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# Stories in Mind – the Relationship between the Narratological Categories of Order and Time and the Reader’s Cognitive Structures as Exemplified in Büchner’s Play *Woyzeck*

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Stories in Mind – the Relationship between the Narratological Categories of *Order* and *Time* and  
the Reader's Cognitive Structures as Exemplified in Büchner's Play *Woyzeck*  
by  
Marc Breetzke

A master's thesis presented to the  
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts

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St. Louis, Missouri

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*May 2015*

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

A fascination with the mind and with psychology is not new to the field of narratology. In order to analyze and interpret literary texts, it is often necessary to draw from psychology as a reference, or further, as a method. Therefore, it is not surprising that, as research about (human) consciousness and the mind expands, the interest of narratologists has increasingly turned toward new results from and insights into the interaction between the story and the brain. Historically speaking, narratology, sooner or later, had to have a “cognitive turn.” Before we can speak about what this means exactly, however, one question must be answered: what are the reasons for this heightened interest in the mind and the brain?

To answer this, I would like to focus on two major causes of such a cognitive turn: First, the research, especially on brain processes, offers a new perspective on literature, on its “interaction” with the reader’s brain, and broadly speaking, on the process of reading. When we know more about brain functions and brain processes we can also broaden our understanding of how texts are written. Of course, it is not my primary interest to make assumptions about the production of texts, but to develop an understanding of how to read literature and understand its affect on the reader. However, we may gain new perspectives and methods of analyzing and interpreting narratives based on the science of the brain and the mind. In other words, when we have an understanding of how the brain and the mind work, we can read texts with that understanding, and for example, actually start to see processes of the mind within narratives.

A second cause of the “cognitive turn” is the desire to broaden the understanding of the reader. As Umberto Eco points out in his *Lector in fabula*, we can find implied authors and implied readers in narratives; although he uses different terms (cf. Eco 74ff.). Thereby he means that the actual reader of a text will—independently of the actual author—create an image of the author within her mind.<sup>1,2</sup> These constructions are the result of the reading experience. Having insight into the workings of the brain and the mind can help us to further reflect on the interpretations and methodology of hermeneutics. Furthermore, our analysis of the cognitive and neurological aspects of a text can become the foundation of a discussion that clears up certain questions, for example, what the text *does* to the reader.

My intent is not to perform empirical research that brings forth statistical results, although it would be interesting to measure the accuracy of the theoretically based instruments. It is the task of neurologists and cognitive scientists to gather empirical data on brain processes as well as ways and means of categorizing them in conjunction with reading, remembering and reconstructing stories and interpretation. However, a narratological approach allows one to contribute to the system of utilizable categories to conduct such experiments. My focus is how narratological categories blend with cognitive processes as they are known today. The purpose of identifying the intersection of narratology and cognitive sciences is to lead to a better understanding of two major components: first, reception, i.e. the process of analyzing and interpreting literary texts within the reader’s mind (and brain), and second, on a theoretical level,

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<sup>1</sup> The opposite is also true: The author will write his text with an image of a reader—although not necessarily an actual (or even probable) readership. However, it can be argued that authors do not always write for a reader; some authors may just write for themselves. I would respond by saying they then have themselves as “reader” in mind.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the thesis, I will refer to the reader as “she,” and to the author as “he.” This choice is completely arbitrary and could be the other way around; of course, I talk about the reader and the author as operators. The only reason why to gender these categories is the readability of the text.

the intersection between data from cognitive sciences and narratological categories for the analysis of literary texts.

Two basic questions thus constitute the driving force of the current interest in cognitive science and neuroscience within the field of narratology: First, what does the reader's mind (facilitated by the brain) do to the text? Second, what does the text do to the reader's mind? Before I go into the details of what this "cognitive turn" really means, I would like to clarify the terms "brain" and "mind". I use the rather obvious term "brain" to refer to the physical, biological organ within one's head. There are a variety of disciplines doing research on the brain by analyzing (among other things) physical, chemical, and biological aspects; their focus is on the specific processes within this organ.

On the one hand, research on the mind is concerned with conscious experience. The mind is considered the non-physical "place" of awareness and consciousness, where we perceive ourselves and where our attention "sits". In other words, whenever we think a thought, pay attention to or read something, we utilize our conscious mind to do these tasks. The brain, on the other hand, is the physical, biological "operation center," or device, "running the mind," and facilitating the operations of the mind in a structural manner. Therefore, it is accurate to say that brain processes determine the mind's ability to function; however, the processes within our mind we do perceive within our mind do not help us to understand the processes running in our brain in the background, so to say. For the purposes of our analysis of the reader's mind and brain, we focus primarily on those processes that are mind-related and therefore lead to an understanding of the reader's comprehension of a story as well as the way in which she comes to conclusions regarding a literary text. However, by "mind-related" I do not necessarily mean processes that are apparent to the reader; in other words, she might not be aware of certain structures within the



text, not because the individual is not able to identify such structures, but because, for example, a lack in training to see those structures that can be made visible through linguistic analysis.

We now come to the questions that arise, along with the matter of what we gain, when we focus on the mind and brain processes. I would like to illustrate these aspects with the help of adaptation theory, which is exemplified when someone makes a movie based on a book. Generally speaking, when one reads stories, she, at the same time, builds images in the mind. One “sees” people, objects and places, and one also has no difficulty in determining how long the actions described in the story take.<sup>3</sup> For example, we can easily differentiate between *narrated time* and *narrative time*. But the question arises as to whether the *quality* of those constructions varies depending on the author’s use of certain techniques and textual structures. In other words, how does the author make the reader think and imagine along with the story? Are there ways to make the reader imagine more and become more immersed in the story? Can we identify strategies that are more successful than others to make the text more engaging for the reader? Understanding the relevant factors in the mind that process texts, which lead to the triggering of imagination (and eventually the creation of certain expectations), allows the reader of literature to identify a certain type of structure that, intentionally or unintentionally, leads toward certain hermeneutic conclusions. In short, when we understand what makes the reader think and imagine, we can find structures in the text that have exactly that effect on the reader’s mind.

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<sup>3</sup> However, questions of focalization remain, for example, regarding who perceives and experiences within a story and who tells the story. These questions require more thought and are not as easily answered. Yet, the fact remains that the reader eventually has a picture of the characters, objects, and events described in the book on the screen of her mind.

Often, one experiences the emotion of disappointment after having seen a movie based on a good book.<sup>4</sup> The thoughts one has while reading a book form certain expectations with regard to a movie, which then are not always fulfilled and satisfied. For example, the characters in the film look different than they do in the viewer's imagination, the voices do not fit those "heard" in the reader's mind. We already have certain images of characters that depend, of course, on the description of them in the book. The premise that the director creates the movie in connection with her own imagination, which varies from that of other readers, leads to the necessary assumption that the construction of images indeed varies from reader to reader.

Another important cause of the disappointment, with movies based on books that a reader might experience, lies within the nature of adaptation itself. As Linda Hutcheon points out in *A Theory of Adaptation*, three major perspectives on adaptations are relevant for explaining why the reader's expectation from reading a book about seeing a movie and the actual watching experience do not match: adaptation involves "a formal entity or product, [...] a process of creation, and a process of reception" (Hutcheon 2006, pp. 7). The first function consists of the process of transcoding, a change from one medium (a book) to another (a movie). The second function shows why the movie based on a book cannot be a simple copy of it; it always contains added and erased information, and it is partly created on its own. Therefore, an adaptation is ultimately a new text. The disappointment of a reader having watched a movie adaptation stems from the difference between this reader's experience of the book and the moviemaker's reading experience. Therefore, we can see how there cannot be universal predictions about how these constructions emerge within the mind. Different people will imagine the same text in different ways; they translate them in images that vary individually.

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<sup>4</sup> Numerous blog entries discuss disappointing movies based on books (Cf. [http://www.ew.com/ew/gallery/0,,20483133\\_20577348\\_21131377,00.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/gallery/0,,20483133_20577348_21131377,00.html), accessed 01/16/2015).

The example of the movie allows for a new perspective on an important term that is as related to the theory of adaptation as it is to narratology: focalization. Although I will dwell on this concept a little bit further later on, I will briefly touch on it here to illustrate this category in context to films. Focalization deals with the question regarding through whose perspective the reader “sees” and experiences the story. This narratological category focuses on how the narrator tells the story to a reader and which perspective the reader and the narrator takes. Specifically, we analyze the following: who sees what happens, who tells, and who experiences what happens. Each of these focal points changes, of course, depending on how the author composes the narrative; the distinctions are easily understood if one considers the difference between a first-person and a third-person narrator.

