her overall appearance (based on gender, physique and clothing, which enables us to identify social background and the like), and then "scanned" from head to toe. This approach is displayed in Karel V. Rais's novel *Zapadlí vlastenci* (Backwood Patriots, 1894), which describes the arrival of a young assistant teacher Karel Čermák at his new place of work, small village Pozdětín located in the mountains, accompanied by an old farmer. The description of both characters systematically copies the initial scheme (physique, face, headwear, clothing and footwear) and the qualities described are primarily contrasting (the thickset old farmer in his old-fashioned country fur coat, and the slim young man in his city clothes, which are inappropriate for the mountains). Hence a paradigm is introduced which is then repeated in subsequent descriptions, i.e. those which correlate two characters, whether drawing attention to what connects or what separates them. Descriptions of characters maintain certain constants: e.g. the narrator almost always also mentions the state of their clothing, implicitly indicating that the characters are most frequently people who are perhaps not explicitly poor, but not wealthy and always very frugal, or who

of a description, say, the description of a table, which tells you the exact shape, dimensions, the material which it is made of, and its colour. Such a description, one might say, *pieces the table together*. There is on the other hand a different kind of description of a table, such as you might find in a novel, e.g., "It was a small, rickety table decorated in Moorish style, the sort that is used for smoker's requisites." Such a description might be called an indirect one; but if the purpose of it is to bring a vivid image of the table before your mind in a flash, it might serve this purpose incomparably better than a detailed 'direct' description", http://wab.uib.no/cost-a32/Ts–310_alter.html [accessed 31. 1. 2014], highlighted by AJ.

have no concern for their garb due to more weighty matters, as in the case of the parish priest. Thus we see such phrases as "his heavy winter shoe of shabby lambskin with bows that were now badly worn", "the collar of his short yellow fur coat, the shaggy piping of which was already heavily matted", "a cap with a broken peak" and the like. (Other examples from novels by Rais's contemporaries[8] persuade us that the image of the kind-hearted farmer in the threadbare fur coat and the shabby cap are among the practically "obligatory" *topoi* of the realist country novel.) Any variation or de-automation of the descriptive scheme consist primarily in the extent to which it is implemented: some descriptions can be somewhat abridged in relation to the paradigm, as we see for example in the following example describing two members of the local "confraternity of literati" (a church singer's association) from the same novel:

> A duet sung by the two old male voices rang out from the literati Šmokřil and Petruška. They were sitting on the first bench just to the left of the organ, they had the Nightingale of Paradise hymn book open on the lectern, and as they sang with all their might, both of them had their eyes half closed and their heads drooping to their shoulders: Petruška to the right and Šmokřil to the left.
> Šmokřil was small, squat and balding in a large blue overcoat with many collars and a yellow clasp at the front. Stooped, he almost seemed to vanish in his coat as his tenor voice bleated.
> Petruška was a giant of a man with a balding head and long grey hair falling from his crown to the collar of his short yellow fur coat, the shaggy piping of which was now heavily matted. He had large, strong legs and was shod in high well-oiled boots, overhung by tassels of his thick leather pants, which made his legs look like pillars. He sang bass – every syllable gurgling in his throat. (Rais 1958: 27)

As opposed to the initial description of one of the main characters Čermák, the subsequent narrative primarily presents the contrasting secondary

8 The description then becomes a fulfilment not only of a literary convention, but also a cultural one (the idea or image of a peasant which raises readers' expectations). Cf. e.g. Jirásek's *U nás* (Round Our Way, 1929: 147).