The narratological category of focalization applied to making a movie based on a book has to address the question of how to depict “narratives”—basically, how to literally show what is written. Since in a film there is usually no explicit instance of a narrator who tells the story, the audience takes over the narrator’s role. It becomes a witness through the lens of the camera. The placement of the pictures into a coherent narrative happens on a mental level. On the level of adapting the book and creating a movie, the direction and the use of the camera have to translate the reading experience into a watching experience, and the images of the mind must be translated into an almost tangible reality that can be witnessed by an audience in a much more specific way, because the function of the narrator is divided between the camera work and the audience itself. Watching a film thus requires less imagination than reading a book. This fact underlines Hutcheon’s point that the adaptation is a recreation. The filmmakers must reduce certain parts of the text while others are expanded, or even just created for the (primarily) visual experience.

In a literary text, focalization basically describes the specific perspective or focus through which the reader experiences the story. How this experience unfolds then determines a reader's analysis and interpretation of the literary text. Therefore, focalization is an important part of the reading and, later, the hermeneutic process. However, it is not the only crucial criterion. I argue that chronology, the order in which the reader experiences and perceives the events, is a major component that influences the reader's propensity to assign a major theme to a literary text. To prove this argument I will focus on Georg Büchner's play *Woyzeck* (1879). Although it is a play and therefore not a typical object of research in the discipline of narratology, I find in my analysis of it—as a narrative text (and not as a play)—some evidence for the claim that chronology indeed influences the hermeneutic attributes one assigns.

I choose *Woyzeck* to provide evidence of the arguments above for two reasons. First, *Woyzeck* is only retained as a fragment; four different manuscripts exist but no final version exists, and one can only guess the proper order of the finalized scenes we do have. And, in fact, over the course of the past twenty years, scholars have again and again changed their opinion about how Büchner meant to present the scenes. Arguing from a structural standpoint, I will show how changing the arrangement of the scenes inevitably leads to a different outcome in the reader's identification of the play's major theme. Second, *Woyzeck*, as already mentioned, is a play, not a prose text. Hence, it does not contain a narrator. In other words, the important function of ordering falls back to the reader. She has to figure out the actual timeline of the story, i.e. the order or sequence of events as they happen in the story world. The timeline stands in contrast to the order or sequence of events as the reader learns about them, which I call chronology. However, the reader's brain process of segmentation does not take place in the same

way it would with a prose text.<sup>5</sup> Since the play consists of individual scenes, each scene already encapsulates segments of events that the reader can rather easily remember; in contrast to a novel, in which the reader continuously processes information and usually forms segments of events to remember on his or her own. I will come back to this point later when I talk about the importance of memory for the process of reading and interpreting literary texts. In any case, because the entity of the narrator is not apparent within the play, the effects of chronology become more obvious to the reader; there is no narrator filtering the reader's processing of the story by making transitions between or within the scenes. Therefore, if there is no narrator between the reader and the story, the reader is closer to the story events, in terms of her experience of them.

In the first chapter I will cover the connection between literary text and narratological interest in analyzing literature. I discuss the components that make up the structure of a narrative and explain some basic concepts in order to provide a clearer understanding of a narratological perspective. I will then introduce some basic categories that are important for eliciting hermeneutic conclusions. Concurrently, I will introduce cognitive mechanisms and processes that blend and align with narratological categories in order to show the closeness between the story, narratological perspective, and actual processes within the brain and mental activities.

In the second chapter, I will describe the functions of narratological and cognitive categories in connection with examples from Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, which I analyze through the aspect of chronology. I then show how the reader's conclusions differ in terms of interpretational readings.

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<sup>5</sup> Martha Nussbaum claims, for example, that readers generally read different types of texts differently than others and therefore follow different strategies of reading (cf. 5f).

In the concluding chapter, I discuss the validity of using neuro-scientific material in connection with narratological concepts. I argue that the insight into the reader gained through the use of cognitive science and narratology produces a more effective approach to the questions of what a reader does to a literary text and what the text does to a reader. I will propose some components to add to the concept of the reader. Finally, I discuss questions regarding the value of expanding the classical narratological analysis. It is not only important to understand the reader, but also to discuss the reader in combination with the text and the dynamic that evolves out of this connection.

## **Chapter 2**

# **The text and the reader or the question of the chicken and the egg**

Generally speaking, we view the purpose of reading as a process of comprehending a text, which we can divide into different levels. One understands first, on a micro-level, the simple meaning of words and sentences of a given text. In terms of goals, the focus of the reader on this level lies on understanding vocabulary and grammar; in this way the reader grasps the basic meaning of what she reads. Understanding deeper meaning based on non-explicit interpretation, however, requires a higher level of reading. Accordingly, above the micro-level of understanding, an advanced form of understanding involves extending the boundaries the text sets. On this second level of reading, the reader applies the written content to the world, according to her understanding of the world, and utilizes this understanding to gain new insights from the literary text. What is interesting about this discussion of text comprehension and text interpretation is the fact that the reader is taken for granted while the focus is on the texts themselves. Generally speaking, the question arises: what was there first, the reader or the text? From a production-oriented perspective, one might argue that neither was; rather, the author was first. However, if we then take a closer look at the writing process itself, basically the same question applies, since the writer at the time of writing is also reading what is written. There is no text without a reader; this situation reflects Eco's exposition for searching for the reader within the (literary) text, which I discuss in this chapter. Systematically, I begin with the text as a structural field in which one can analyze content, or more accurately, in which the reader can realize certain information. I then discuss the boundaries of what actually is in the text and how it

(the text) has “adapting” points that make the reader a necessary component not only for the realization of the story from the text that is encoded by words and sentences, but also as a means to bridge literary “gaps” (cf. Iser 38). This is information the text does not contain; the reader however needs to add such information in order to understand the story. Both information encoded in a text and information we know about that is actually not in the text, however, do not suffice as foundation for a reader model. Therefore, I argue, we need to turn to cognitive sciences in order to gain further insight into the reader’s comprehension and hermeneutic processes, which can ultimately lead to an understanding of the complete reading process.<sup>1</sup>

### *Stories as linguistic structures*

When we consider stories as constructs of textual elements, one can analyze by undertaking a structural analysis, we have to assume that the structures of these stories are also relevant to the understanding of the story. Therefore, by analyzing these structures, we analyze at the same time the evolution of our reception as readers and the development of our understanding of these structures. From a neurological perspective, we can only identify certain structures within a text if we are equipped to do so. In other words, our mere ability to recognize structures in the text is proof that the distinct patterns we witness are also relevant in our brain processes during the reading experience. At this point, I argue that there must be a congruence, a certain symmetry,

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<sup>1</sup> When I use the term “complete” or “final” in combination with reading or interpretation, I do not mean that the reader’s opinion about the text do not change. However, the process by which opinions change, either because the reader re-reads a text or because she discusses the text with a third party, remains the same. Therefore, I mean “complete” and “final” in terms of understanding all the processes and mechanisms, and not in the sense of the end of interpretation.



between the reader's identification of structures and the structures implemented by an author in the text.

For the purpose of categorizing these structures, the information within a sentence must have two functions in order to allow us to create a taxonomy. First, the information within a given narrative structure must be identifiable as such, and second, this information must recognizably vary in comparison to other structures. The main question therefore concerns whether one can find an underlying structure as the basis of literary texts that then defines a text as being a narrative. But even if structural elements indicate a narrative structure, not every reader can rely on this categorization; for example, she still might confuse fiction with non-fiction (e.g. a commercial). Therefore, paratexts must frame the text like book covers, so that the reader is not dependent on reading the structural information. The framing also establishes a certain expectation regarding a text and adds to the text its own structure.

In order to understand the narrative as a structure, we need to know the components required to build it. Therefore, in the following paragraphs I give a short introduction to a narratological perspective on this issue and provide some key information. Historically speaking, the discipline of narratology has evolved from the field of linguistics. Since undergoing a cultural turn, narratology has loosened itself from its structural roots and undertakes research on a variety of aspects related to questions regarding what is key to storytelling. However, for the purpose of defining what a narrative structure is, I claim that an approach considering the linguistic basis underneath narratology provides some benefits. Basically, linguistics, especially syntax, has a "bottom-up" approach: in order to understand the syntactic workings of an entire complex sentence, the linguist analyzes the syntactic structures of smaller elements within this one sentence. The insights gained into how these smaller structures work then enable the linguist to

understand the sentence. Now, from a sentence level, information must trickle up, so to say, so that one can undertake a structural analysis on a textual level. Here we enter the field of text linguistics. In the next paragraphs, I explain some basic categories of text linguistics, so that we have foundation when we come to the specifics of narrative texts.

One of the basic elements within text linguistics that is important in order for making this step from sentence level to text level is the *proposition*. In their introductory book *Textlinguistik und Textgrammatik: Eine Einführung*, Christina Gansel and Christina Jürgens define proposition as a „[g]rundlegende satzsemantische Kategorie, mit deren Hilfe der Kern der Satzbedeutung erfasst wird“ (Gansel/Jürgens 261). In other words, the value of the proposition thus lies in its ability to transport the information of a sentence on a meta-sentence or text level. Based on this proposition model, linguists then define texts, according to Wolfgang Heinemann and Dieter Viehweger in their book *Textlinguistik: Eine Einführung*, “als geordnete Folge von Propositionen, die durch interpropositionale Relationen miteinander verknüpft sind” (Heinemann/Viehweger 44). This definition helps, from a text linguistic perspective, to identify the information in a given text.

An analysis of the hierarchical structure of these propositions within a text leads to what Teun A. van Dijk calls, in “Textwissenschaft: Eine interdisziplinäre Einführung”, a “Makrostruktur” or, more broadly, a “Textthema” (van Dijk 39). Technically, for the reader to know all the information of a given text does not suffice in order to decide what *kind* of text it is. The additional category of text function is required so that the analyst can identify the illocutionary structure; this approach is based on Searle’s speech act theory (cf. Searle 1969). This analysis allows, from a text linguistic perspective, the reader to determine the function of a whole text; for example, an examination of the illocutionary structure answers the question of

whether the text has an overall directive function or if it is an expressive text (for example, if the author expresses his attitudes or feelings).<sup>2</sup>

I have been speaking thus far of the (text) linguistic approach to *any* text. The question that arises now regards the specifics of literary, narrative texts. To understand the elements of narrative structures, we have to know which system is relevant for determining uniquely narrative features. Van Dijk states that the information of the propositions within the sentences of a given text does not allow for a categorization of a text. Merely because the author provides certain information, one cannot know whether he employs this information in the environment of a story, in a description of something, or in the context of an argument. Therefore, functional analysis can help identify what the text does. The result of this analysis is what Van Dijk calls a superstructure. With a binary model, he thus shows the different levels of a narrative structure.

Others have stated certain rules within a so-called story grammar. For example, as Bortolussi and Dixon summarize,

a story consists of a setting followed by an episode, an episode consists of an event followed by a reaction, and an event consists of either an (embedded) episode, a change of state, an action, or an embedded sequence of events (102).

This quote represents an attempt to show the constitutive parts of a narrative structure in a hierarchical order. In other words, scholars have shown how narratives present certain structures that seem to follow the same rules, and they have made the attempt to apply these rules to all different kind texts. Such structural discoveries have led to ambitious endeavors with the purpose

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<sup>2</sup> Here coherence comes into the equation, too. In order for a text to be coherent, it cannot show gaps on the different levels. Incoherence therefore might be the case, for example, if certain propositions contradict each other. Coherence also involves semantic and pragmatic aspects.

of categorizing all narratives known and to create a list of all types. For example, Wladimir Jakowlewitsch Propp as a famous representative of formalism conducted research on folktales and their *narratemes* (the smallest unit within a narrative, as an analogy to morphemes, the smallest identifiable unit that contains meaning) (cf. Propp 1972). He found 31 different universal narratemes in his research.<sup>3</sup> Results such as these lead to the assumption that there are grammar-like rules that govern the structure and the functions of narratives.

To summarize, I have shown how the narrative as a certain type of text provides certain structures that, first, make the text a narrative, and, second, are not arbitrary. In fact, as we have seen with how Bortolussi and Dixon define narratives, a hierarchical order governs the story-syntactic constitution of a story.

### ***How the text makes room for the reader***

By now we know that a narrative text can be identified by certain structural components one can analyze. However, before we can prove that brain processes and mental activities match the textual structure in order to construct comprehension—and later on build a foundation for an interpretation—not only do we have to search for the text “within” the reader, I also assume there is, in the first place, the structural construct of a reader within a text we have to understand. For the purpose of comprehending the reader’s function in combination with the text, we first need to understand how the text functions. After our exploration of the linguistic make-up of narratives, we can identify categories and elements that construct a text, which we need in order

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<sup>3</sup> In his blog “Mindsigh,” Jerry Everard provides a brief but good overview of the different universal types Propp categorized ([http://lostbiro.com/blog/?page\\_id=522](http://lostbiro.com/blog/?page_id=522), accessed 03/15/2015).

to know how we can realize certain structures. However, the question remains regarding how the text *intends* to communicate with the reader. Or, in other words, how must the reader *interact* with the text, so that she can have a satisfactory reading experience in which comprehension, interpretation and, ultimately, pleasure<sup>4</sup> can occur? We cannot solve this puzzle by looking only at the pieces we have already identified. Moreover, we need to take a look at what is *not* in the text.

Here I refer to what has been called gaps or “Leerstellen.” Eco takes the example of a short narrative, whereby he shows how much the reader needs to engage with a text in order to produce meaning, and at the same time, how well the reader’s mind performs this engagement (cf. Eco 62). Eco comes to the conclusion, “[d]er Text ist also mit Leerstellen durchsetzt, mit Zwischenräumen, die ausgefüllt werden müssen; und wer den Text sendet, geht davon aus, daß jene auch ausgefüllt werden” (Eco 63). In other words, the author’s intention to leave out information (deliberately or by default) is an intrinsic part of the reader’s ability to have a reading experience. Here we see not only how intertwined the text and the reader are, but also how the relationship between the author and the reader is manifested. The fact that the text needs the reader to work (by deducing from the given information and actualizing the text within the reader) leads Eco to the realization that the reader is structurally implemented into, or implied in, the text. Strictly speaking, the author implements reader-structures with certain functions for the actual reader to fulfill (who is a human being focusing on an actual book). These dynamics that I just circumscribed are the underlying concepts of what scholars in the field of narratology discuss under the labels of the *implied reader* (cf. Schmid “Implied Reader”) and the *implied author* (cf. Schmid “Implied Author”). In other words, Eco points out that every literary text also

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<sup>4</sup> The aspect of pleasure or satisfaction is not dependent on the reading process and individual reader with different preferences will experience varying results. Here I refer to an (theoretically) optimum experience.

has this reader-structure and an author-structure. Specifically, authors inevitably implement a reader-structure by having assumptions about their readership and designing the text according to these assumptions. In contrast, the reader makes assumptions about the author based on the text and his reading experience.<sup>5</sup> However, there is a difference between the actual reader and the implied reader. This is such that in some instances the reader might not be (intellectually) familiar with the vocabulary of the author, or their common set of vocabulary is very small, both which make it difficult for the reader to understand. In other cases the reader might “over”-read something, by which I mean that she adds meaning that the author did not intend to place in the text. In either case, the text works on its own with dynamics of which the author and the reader are parts, but in which the text develops its own unforeseen dynamics. In fact, both the actual reader and the implied reader interact with each other. Parts of the implied reader that the actual reader should actualize simply get lost. In other cases, the implied reader “knows” concepts the actual reader does not; however, the actual reader is able to learn these concepts by the way they are presented. In such an instance, the implied reader teaches or educates the actual reader; therein a dialogue emerges.

In this problem we can thus see the underlying aspects involved in the communication between the actual author and the reader. The author (of a narrative) creates a text that inevitably has intrinsic structures: first, the author-structure, which realizes itself in the way the reader thinks about the author; second, the narrative content-structure, which usually consists of the narrator and the narrated content; and third, the reader-structure. Outside of this structural field

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<sup>5</sup> Here one could ask whether the author intentionally implements this author-structure to create a certain image of himself within the reader’s mind, or whether the author’s ability to design such an author-construction is rather limited. Since the actual reader does not necessarily fit the reader-structure, an implemented author-structure might be an attempt to actually control the author-structure that is never totally in control.

we also have the actual reader who sits (usually) alone and who, parallel to some processes within the brain, focuses her eyes on the book.