characters, who stand out due to some dominant psychological feature or a tendency towards specific behaviour and conduct (Šmokřil is a smug grouch, while Petruška is rather spiteful). The resulting character depiction can be placed somewhere between a sketch of a unique individual and an entertaining illustrative representation of a human type, which together form an image of a village community.[9] "Announcement of a character" by means of speech or song is a strategy favoured by Rais: the young niece of the priest's housekeeper Albina is first presented through a song (with a characteristically girl's theme) heard from behind a door which the girl opens suddenly, little suspecting more company in the room – and she blushes almost as red as her prim striped dress with fright and shame. This is not an individualizing portrait even in this case. The description is closely linked in with the dual effect of the character's entry, subject to the current situation and the social rules: all those in the room turn their attention to the nimble young girl in the prominent dress, while she herself takes fright from the unexpected audience. The way her fresh appearance is described corresponds to the extent to which her characterization is subsequently given: this always only takes place in dependence on the way her affection for the assistant teacher develops, so that her attributes remain her simple grace and above all her kind-heartedness and her weakness for touching love stories, whether real, as experienced by her aunt, or as narrated by the popular sentimental ballad at that time "Vnislav and Běla". The depth of psychological characteristics classifies Albina, much alike the other females, rather as a secondary character. In terms of the narrative structure it can surely be said that it is the love affair with the temporary separation of the lovers and the traditional class and financial obstacles which is the weight-bearing element in the narrative arc, as well as the one that draws the attention of Rais's "mainstream" reader, offering him a happy ending with the promise of marriage and above all a good position in the region where the assistant teacher

9 Only the teacher Čížek is "portraited" like that with great thoroughness in a truly individualized way: however, the reason is not based in the internal structure of the text, but more on the author's intention to compare as much as possible the character's physiognomy to his real prototype, the teacher, author, violin maker and musician Věnceslav Metelka, whose diaries Rais used in writing the novel, and whose memory he wished to celebrate, alongside the patriotic endeavours of other "national awakeners" among the teachers and the priests. – This same portraiting effort is also evident in the illustrations by Adolf Kašpar depicting the teacher.

has become integrated, both in the social and the intimate spheres. However, the actual subject of representation here is the revivalist activities and experience of the mountain patriots represented chiefly by the teacher and the priest. Evidently, thus, the individual realizations of the descriptive procedures here are not exclusively matters of authorial style (or the narrative diction of the individual novel) understood primarily in the linguistic sense. They are frequently realized to an extent corresponding both to the role of the character in the story and to the "furnishing"[10] of the fictional world.

The descriptions of the interiors are also paradigmatic in *Zapadlí vlastenci*, as space is normally "read" from left to right and "composed" in accordance with spatial polarities, as is the case, for example, of the description of the teachers' room or the priest's little room, which is jovially referred to by its occupier as the "residence" and is furnished for the most part with numerous bird cages. The paradigmatic nature of the description may also depend to some extent on the "house philosophy": these functional little rooms are basically subject to a certain order of life and its rationale. A certain systematic order predominates in both households. Nevertheless, among the depictions of the landscape, which in this novel are for the most part panoramic with the focus on phenomena associated with the season and the time of day (e.g. in the early spring wanderings of the Pozdětín musicians to Větrov, Chapter 10, pp. 153–154), we of course also find the onset of perceptual mimetism or "perspectivized observation".[11]

Examples of paradigmatic descriptions of characters structured in a similar way to the introductory example can predictably be found in a number of other realist works, but this never justifies us in identifying a paradigmatic description with some kind of realist prototype. For example, in Jirásek's "new chronicle" *U nás* (Round Our Way, 1897–1904) a procedure based on a diffuse attribution of qualities, i.e. their "assignment" to individual references regarding the character's current activity, particularly that which is characteristic of their nature or living situation (traditional Czech stylistics would thus evaluate this case rather as an "indirect characterization") is more frequent than the above mentioned "concentrated" paradigmatic