Considering all the components involved within the reading process, we can ponder this question: Can we contour a reader model that might be based partially on assumptions, but which has an overall foundation of knowledge of how the mind of the reader functions? One might suggest that the implied reader may give sufficient information about the reader to make conclusions. However, there are two main arguments refuting this idea. First, the reader-structure is author-based. In other words, the information we can draw from is based on the author and there are several problems related to this fact. The author usually implements and creates the implied reader-structure on the basis of his single point of view. The author might not know that the reader has to actualize the text, but instead, the author simply interprets his own fantasy, and therefore subconsciously implements a reader that is rather unspecific. Another problem is that the results of an analysis of the reader-structure stems from the conventions the author is used to. In other words, the model of a reader we would generate from drawing conclusions from implied reader-structures, is, at best, shaky. In fact, we cannot necessarily find any information about the reader if we rely on the author.<sup>6</sup> Second, the most important reason we cannot rely solely on the structures within a text lies in the fact that those structures only sporadically contain information. Only the text and the reader's mind together are able to sufficiently actualize the text. Similarly to the way in which the reader has to fill in gaps within stories to create a coherent story world (and to understand the text at all), the reader-structure in a given narrative is fragmentary and

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<sup>6</sup> One interesting question to ask at this point is whether there are (narratively identifiable) texts without a reader-structure. The answer, according to Eco, must be no, since a text that does not meet the requirement of being actualized and read by any means does not fulfill the basic criteria of being a text.

incomplete and at some point even indeterminable. Therefore, we have to turn toward sources that lie outside the strictly structural approach.

### ***The process of reading***

In order to find more information about the reader I claim that it is necessary to understand the process and the activity of reading itself. The function of the mind is especially important, because it is the common denominator first in reading comprehension and then in interpretive efforts. Here, I separate these steps strictly, although they sometimes actually occur as parallel operations during reading. Text understanding leads to interpretation; however, if there is no basic comprehension, the necessary foundation to build a solid interpretation is missing. I will cover the distinction between text comprehension and interpretation more thoroughly later in this chapter. However, theoretically speaking, they involve very different processes of the mind. The first process involves the one requirement reading comprehension generally must fulfill, and that is memory. One cannot understand a story without having the ability to remember it. Moreover, there are some specific aspects to this process.

As Speer, Zacks and Reynolds point out in their article “Human Brain Activity Time-Locked to Narrative Event Boundaries”, the brain segments every activity by dividing it “into a series of discrete units, or events” (449). Our brain orders, hierarchizes, and prioritizes the continuous stream of information in order to provide, at a conscious level, a basis for appropriate behavior. All these processes take place subconsciously, which means that to a large degree we are not aware of this segmenting process. The same mechanism that runs during the process of the real world runs during the reading process, but at another level. The text provides similar



informational input; however, the reader's brain does not simply process what it receives through the sensory faculties, it also needs to translate, in this case, the "ink spots" on the paper before us into meaningful words, sentences, and scenes. The brain then interprets the meaning of these events and gives them an *emotional representation*, i.e. an overall encoded memory of a particular event to which our first access is an emotional one. Once such an event is recalled, the "content" in terms of the specifics of a particular scene unravels and we access the whole (and completed) event. The act of recalling thus allows the reader to easily access the information of a story. Also, the emotional coding of the scene allows the reader to locate the scene in the bigger picture, although such a locating process is not always reliable, especially when the number of scenes in consideration is rather high, and scenes that do not seem as important as others to the reader are harder to remember.<sup>7</sup> The process of remembering allows the reader later on to activate the memories of this narrative, therefore recall the story and enter a discourse by interpreting (the memories of the story). However, the process of memory activation is less accurate than one might expect because the scenes are not merely recalled, but literally recreated. In other words, the reader does not recall the events as they were described. Rather, the reader only remembers the basic situation and then creates, in her own language, a new text and literally paraphrases these events. However, in this case we have to talk about a derivation from the original text; in fact, we can say that the reader (re-)creates a certain narrative and thus that a new text emerges. This "re-creational" aspect is an important fact when we consider how we treat texts. In fact, for our understanding of interpretations we need to differentiate between the *immediate interpretation* and the *final interpretation*.

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<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the recall process is rather restrictive, which one should keep in mind in the broader discourse of interpretation, in which the accuracy of recalling content does not seem to be questioned. In fact, when interpreting, the basis is often a perfect memory and absolute access to everything regarding the content of a given text.

The former happens, as the term suggests, immediately during the reading experience. Immediate interpretation occurs sporadically and is less a rational process than an emotional hunch or a specific thought that occurs parallel to the comprehension process. Here Daniel Kahneman provides insight into understanding how this works. In his *Thinking Fast Thinking Slow*, Kahneman differentiates between two mental or cognitive processes that work not only very differently in terms of start and end, but also provide different information for the receiver in regard to their target:

- *System 1* operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control.
- *System 2* allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations. The operations of System 2 are often associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration (21f.).

In other words, we usually call the first system intuition; we activate or utilize the second system when we deliberately turn our attention to something (e.g. an object or a question).

Therefore, the second process that I have identified, as the final interpretation, results from a longer cognitive interaction (system 2) with the details and the specifics of the text. Accordingly, we must involve the faculty of creativity in order to begin the second form of interpretation. Ultimately, it appears as if the first form of interpretation, immediate interpretation, is a further form of “digesting” the comprehension and results from the process of building emotional representations. Accordingly, such sporadic emergences of “blink” moments, as Malcolm Gladwell calls them, are then associated more closely with the text. The perspectives the reader forms and evaluates after the reading in a final interpretation then leverages those

moments, in which the reader forms opinions about the text. As a result the whole process of final interpretation is more efficient and uses fewer resources in terms of “working memory” or mental capacity. When I discuss the specifics of interpretation as a process in the second chapter, I will further discuss how exactly this mnemonic capacity functions.

## ***Travelling systems – narratology and cognitive sciences as neighbors***

By considering the actual reader and the memory involved in connection to other aspects of the reading process, we can see what constitutes text comprehension. The next step of understanding interpretation, however, consists in analyzing the interference of the actual reader with the text and what aspects are involved in this. Hence we can explore the field of narratology, which is engaged in identifying tools and instruments one can utilize to interpret narratives (from a reader-perspective) and thus arrive at valuable conclusions. The foundation of the discipline of narratology lies in between the text-linguistic realm we touched upon earlier and the pragmatics of a given text.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the roots of narratology in structural analysis, the more modern field of narratology appears to be more cluster-like with many different tendencies with regard to what is being observed. Parts of narratology are solely focused on theoretical

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<sup>8</sup> One could say that the pragmatics of a narrative is predetermined by the narrative structure. This means that the reader knows what to do and how to treat such a text. However, this is not to be confused with the pragmatic utilization of a given narrative, for example in advertisements where stories are used for the purpose of a call to action, namely to buy a product or service. The former statement remains true, however, that within the story the pragmatic structures are predetermined; the ad in this example would be, hierarchically speaking, a superimposed structure with new pragmatic paradigms.

questions while others apply developed instruments to single stories, and others engage with genres. More recently, there has been interest in exploring in the field of cognitive sciences, neurology, and sciences of the mind.<sup>9</sup> The reason for this “cognitive” turn lies in advanced technology, and therefore the new possibilities result not only in empirical studies but also in theoretical and at times even philosophical treatises regarding questions of perception and representations. For example, Herman suggests that stories are no longer isolated research areas that tell us about the time in which we live or help us understand the world in which we participate. In fact, reading and stories are much more intricately interwoven with the human ability (involving the mind and the brain) to perceive, to understand and to participate in this world. Therefore, stories are no longer mere parts of the world; moreover, understanding stories brings forth an understanding of our place within the world and our “participatory mechanisms.” This becomes clearer especially when we consider interpretive processes. Our way to evaluate interpretations of stories shows and involves processes involved in our real world experiences. Marie-Laure Ryan calls the result of bringing the reader’s world to story world “virtual realities” (cf. Ryan 25-28); in this way, we can see how both the real world and the virtual world overlap in regard to the mechanisms involved. However, story worlds demonstrate, in a much more controlled environment, the possibility of experimenting and learning about the reader, which brings forth new ways of thinking about stories. Such a consideration of experimenting with stories comes close to what Franco Moretti considers in his introduction to *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (cf. 2); the methods of treating literature thus come closer to those of the sciences. Narratology already possesses elements that are intricately intertwined

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<sup>9</sup> In this work I do not make a strict distinction between these different labels, because all of them engage, or have at least subfields doing such, with similar, in some cases even the same, questions. I prefer the term „cognitive sciences“ in my research because it is less restrictive (for example, neurology is closer to the functions of the biological brain, while questions about comprehension, memory, and consciousness are more general).

with aspects of the cognitive sciences, and it therefore provides the opportunity to outline such an experimentally interpretive approach.