10 The expression "furnishing" is there derived from Umberto Eco's term *furnished world* (cf. Eco 1997: 626).

11 Likewise the paper by Stanislava Fedrová deals with this subject, cf. 97–115 in this volume.

descriptions. The scene is always fully under the control of the omniscient third-person narrator, but there is almost always another character present here as well: The individual being described then finds himself in the latter character's field of vision, so this character is implicitly ascribed the capacity to observe. In several cases one of the primary characters (e.g. Father Havlovický) at various points notices the individual characteristics of the other person (e.g. old Plšek, the Evangelic), which are then associated with the imparted information and accompanied by an assessment, or he becomes aware of the already known characteristics of the other person in a particular situation. The motivation behind this process is not only based in the narrative, but also cognitively based: in everyday experience among people we only have the opportunity to meet or glimpse fleetingly we often first notice some outstanding feature that suffices to identify the person in question, and it is only when we meet or observe them again that we discover some other element in their appearance or we bolster our knowledge with a characteristic phenomenon in their behaviour, e.g. their speech. The distribution of information presented by the narrator and his intentions thus sets a certain parallel to the ongoing acquisition of information in our own experience in the actual world. Notice here that an image mediated by a description – in the sense of the attribution of a set of qualities "piecing together the object of the description" – thus emerges from the successive experiences of one of the characters. Hence this means that a description acquires an experiential nature: not of course through the sensory aspect of the perception of objects, their qualities and details or the detail itself (as Wolf emphasizes), but through the explicit "temporalization" of the attribution process, i.e. its association to the characters' experience taking place over time.

The full glow that fell on her… Temporalization of attributes and atmosphere

An even more subtle variant is the association of temporality with the attributes themselves, i.e. the thematization of their temporary nature[12] wherever the object is not ascribed permanent, but merely "momentarily ap-

12 Here we come close to the issue dealt with in the paper by Emma Thornborg (see pp. 76–96) on the temporality of ekphrasis.

pearing" attributes, i.e. those which might appear differently or less clearly in other circumstances or to another observer. This may be clearly illustrated by a passage from the second volume of Jirásek's chronicle *F. L. Věk* (1890–1907): after a prolonged absence the protagonist comes to visit the Butteaus – and is unpleasantly surprised by the fact that Mrs Butteauová has not informed his friend Thám of the visit, as well as appalled by the poor family circumstances and disappointed by Paula's embitterment following her son's death, which has evidently also affected her relations with Thám and her previous patriotic sentiments. However, at first the protagonist is affected by the atmosphere staged by Mrs Butteauová, who brings him into the unlit apartment and in the darkened room promises the brooding Paula a surprise – an unexpected guest. The actual image of the long unseen Paula then suddenly appears to Věk in the light struck by her mother:

> The bluish glow of ignited sulphur flickered in the darkness. Its odour could be smelled as the candle burst into flame and its sudden light illuminated Thám's young wife standing in the middle of the other room, slim, well-proportioned, in a white cap and with a black lace scarf loosely tied round her throat and hanging down over her bosom. Her face was pale and slender, the full glow that fell on her casting a shadow beneath her perceptible cheekbone. And due to this gauntness her mouth appeared larger than it was, as did her beautiful eyes that gazed enquiringly into the first room. Her face displayed fatigue and anxiety, but her overall appearance was touching. At least Věk was touched, just as it had previously aroused his compassion, when he had caught her alone in a dark corner, absorbed in thought. (Jirásek 1910: 80)

This text only relates allusively to the descriptive paradigm (beginning with an overall overview of the figure), but undoubtedly provides a complex image of Mrs Paula Thámová. Nevertheless, the descriptive strategy here is not based on the "attribution of stable objective qualities", but on capturing of features that appear in the given light conditions particularly conspicuously to the observer situated in the same space. Temporality is present here in a dual aspect: the first is associated with the situatedness of the object of depiction in space (Paula, her physiognomy emphasized by the lighting), and the second with the observing subject (i.e. Věk, even though the observation

is again ascribed to him by an external institution, the third-person narrator) and above all his situatedness in time: this relates more narrowly to the narrative structure, for the young woman's excessive slenderness and fatigue only "appear" to Věk due to the lapse of time since their last meeting. Hence there is no reason to raise objections should anybody wish to ground the passage alternatively as "an account of how Věk saw Mrs Paula, how she appeared and how this appearance touched him", for this is not a question of acquiring arguments to make classifying decisions on whether the passage is narrative or descriptive: we can easily argue that the temporal aspects, the indication of a personal perspective and the resulting experientiality fulfil both functions at the same time here. There again, this is by no means confirmation of the theory that there is no point in distinguishing between the two modes of representation. Quite the reverse, should we observe such interpenetration of narrativity and descriptivity in the broader context of Jirásek's mature work, then not only does an important element in the author's poetics thereby emerge from this observation, but it also gains in importance from the standpoint of historical poetics, i.e. uprooting the fixed idea of easily detachable paradigmatic description as the dominant descriptive form in realist depiction.