### ***The power of the narrator***

The narrator functions as a regulator in the reader's process of interpretation and comprehension. Therefore, the narrator, depending on what his or her expressions are, interferes with the reader's imaginative processes. This interference either enhances the reader's involvement with the text, or it hinders and causes resistance of the reader's engagement. So, if we take a look at the results regarding the reader's interaction with a text, we – almost always – have an unknown factor, namely how the narrator influences the movement of the reader's mind. In order to eliminate this factor, we may turn our attention to texts without a narrator, but which are nonetheless narrative. As already touched upon in the introduction, the text of a play offers such a constellation in that there is no explicit narrator; however, the function of a narrator still remains. The reader takes over the role of creating a coherent narrative experience, hence she narrates to herself. The reader's comprehension process thus results in the creation of an overarching narrative structure, which in and of itself allows one to understand the events. Vitally important for successful comprehension is the process I call *emotional association*, in which *emotional representations* build the hooks that allow the reader to “pull” these scenes out of memory later on.

From a cognitive perspective on interpretation, we have to factor in these representations; however we do this from a new vantage point. It is simply not enough to point out that the narrator guides the reader to certain conclusions or interpretive points that then lead to coherent

understanding and comprehension, because the narrator really only provides a basis for such an interpretation. The reader has to deduce most parts from the narrative in order to be able to create a picture in her mind. The images on the screen of the mind then lead to an emotional impact, which is the effect that the images have on the reader. In other words, the reader becomes part of the narration, lives what is told, and therefore undertakes each movement the narrator allows the reader to take.

How can we know what the reader does, and what mental movement the reader undertakes? In terms of understanding the picture and recreating the images in the mind's eye, we simply cannot. However, we do know the structural processes involved in the reading process, which we have pointed out so far. From a different angle, we can say that the text functions as a "guardrail" in the following two ways: First, the reader receives an orientation which guides her imaginative movements. The overall scene that the narrator, or, more generally, the text, depicts simulates the reader to undertake imaginative acts. However, the reader not only acts imaginatively in an arbitrary manner; the reader also literally wants to make sense of what she reads. The only way to comprehend a narrative, ultimately, is through the imaginative act.

Second, the text functions as a "guardrail" in the restrictive sense. The text allows the reader to imagine; at the same time, however, it does not allow arbitrary imagination. Especially in the hermeneutic realm, the reader needs to read very closely in order to prevent herself from implementing aspects that the text simply does not provide, or more strictly, does not allow. Therefore, the text frees and restricts the reader in her focus and at the same time in the imaginative act. In other words, the text also represents the boundaries of the contingency of imaginative acts. The question arising from this point is thus: how does contingency actualize?

In order to find a response, we need to draw on what Ferdinand de Saussure understands as the difference between the signified and the signifier. While the “signified” describes the actual thing or the image (in a person’s mind) of the thing, the signifier—a word or sign—is the carrier of meaning. The signifier is, generally speaking, arbitrary with regard to the signified. The word “tree” means tree, independently from the “tree-thing” in the world; the word does not mimic or imitate “tree-ness”; the term is unrelated to the actual tree-concept. To apply this theory of language to the meaning of the concept of reading we lay out here, one might suggest considering the following example. When a tree is described in a text, every reader has a different tree in mind (cf. de Saussure). The reason for the possibility of the imagination running wild, figuratively speaking, lies within the under-specification of the description of the tree. Now, if the tree is described in more detail and more thoroughly, more boundaries occur that narrow the range of taking imaginative action, and therefore increase the similarity of the tree imagined by different readers’.

Now, one might assume that, if something is under-specified in terms of having just a one-word description, the imagination “fills” in all the details not mentioned, which leads to various reading experiences. However, such a filling-in does not occur. The story world therefore is always different for each reader. There are as many story worlds as there are readers. However, each and every story world is similar to every other one. The reason for this lies in the restrictive function of the text. An important aspect of the “inner” creation of the story world is that there are conditions that interfere with the theory of imaginative prescription of the text. If the description of a certain object is too explicit, the text will lose the reader’s attention.<sup>10</sup> To

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<sup>10</sup> An interesting aspect in this regard is the actual reading moment of the reader. How much capacity must working memory have in order to comprehend meaning and how much information can build on the preceding content without overwhelming the reader and removing the constraints on the contingency of imaginative actions? In other

summarize, we can conclude that there are central factors that have to exist in an adequate balance and that these are demands made placed on the reader: deduction and imagination are the faculties of the mind responsible for a successful reading experience. They define the intersection between the text and the mind.

Once we fully comprehend what happens within the reader during the reading experience, we arrive at a better understanding of how interpretations emerge. However, the reading experience is only one part of the interpretive process. Many factors are involved in between the reading experience and actual interpretation.

### ***The reader's cognitive aspects***

The sciences of the mind or cognitive sciences have thus asked these questions about immersion and consciousness projection. However, they have done so almost exclusively with the underlying question of how the reader gains understanding and comprehends the text. Jeffrey M. Zacks recently published *Flicker – Your Brain on Movies*, which thoroughly explains what happens to the human brain when one watches movies, considering all the technology behind the production of these movies. There we can find a helpful explanation of how the experience evolves within a viewer. However, in order to see how interpretations emerge and how the reader of stories evaluates stories (based on her experience), we have to enter new territory. The main difference between the viewer of a movie and the reader of a novel lies in the fact that the viewer's imagination does not interfere with the viewing experience, while the reader's

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words, at what moment does the reader stop reading the text and start to drift off with her mind, due to the wrong intensity of imaginative guidance?



experience of reading a book is highly dependent on the utilization of the reader's imagination of the events in the story.

Systematically speaking, the differentiations David Herman suggests in his introduction to *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind* can lead to a strategic overview of how to approach cognitive science in relationship to narratives. There he makes two basic distinctions:

Distinction 1: (a) leveraging the sciences of the mind to investigate stories versus (b) drawing on ideas developed by narrative scholars to investigate focal issues in cognitive science; and

Distinction 2: (c) studying narrative as target of interpretation versus (d) studying narrative as resource for sense making” (Herman 1).

For the purpose of this work, especially the first distinction is important, while I do touch on the second as well in the sense that I distinguish between reading comprehension and interpretation. The first distinction, however, opens the dialogue between narratology and cognitive sciences.

### ***Immersion: Emotional Comprehension***

Ultimately, the reading process demands different mental states or, as Marie-Laure Ryan characterizes it, “degrees of absorption in the act of reading” (98). She distinguishes four different forms of reader involvement: First, “[c]oncentration,” which basically means the mental activity that occurs when one reads a difficult text, e.g. a philosophical treatise. Second, in (2) “[i]maginative involvement,” the reader is, at the same time, aware of what happens within the text and of how the author conveys it, e.g. in terms of stylistic devices. Third, Ryan calls

“*[e]ntrancement*” the state in which the reader is not even aware of the fact that she is reading. In this state the reader has the experience of being in the story world. Ryan states, however, that at the back of the reader’s mind, she is aware of the fact that the experience is not real; there is no need to fear story events; the reader knows she is safe in the room or situation where she reads the book. Fourth, “*[a]ddiction*” describes the fourth state of absorption in the act of reading. If the reader is in this state, either she searches for escape from reality or does not have the capacity to discern fictional worlds from the real world (cf. Ryan 98f.). While Ryan’s approach to categorizing mental states stems from a theoretical consideration, it is also important to consider what the sciences of the mind tell us about the reader’s mental states and whether Ryan’s considerations are accurate or whether results from research in cognitive science reinforce her assumptions. In my discussion of these degrees of absorption, I omit the fourth category, because it describes a psychological condition rather than an actual reading experience. There the focus lies less on what the reader experiences when she reads than on how the reader treats fictional texts psychologically and behaviorally in her real-life context.

### ***Conclusion: from theory to practice***

In this chapter I have shown how the reading experience works and what the difference is between text comprehension and interpretation. Further, I have distinguished two forms of the latter. Generally speaking, we see the dynamics between author and reader and how both are interrelated structurally. I claim it is simply not enough to work with the structures of the text to construct a reader model that answers questions regarding how interpretation works. Therefore, attending to the sciences of the mind or cognitive sciences becomes necessary. The reason for

this lies within the fact that we receive interesting data about media reception (for example about what happens within the brain during movies), but cognitive sciences have not yet asked what happens during the reading process. The reason for this lies within the involvement of unknown factors in the reading process. However, we can apply the theoretical considerations of this chapter in analyzing the considerations within an argument about the contingency of interpretation. In the following chapter I offer an answer to the question that now arises: how does the reader model (that considers aspects from cognitive science) add to the quality of a complex interpretation and reveal certain structures of a text a reader might not have previously discovered?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Time changes; or *Woyzeck* as a “guinea pig”**

Now that we know what a reader model looks like when we leverage resources from both the disciplines of narratology and cognitive sciences, we can turn our attention to a specific case in which the reader’s interpretation changes by virtue of changing the basic textual category, namely the order of the text. Throughout the following analysis it is important to keep in mind that the reader never merely reads a text, but that she also actualizes it (vividly) within her mind. Therefore, when I talk about the reader within the narrative, or within the story world, at the same time I always refer to the story world within the reader. In other words, the best way to show the inner dynamics of the reader model is to apply the principles we have discovered in the first chapter to a specific text, so that we can see and explore the different stages and steps of comprehension and interpretation. To illustrate how the reader’s experience changes, I therefore focus on the narrative structures themselves. However, because discussing all potential possibilities of how, for example, the reader accesses the meaning of sentences and their structure, is simply impossible, especially when we consider the ambiguities in the text, I will follow another strategy by using a specific example.