Both in *F. L. Věk* and in the "new chronicle" *U nás*, i.e. in the alternative chronicle genre with the characteristically slackened narrative pace and the high degree of episodicity, we find variously graded intersections of descriptive and narrative representation, the common principle behind which is the *attribution of changeable* and above all *actually changing qualities* to a selected object or spatial constellation of objects. Of course, these depictions much more frequently involve stimuli from two different sources: the first is the sphere of visual arts, which undoubtedly forms the backdrop for the variations in the charming, often "chiaroscuro" portraits of the female characters that provide them with a particular ambience,[13] while the second is the narrator's intensive observation of the phenomena of cyclical natural time, which again often involve the aspect of lighting. If this is the case for the representation of characters situated in interiors then it is even more so for the depiction of exteriors: Jirásek likes to refer to the environment surrounding the protagonist when they are changing most conspicuously, e.g. at sun-

13 Specific proofs and analyses in Fedrová – Jedličková 2011: 44–47.

set and dusk, when the apparently "stable" qualities of things are "destabilized", as we can see in the extract dealing with the situation in which the young teacher Kalina returns from his mother's to the school which he took on after his father died:

> The teacher set off out to the right beneath the lime tree and up; but just a little further on he turned again to the right, on the narrower path to the vicarage, beyond which further to the right the wooden school among the fruit trees shone white. The trunks of the old lime trees and part of the whitish path beneath them began to drown and disappear in the soft dusk. However, further up to the right above the vicarage and its surroundings – the belltower and the church, it was brighter beneath the still clear sky, shaded by the trees. In the last light the shingle mansard roof of the vicarage building was still to be seen clearly; however, the flood of woodbine, almost entirely muffling the whiteness of the wooden walls, was growing much darker. Only patches of red foliage peeped through the fading green around the gleaming small windows in the west-facing facade.
>
> (Jirásek 1929: 69)

These changes in circumstances have no influence on the conduct of the character, i.e. from the narrative development standpoint they might appear redundant. In such cases, even narratology acknowledges the representational mode to be descriptive, while the key argument is the fact that that it is not a deliberate act by the character that is depicted, but unintentional events that repeat over the course of natural time.[14] The association with the character is only retained in the sense that the depiction of the circumstances follows the teacher on his way to the school, i.e. this depiction is limited visually or in terms of perspective. Otherwise Jirásek very often makes it clear that he has depicted no more or less than what can be seen of a particular place under the changing light conditions, often without identifying any particular perceptible object, i.e. just taking into account the vacant

14 Hence it is easy to relate Gerald Prince's initial definition of descriptivity to the situation (1987): of basic importance from the narratological standpoint is the fact that these are not irreversible changes, but merely repeating acts, which only vary slightly depending on the progress of the seasons and above all do not have any basic influence on the characters' intentional behaviour.

position of a potential observer. Rather than constellations of objects in space, the actual objects of description are the changes in their optical attributes and the resultant effect on the reader induced by a particular atmosphere. By atmosphere we understand the notion as it is presented in the reflections of Gernot Böhme (1998),[15] i.e. as a specific correlation between the subject and its surroundings, as a "tempered space" (*gestimmter Raum*) arising out of sensory contact between man and the world. This means that the atmosphere cannot be attributed either to the objects or their constellation, nor does it result from projections of the subject (even if it is unthinkable without his perception), but it is a specific reality that emerges from among them. The atmosphere may "arise" and enthrall us, but it might also be consciously staged (it might also be added that one of the possibilities is of course "a verbal performance"). This is basically possible because we have already experienced or assimilated certain types of atmosphere within the context of our culture, where their typical characteristics are somehow fixed (for example, an idyllic atmosphere is associated with visual models such as the pastoral landscape of fine arts, relaxed atmosphere with images of exotic seascapes as presented by travel agencies etc.).

Hence the experientiality of this type of literary "atmospherism" is not based on a direct relation to the experience of the characters, but on the fact that the actual description has the potential to activate the sensory and culturally assimilated experience of the reader, i.e. it may evoke in him a mental state that is akin to real-life experience of a "tempered space". Hence in this characterization we come close to Wolf's argument in favour of description as a kind of "substitute for sensory experience" (Wolf 2007: 14), or the evocation of stored sense experience. Some authors speak of "perceptual mimesis" in this context (e.g. Scarry 1999), while others object that mimetic represen-

15 "Atmosphären sind gestimmte Räume, oder, nach der Definition von Hermann Schmitz, randlos ergossene Gefühle. Wir reden von der festlichen Atmosphäre eines Ballsaals, der ernsten Atmosphäre, die ein Mahnmal umgibt, der heiteren Atmosphäre eines Tales. Atmosphären sind etwas zwischen Subjekt und Objekt, eine gemeinsame Wirklichkeit beider. Sie gehören nicht einfach zum Subjekt, sind auch nicht dessen Projektionen, denn man kann von Atmosphären ergriffen werden und in Atmosphären eintreten. Sie werden auf der einen Seite zwar durch Dinge und Menschen erzeugt, gehen von ihnen aus, und man kann sie, wie im Bühnenbild, bewusst inszenieren. Auf der anderen Seite sind sie aber in dem, was sie sind, niemals vollständig bestimmt ohne ein empfindendes Subjekt" (Böhme 1998: 19–21).

tation would also have to primarily include linguistic correlates to our preverbal experience of the world (Kuzmičová 2013: 88ff).

Some pagan paradise… Cognitive aspects of descriptivity

It is the emotional and cognitive aspects that Jirásek is able to utilize in such a sophisticated manner as the motivation for the depiction arising at the intersection of narration and description. The description of the ballroom in the Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace in Prague, where Věk's young protege (and future bride) Márinka Snížková is brought for a tour by her uncle before Leopold II's coronation ceremony, sounds rather superficial, for at first sight it primarily provides information about attributes that could easily be ascribed to any ballroom in any other palace, while the specific attributes are somewhat "slapdash". Why? A twofold cognitive perspective alternates in the description. The first one belongs to the omniscient narrator, who narrates Márinka's visit to the palace while being able to identify the typical elements in the ballroom's furnishings and decorations (e.g. the candles in the girandoles). The second belongs to the character of Márinka who tries to observe the ballroom in line with her uncle's exposition, but who does not pay focused attention either to the verbal commentary or to the place itself, because her mind repeatedly wanders off to her much yearned for companion – František Věk. It is only such a distracted and uninformed mind as that of a young provincial girl that could produce the following characterization: "through the high ballroom, on the ceiling of which a large picture had been painted, *some pagan paradise*, as her uncle explained […]" (Jirásek 1910: 331; highlighted by AJ). Jirásek tends to handle such cognitive elements of focalization with moderation, but always with complete conviction. And why can it be said that despite its "superficiality" the description fulfils its function? As we have already indicated, the description is not fully individualized (with the exception of the cognitively "coded" reference to the fresco depicting the Olympian gods), but it does include all the signs that match the class of phenomena in question, i.e. a ballroom in a noble palace at the end of the 18th century, just as the majority of readers will imagine it. However, this kind of schematic depiction is sufficient in the given situation, for here the mechanism of reader cooperation is deployed, as is tellingly described by Umberto Eco in his exposition of the operation of fictional worlds in literature (Eco 1997: 640–641). He believes that this is based