#### ***Why Woyzeck; and why Woyzeck works***

I use the outline of a given text as a roadmap for understanding a literary text. For this purpose, I choose Büchner’s drama *Woyzeck*, which is particularly suited to our analytical

experiment of demonstrating the processes of interpretation discussed in the first chapter. The reason why especially *Woyzeck* in particular works for this purpose is that the play is retained as a fragment. A number of Büchner's different handwritten versions of *Woyzeck* exist and I discuss them later in this chapter, but the main point is that scholars are not sure about how to arrange and order the different scenes in the play. Since there is no consensus on this aspect, the reader or the director (if she actually wants to make a theater or movie production of the play) is in the position of deciding how the play works best. Thus one has justification to play with the order, since the order-determining factor (specifically the author's intention) is simply lost.

Many have argued from the perspective of aesthetics and also of philology against such a claim. For example, J. Elema, in her article "Der Verstümmelte *Woyzeck*," attempts rather convincingly to restore what she sees as the originally intended order from such a philological perspective, combined with the historical background of the text. She focuses on the four existing manuscripts and tries to identify their relevance for a theoretical "final" version. More importantly, she amplifies the claim that there is no justification for "opening up" the possibilities of rearranging the scenes. I argue against this approach, for in the process of "restoring" we also enter the field of re-creating. In other words, we as re-arrangers also become poets.

However, for the purpose of demonstrating the dynamics of the reader-model I outlined in the first chapter, I restrict my "creative involvement" to allow to changes to occur. In fact, I will only change one variable, namely the order of the scenes, and nothing else. I will then show the effects of such "small" alterations. Before I get into the details of the analysis, I need to discuss the question of whether a play can be the focus of a narratological interpretation.

## *The reader as the narrator of the play*

In order to apply what we have discussed to the first chapter to Büchner's *Woyzeck*, we must find a definitive answer to the question of whether analyzing a play, as the object of a narratological perspective, falls at all under the scope of the field of narratology. Therefore, in order to confirm the status of a play as a justified object of attention, we need to prove whether the functions of a play follow similar structural rules in comparison to a literary prose text, or whether there are substantial differences we have to account for in our analysis. We must therefore understand first that we can find additional structures within a play that are not in a prose text and, second, vice-versa. According to Gérard Genette's outline of the structures of narratives, which offers functional categories, the reader generally can utilize those categories to pursue a thorough analysis of literature and narratives (cf. Genette). These basic categories are *duration*, *mode*, and *voice*. In order to deploy those categories as technical terms of narratology and to indicate that we refer to them as such, I use the German expressions as they appear in Martínez' and Scheffel's *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*, (which also adds a philosophical connotation to the discussion of these classes). As Wolfgang Iser points out in *The Implied Reader*, traditionally,

the novel as a form in the eighteenth century is shaped by the dialogue that the author wishes to conduct with his reader. The simulated relationship gives the reader the impression that he and the author are partners in discovering the reality of human experience. In this reader-oriented presentation of the period when the possibility of a priori knowledge was refuted, leaving fiction as the only means of supplying the insight into human nature denied by empirical philosophy (102).

Of course, Iser focuses here on the novel as a specific genre within a certain time period. With *Woyzeck* we therefore undertake an unconventional approach. First, it is a play, second it is from the nineteenth century. The question necessarily arises as to whether Iser's aforementioned statement is by any means applicable to Büchner's *Woyzeck*. In order to find an answer we need to focus on the similarities and differences between *Woyzeck*, or more generally, a play and a novel. The most obvious distinction between the two genres or types of text is, as I mentioned, the lack of an identifiable narrator. However, for us to know whether we have an intrinsic narrator (a narrator within the structure of the play, and not an external narrator, for example, in the form of a person) as a category within a play, we need to know whether we can find the functions of a narrator structurally implemented in the play. Such an attempt to undertake a functional analysis requires that we understand the nature of the narrative function, and moreover, its effects. In other words, once we have identified the same effect of a narrator in a novel in our play *Woyzeck*, we can then see the narratological parallels between the text type of a novel and that of a play. But before we come to a detailed analysis of the similarities and how we can find the narrator's function within the play, we need to take a look at the Genettian categories and how they differ when we apply them to plays and novels, generally. As Martínez and Scheffel argue,

Unter der Kategorie des *Modus* behandeln wir diejenigen Momente des Erzählens, die den Grad an Mittelbarkeit und die Perspektivierung des Erzählten betreffen. Es bietet sich an, nach zwei Leitfragen zu differenzieren und die unterschiedlichen Präsentationsformen des Erzählten nach den beiden Parametern *Distanz* und *Fokalisierung* zu erfassen (49).

In other words, the *mode* is the category of narratology that focuses on the extent to which the story is mediated to the reader. Categorically, the *mode* generally differs between a play and a

novel. In fact, the most obvious difference lies in the presence of a narrator within a novel and the absence of an identifiable narrator in a play. Within the Genettian framework, the lack of a narrator can indicate zero mediation. In other words, the reader is as close as possible to what happens within the story, there is no stage in between. I argue that the degree of mediation, strictly speaking, cannot be zero, because mediation happens within the reader's mind as the events take place. I propose a story test in order to prove how mediation happens in the reader's mind. After the reading of the play (as in our case), if the reader is able to reproduce the events in a coherent narrative, then the reader takes on the role of the narrator (by definition). If the reader is able to produce a narrated version of the play, she has automatically deduced a narrative structure and put it in a narrative form, and she has also integrated the mediation. If this were not the case, then the reproduction of whatever the reader experienced would result in a different type of text; however, it would not be a narrative text.

Since such a story test does work in the case of *Woyzeck*, we can assume that we as readers of the play have taken over the narrator's function. Hence, we can abstract from the specific example of *Woyzeck* and generally assume that such a dynamic happens with plays in most cases. Therefore, the basic elements required to construct a narrative structure exist in the same way in a play as they do within a novel. The play, however, is apparently designed to adjust to different circumstances regarding its performance on a stage; this is contrary to the usually quiet experience of reading a novel.

For example, Büchner's *Woyzeck*, a play that is extant as a fragment, leads to different interpretive conclusions depending on how the different scenes are arranged. Scholars attempt to restore a version that presumably comes close to the author's intention. However, four different manuscripts exist. What makes a reconstruction even more difficult is the fact that



Büchner continuously edited and changed his manuscripts. One can see the difficulty of such an undertaking by merely surveying the vast diversity of varying editions of that play available at the bookstore.

I argue that, depending on the order of the scenes, one can find at least three distinct subgenres<sup>1</sup>: *Woyzeck* as a crime story, *Woyzeck* as a character study, and *Woyzeck* as a social drama. Of course, all of the components of the story remain the same, which means that the reader can find all the elements of the choices above in every version. However, I argue that the primary reading, the structure one identifies first, does depend on the order in which the scenes are presented to the audience. Even further, if the reader identifies one of the masterplots above, for example the crime story, it becomes unlikely that she will identify another structure as easily. Even if the reader finds elements that do not fit a certain masterplot, they will not be given the same priority. In other words, once a structure is discovered, it is difficult to identify another structure as a complete one.