on the fact that a number of aspects in the fictional world are naturally presumed (the *superficiality* principle) and that a number of them only become conceivable if the reader is able to adapt his experience of the actual world to them (the *flexibility* principle). Based on the example of an exposition of Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, the author shows that the rather general characterization of the Gascony landscape with its vineyards and olive groves has sufficient capacity to form the fictional environment, because it refers to a landscape type that is typical of southern Europe, or to the fixed (somewhat superficial) cultural idea of this kind of landscape. This means that even if the reader has never experienced this landscape type and cannot base his idea on his own experience, it will suffice for the purposes of the narrative in question if he takes this cliché-ridden cultural characterization for granted. The same applies to Jirásek's description of the ballroom at the Colloredo-Mansfeld palace: the marble facing of the walls, the chandeliers and girandoles with their profusion of candles, the Venetian mirrors and the high doors with their decorative carvings – none of this brings to mind a specific image of a particular ballroom, but just an "atmosphere of aristocratic magnificence". And it is on this basis of the reader's cooperation (which includes the aforementioned *flexibility* and *superficiality*, cf. ibid.: 635–642) that the psychologically based "superficiality" of Márinka's observations brought about by her emotional excitement is sealed. Thus, Jirásek presents us with a rather schematic description (while relying on the superficiality principle) only to use it as a foundation for psychological projection of the character. Since this projection is a subtle (an inaccurate interpretation based on limited knowledge) and a singular one, it does not result in distorting the image of the reality observed, while providing a double individualizing quality at the same time: both when related to the subject of description, and to the observing character herself.

"From Saturday to the graveyard": description of the circumstances

In view of its structure and its share in the structure of the narrative, this subcategory of description might serve as a good argument for those who doubt the usefulness of placing boundaries between description and narration. Let us first dwell upon a comparison of two excerpts: both include concentrated information on the time-space coordinates of the plot, which is unsurprising in view of the fact that both can be found at the beginning

of their respective chapters. The first is actually at the very beginning of the novel *Děti čistého živého* (Children of Pure Living Spirit, 1909), in the initial exposition, and explicitly stated, and the incomplete time details actually refer to historical time, while in the second, which comes from the aforementioned chronicle *U nás* (Vol. 1, 1897, at the beginning of Chapter 15) cyclical time is referred to, with its festivals and the associated annual events:

> On a Saturday afternoon sometime towards the end of June 1860, as day was fast slipping into dusk, Machata the gravedigger set out from his little home, wedged in close between the road and several more substantial-looking cottages. Passing the dishevelled garden, where besides a few sunflowers, perennial honesty ran wild under an ancient apple tree with grotesque branches and sparse foliage, he quickly fixed several half-broken posts in the fence and having crossed the bridge he walked along the broad road down to the square, at the southern end of which a modest chapel stood out in the middle of a graveyard behind a solidly-built wall. (Nováková 1966: 6)

> The day before All Saints, that is, before the Padolí fair, a merchant's wagon drawn by a poor, gaunt, shaggy gelding, drew up at the "courtyard" in the late afternoon. Wearing a ring in his ear and a strangely-shaped hat, the merchant came to a halt right outside the unhewn sandstone portal, behind which a now bare poplar loomed in one corner. (Jirásek 1929: 146)

The contemporary reader will undoubtedly have the feeling that due to the quantity of incidental information, the straightforward identification of action governed by a specific intention (the gravedigger sets out for the graveyard to dig a grave for a burial the following day; the merchant comes to the local fair and stops off at the "court" magistrate's) is delayed to a surprising extent. In the first excerpt this tendency seems to affect the readability of the compound sentence, which the modern-day non-academic reader may even judge to be insufficiently transparent: the passage on the actual action is repeatedly interrupted here by the description of the additional activities (e.g. the rather automatic adjustment of the posts in the fence) and the secondary circumstances (the appearance of the house and the state of the garden).