Of course, this statement has certain limits. First, in order for a reader to identify a primary structure he has to have learned their features and how to extract them from the text. The ability to do so, however, is not connected to reading competence. In other words, the fact that one can read does not mean that one can easily identify genre, themes or topics. Hence, publishers have to indicate with paratexts, a pragmatic element according to Genette (cf. Genette *Paratexts* 1-3), whether the reader is dealing with a novel, a biography or a scientific text. They do this not just because the reader is able to identify more quickly what she likes in a bookstore, but also because a reader might misperceive, for example, a literary text for a history book. This necessity

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<sup>1</sup> What I call “subgenre” is a deviation of Porter Abbott’s term “masterplot” (cf. Abbott). It is bound to certain sets of expectations, sets of desires, and their fulfillment. I choose the term “subgenre,” because it implies the reader’s ability to categorize a story-type. “Masterplot,” however, adds a hierarchical component and implies a structural predetermination without the component of the reader, who, in my terminology, assigns a subgenre to a text.

of publishers to label what kind of books and texts they sell, however, does not mean that the content and its structure signal to a reader how to identify a type of text in the first place.<sup>2</sup> This fact precedes the necessary assumption that the reading of a story has a cultural component. However, not only biological but also procedural boundaries determine the working of the brain, which facilitates the mind. Hence, to a certain degree we are able to find general principles applicable to every reader.

Second, in order to successfully prove this statement, another requirement is necessary: namely a certain degree of neutrality on the side of the reader towards the text. Especially regarding *Woyzeck*, if the reader is very well acquainted with this period of time, the historical and social environment, the major motifs of art within this certain epoch, and the typical characteristics of literary texts of that period, we can consider the reader to be biased. Her expectations would overrule her textually immanent hermeneutic approach to the extent that she would be able to identify the genre or kind of text we are dealing with even before she actually had read it. While reading the text, he would focus on information within the text that proves her presumptions, and, of course, he would find them. Therefore, the chronology in which the scenes in *Woyzeck* occur would not influence her interpretation. However, if a reader does not have strong expectations and she allows herself to address the text with an open mind, she might come up with other interpretations. Does this mean that the reader identifies a reading only according to her secondary knowledge about a given text? Of course not, but the point I want to make regards the propensity of the reader's identification of a subgenre while reading.

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<sup>2</sup> In some cases, the author might have particularly intended to create such an illusion to blur the lines between fact and fiction. Given such a case, even the best narratologist is unable to completely disambiguate the text on a structural level.

This fact leads to a third important restriction: Although *Woyzeck*, as I argue, can be read as “more” a social drama, “more” a crime story, or “more” a character study, the basic nature of the text does not change when one rearranges the scenes. And, the scholarship will always treat *Woyzeck* as a dramatic play set in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But does this mean that an interpretation of a narrative is dependent on the reader’s expectations? The possibility of identifying specific interpretations in such a way can stem from the particular chronology in which the reader “experiences” the scenes.

### ***When you change the order of the story, you change the story***

“First things first, but not necessarily in that order”

—Doctor Who<sup>3</sup>

As I have mentioned, I claim there are three different genres (or at least subgenres), each of which the reader identifies more likely than the others if the order of a scenes is arranged in a certain way. Up to now, I have been comparing such a “test” to an experimental situation in which the focus is on one single criterion being changed within the story. This one “small” change, however, automatically also involves the function of other facets within the text, not only those concerning the reader, but also those concerning the story itself. In particular, (re-)arranging the scenes in order to have the outcome of various (though predetermined) interpretations affects some (traditional) narratological categories.

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<sup>3</sup> Here I would like to thank Vanessa Ossa for finding the reference for the quote.

The first category is time. Strictly speaking, according to Geràrd Genette's system of narrative, time would be the category of which order would be a subcategory. Martínez and Scheffel point to the narratological meaning of *order* as a criterion in their *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*:

für jeden narrativen Text [ist] ein zeitliches Nacheinander konstitutiv. Das gilt sowohl für das Erzählen (wegen der unvermeidlichen Linearität sprachlicher Äußerungen) als auch für das Erzählte (das *per definitionem* einen zeitlichen Ablauf darstellt) (34).

In other words, a narrative cannot exist without the dimension of time. It always is a dimension of a story, and such in a twofold way: First, *narrative time* i.e. the time of narration itself, and second, the *narrated time* is also involved. For example, the concurrence or simultaneousness of certain events show how both categories can be independent of each other, because, although the events happen simultaneously, the reader learns about the events in a certain order. Therefore, a distinction between the time within the world of the story and, broadly, the reader's time is necessary.

### ***The reader creates the time of the story***

In Genette's terms, I thus argue that this analytical distinction between the *narrated time* and the *narrative time* is not as strict during the reading process as it may appear in theory, for the linearity of text forces the information flow to follow a certain pathway and thus creates a line along which the reader processes the story. For example, let us therefore assume that the reader reads in a novel about one event and then about another. These events are finite and each is told

from the beginning to the end (in terms of *erzählter Zeit*). Theoretically, there are three obvious possibilities regarding how these events relate to each other in terms of time: (i) the first event happens before the second one; (ii) they happen concurrently; or, (iii) the second event happens before the first one. However, the reader experiences<sup>4</sup> the first scene before the second one, regardless of the actual story timeline in which these events occur. In order for the reader not to have a certain impression or intuition of time, the text needs to contain certain clues or indicators that interrupt or disturb the reader's inner sense of time. If the narrator does not tell us the relationship in which the events happen, the reader assumes out of habit that one happens after the other.

According to this train of thought, the literary gaps are, strictly speaking, much bigger than just small holes in the larger literary text. We as readers have no difficulty dealing with these gaps because we have been socially and culturally trained to understand narratives and therefore know what to fill into those literary gaps. Even if we wanted to assume we do not know anything about the time within a narrative (in terms of what happens first), and if we were to stop trusting the order of a narrative, we would ultimately fail at interpreting it. Our mental capacity for considering events as individual items standing as equal elements next to each other is limited. Therefore, the reader will not succeed in text comprehension, since the task is simply too complicated. Ultimately, we have to accept the premise that the reader's natural inclination is to read the text in a linear manner; first, because of the nature of the text, and second, because of the convention of story worlds.

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<sup>4</sup> We assume that experience means an "average" involvement with and immersion into the story world, which means that the reader is alert enough to know what he or she is reading and is not drifting off in his or her thoughts.

As we have discussed in the context of event memory, each event or segment of a story is stored separately in the reader's memory; the reader accesses those segments as finite events (with a beginning and ending) in relationship to other individual events. In order to do so, the reader's mind must process the information into finite segments, extracting them from the continuous flow. However, the ordering of the events happens both internally and externally, and all of that construction of episodic memories happens—to a certain degree—independently of the sentence level. In order to process the information and therefore to comprehend single events as outputs, the reader's mind does not rely on the sentence-level of stories. Thus, the sentences might explain one aspect and then another of the scene without the reader thinking that those things happen one after the other. However, the reader's mind is able to differentiate one scene or event from another and her processing of the events then leads to her belief that one event came after the other, except for cases in which the narrator deliberately indicates otherwise. I call this phenomenon the *principle of event-sequence perception (PESP)*. At the foundation of this principle lies the premise that, for the reader (just like in real life), one event happens after another and only one event happens at a time. Such events can be infinitely rich in content, depth, and complexity. The simultaneity of events, however, is something that the reader understands only in hindsight, and is therefore part of the “interpretive” stage of processing the text.

## *Woyzeck's problem of order*

“Sehn sie Herr Doctor, manchmal hat man so n'en Character, so n'e Structur”

—Woyzeck

With regard to *Woyzeck*, the basic problem of order<sup>5</sup> occurs because there is no narrator who indicates what has happened;<sup>6</sup> for example, whether implications made by the protagonists are part of foreshadowing or whether they refer to events that have already happened. Therefore the problem of order is one the reader faces. Publishers who decide on the most common rendering of the play pragmatically rely on the results of scholars' research and their suggestions regarding the question of how to arrange the play. Here the editor decides how the reader experiences the text.

As we have seen, the order of the scenes in the play directly influences the perception of time within the story world. The reason for this influence is the fact of the principle of event-sequence perception, which dictates that what the reader experiences first, the reader assumes comes first, if not indicated otherwise. This principle is part of text comprehension. When the reader (after completion of the comprehension stage) begins to interpret the text, the principle does not apply anymore, because the reader can then choose to deconstruct the story and to question the temporal implications. However, in order for the reader to question whether an

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<sup>5</sup> My term “problem of order,” especially with *Woyzeck*, may imply that there is a (single) solution to it. Many scholars have attacked this particular play with the claim of restoring the text so that it reflects the author's (Büchner's) intention. I refute such attempts and try to redefine the problem of order as a question worth discussing especially with regard to the reader's interpretation.