As the action described in the extensive compound sentence is separated by the description of these circumstances into two parts, the impression may arise that these circumstances actually dominate the scene. This is easily explained by the traditional function of the exposition to provide information on the time and the setting of the plot. Moreover, the descriptive elements cannot be separated off here, but it is also very difficult to judge which of these circumstances are indispensable for anchoring the character in the fictional world, and which of them are already "redundant" – as the narratologists themselves confirm, a certain amount of redundancy (references to specific phenomena and attributes of the fictional world) is essential for the narrative to function.

A transformation test enables us to verify the extent to which the question of redundancy is deceptive: if we imagine this same situation in a film, all the circumstances described will accompany the actions performed by the characters in several shots, simply because the "film cannot help describing" (as Seymour Chatman so tellingly puts it, 1990: 40–41), because it is unavoidable for it as a medium "to show the physical being" of the external world (or its *whatness*, as Wolf calls it, cf. 2007: 28). In film, just as in art which is "time-based", but which has a visual component, the display of "reality in the simultaneity of things" appears obvious: The automatic adjustment of the fence posts lasts just a moment and thus will appear to be very natural; the choice between a broad shot and a close-up, for example, will then decide whether the viewer is at all aware of this action, or will ascribe any particular significance to it. In a review of this film, its "sense for realistic detail" may be discussed regarding the sequence in question (especially provided an approach of this kind were repeated and highlighted by the choice of shot and the like), but hardly its redundancy.

The realism of the representation in Nováková's novel is based in the interweaving of "the simultaneous coexistence of the inessential" (i.e. the descriptive elements of representation) and the successivity of action (the narrative elements) referring to an event in the prehistory of the story told (Koutný's death). Conversely, by referring to this procedure, which respects in as great detail as possible the unavoidable situatedness of man in time-

space, we may defend this method as realistic.[16] And it is in the proximity to this unavoidable real-life situatedness that the quality we seek here, its *experientiality*, is implicitly involved.

If we summarize the experiential aspects of descriptiveness in the cases under review, it is obvious at first sight that the temporal aspect predominates: however, as a result it is not the case that the traditional sharp polarity between the *staticity of description* and the *dynamism of narration* should collapse, or that description "is *dynamized* by narrativization", but rather most frequently the interplay between the *temporal and the cognitive* aspect: The seemingly *stable* attributes of an object are described – as they are observed – in their *changeability*, depending on the ambient lighting, the mood or the focus of the implicitly or explicitly determined observer. Here questions are raised regarding the theoretization of the phenomenon (for example, does it make sense in this context to introduce a "descriptor" category as a complement to the narrator?[17]) and its application in the historical poetics of fiction, for it would seem that the changes in the aspects of experientiality at the intersection of description and narration are indeed, as we have been able to see in our excerpts, modelled to a considerable extent by the microcontext, but that they are quite obviously based on a "representative macromode", which is bound to the rules of the genre. This particularly applies (as indicated in the excerpts from *F. L. Věk* and the "new chronicle" *U nás*) for the rhythm of the chronicle method, which is not only determined chronotopically, but also by alternation between emphasis on representation of the "world" and the "story"[18] in it. Investigating this relationship is a task for further research.

16 Whether or not it will stand up to the reception demands of the modern reader is quite another question.

17 The case of "some pagan paradise" suggests it may prove helpful in some cases, since Márinka's focalization does not affect the narration as a complex mode; her view interferes only with the descriptive part of the narratorial function.

18 Lecture by Marie-Laure Ryan in Prague 29. 10. 2013, see http://www.flu.cas.cz/cz/text-worlds-stories [accessed 31. 1. 2014]. Very roughly speaking, the author provided with exemplifications her suggestion to distinguish narrative genres in accordance with the extent of attention that is paid within the structure of their fictional world to the "world itself" (i.e. its "furnishing" in Eco's sense) and to the story, or to be more precise the plot (for the terms *story* and *plot* were applied as synonyms in the lecture, while it may be argued easily that there is no other mode of existence for a fictional world than that of *storyworld*).

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