<sup>6</sup> To clarify, the focus lies not so much on the lack of a narrator but on the absence or lack of indicators disambiguating time relations. One may mistake this argument for an objection by saying that *Woyzeck*, or more generally a play, does not fit a narratological analysis since the problem of order results from the lack of a narrator. I, however, would respond by pointing out that there are also fragmentary prose texts in which the problem of order occurs too. In fact, having scenes as clear finite elements of the play makes it easier to discuss the problem of order.

event she learns about first also comes first in the story line, there needs to be a justification or even a trigger (like a logical or temporal gap in the text, or an extra-diegetic fact) encouraging the reader to do so. In the case of *Woyzeck* it is the extra-diegetic fact of incompleteness that makes the reader ask what comes first in the story world.

### ***Change of order in terms of cause and effect***

In order to prove the argument that the reader comes to different conclusions regarding the subgenre within the process of interpretation by virtue of the order of the scenes, we need to understand the text comprehension process. Once we know how the reader comprehends the text, we can make some predictions regarding her interpretation.<sup>7</sup> Therefore it is true to say that text comprehension affects interpretation. An alteration in the order of the scenes in *Woyzeck* changes the perception of time experience, which changes the interpretation of the play, I argue, with the reader's propensity to assign a certain subgenre. The reason for this difference in the assignment of a certain genre lies in the fact that, as the (reader's perception of) time in the story is changed, the causal structure of the story changes, too. Therefore, the whole structure of the story changes. In other words, the causal structures of a narrative generally are not explicit but implicit and the reader "decodes" this temporal structure according to the PESP. The next step in our analysis will focus on differences in the narrative structure. Before we engage in the discussion of specific orders, I list here an overview of all the scenes I discuss:

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<sup>7</sup> Interpretation of a text, of course, relies on one's understanding of the text. However, since there is an infinite variety of hermeneutic approaches, by "interpretation" I mean the application of a narratological system with the intention of gaining insight into the text. For example, what I do *not* mean is the analysis of the role of women in *Woyzeck* or of the function of society. What I *do* mean is, for example, the questions of genre, temporality and space within *Woyzeck*.



**Table A: List of scenes from *Woyzeck* (published by Reclam in 1999)**

1. Freies Feld. Die Stadt in der Ferne. Woyzeck und Andres schneiden Stöcke im Gebüsch.
2. Marie (mit ihrem Kind am Fenster) Margreth.
3. Buden. Lichter. Volk; Unterofficier. Tambourmajor. Das Innere der Bude.
4. Marie sitzt, ihr Kind auf dem Schooß, ein Stückchen Spiegel in der Hand.
5. Der Hauptmann. Woyzeck. Hauptmann auf einem Stuhl, Woyzeck rasirt ihn.
6. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Tambour-Major.
7. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Woyzeck.
8. Woyzeck. Der Doctor.
9. Straße oder Gasse; Hauptmann. Doctor; Woyzeck kommt gelaufen.
10. Die Wachtstube. Woyzeck, Andres.
11. Wirthshaus. Die Fenster offen, Tanz. Bänke vor dem Haus. Burschen.
12. Freies Feld. Woyzeck.
13. Nacht. Andres und Woyzeck in einem Bett.
14. Wirthshaus. Tambour-Major. Woyzeck. Leute.
15. Woyzeck. Der Jude.
16. Marie. Das Kind. Der Narr.
17. Kaserne. Andres Woyzeck, kramt in seinen Sachen.
18. Marie mit Mädchen vor der Hausthür.
19. Marie und Woyzeck.
20. Es kommen Leute.
21. Das Wirthshaus.
22. Kinder.
23. Woyzeck, allein.
24. Woyzeck an einem Teich.
25. Gerichtsdienner. Barbier. Arzt. Richter.

The Reclam edition also contains additional scenes, which were not published or—in the opinion of scholars—which Büchner erased. Within the framework of this paper, I will not discuss each

and every scene or whether or not certain scenes would add to the certain subgenres we focus on. In fact, adding or deleting scenes from the script would be tantamount to changing scenes, because then we would manipulate the informational content and therefore the narrative structure would change on many levels of the play. The argument, however, that the single factor of the order of scenes, if changed, can also change the interpretation, would in fact be undermined if I were to change the (for our purposes here) fixed number of scenes and their content.

### ***Scenario 1: Woyzeck as a crime story***<sup>8</sup>

In the following I discuss three possibilities for arranging the text. Let us begin with *Woyzeck* as a crime story. Traditionally, when we talk about crime stories, we, in terms of society, have certain expectations of what a “classic” crime story looks like. We expect a perpetrator to commit a crime and then we see somebody, for example a police officer or a lawyer, trying (and usually succeeding) to solve the crime. This is the basic outline of a crime story. Of course, there are infinite variations of this form.

Considering the scenes in *Woyzeck*, we can already assume that some of these basic expectations about the story will not be fulfilled. We do in fact have a crime: in the Reclam edition from 1999 we find the murder scene to be the third scene from the end. What the story obviously lacks is the police (or some other entity for that matter) investigating a crime. We can find the “Polizeydiener” taking part as the police’s representative in a court scene, but the function of the scene merely comments on the events; the informational content consists of the

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<sup>8</sup> Although the term “detective story” is a more common term in the field of narratology than “crime story”, I have decided to use the latter term because “crime story” appeared to be more general. The term also is more compatible with the content of *Woyzeck*.

fact that the police discovered the murder, and that they react to it. Interestingly, the emotional impact of the murder on the police (who also represent society in its virtues and perception of justice) is mostly one of positive excitement, which is amplified by the expression “[e]in guter Mord, ein ächter Mord, ein schöner Mord,” (Büchner 40). One might expect their reaction to be rather one of disgust or contempt. Thus, we can see Büchner’s critique of society—or at least its system or perception of justice.

Since the investigating element is apparently missing in the text, we are therefore dealing with a variation on the crime story. But how can we still have a crime story if the important element of the investigation is missing? The answer lies within the function of the reader. The element of the investigation is there ontologically, however, not in the text, but in the reader’s mind. In this way, the murder happens, and the reader becomes a witness to it. Therefore, the classical question of “who the murderer is” becomes—at least partially—obsolete. We are not in the situation of, for example, the *Tatort* series, where the audience asks the question of who did it. The detective story no longer falls into the category of *whodunit* (see Pyrhönen, 104) as a subgenre. In *Woyzeck*, we find ourselves asking two basic questions after the murder happens. Which of the following two questions the reader asks depends on the presentation of the crime in the beginning: 1) Why did Woyzeck kill Marie? 2) What happens next to Woyzeck? The reader asks one or the other of these questions in the beginning. The problem we now have to solve is to arrange *Woyzeck* in such way that it appears to the reader to be a crime story.<sup>9</sup> In order to find a solution to this problem, we need to eliminate the possibility of that the reader might ask one of these questions about *Woyzeck* while reading.

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<sup>9</sup> As I have said earlier, I will not make changes to the content of the scenes (for example in terms of characters or places), but merely to the order in which the scenes occur. Therefore, *Woyzeck* never really becomes a crime story; however, the impression the reader has during the reading experience reminds her of the narrative structure of a crime story, which therefore leads to the assignment of crime story as the subgenre. (The overall genre remains a drama, which is rather general).

The basis of imitating the structure of a crime story results, as already indicated, in the crime being placed at the beginning of the story. Of course, the murder thus does not need to happen in the first scene, but the murder should appear within the first fifth or quarter of the play. Similarly, with the TV series *Columbo*, the viewer becomes an eyewitness to the murder, knowing who the perpetrator is and how the murder happened, and the viewer sees the perpetrator's attempt to hide the traces of the crime. In *Woyzeck*, the latter happens in the scene "Woyzeck an einem Teich" (Büchner 40), when he (Woyzeck) throws away the murder weapon and washes off the spots of blood (cf. Büchner 40). The reason why I do not suggest the murder as the first scene is that such a beginning would overwhelm the reader. Such a start would guide the reader to see *Woyzeck* not as a human but as a criminally mad person, a ruthless psychopath. Then the reader would ask himself or herself what is wrong with *Woyzeck* instead of starting to investigate the crime. In other words, the subgenre would move the reader's perception more towards a character study than a crime story.

As we can already see here, the reader's assignment of the subgenre depends on the reader's motivation in the form of unanswered questions (cf. Abbott 6). In (almost) every case, the text provides enough connecting points for the reader to find an answer to each individual question and therefore to satisfy the expectations the reader sets according to the order of the events. The reader's expectation toward a text does not rely solely on the order of the first scenes and how they shape the reader's impression and guide her questions, but also on factors outside the immediate reading experience. In this fact also lies the reason why the experience of reading a book again for a second time after a long period of time can differ tremendously from the first reading. In fact, having a long "digestion" period of a book and re-approaching it can lead to the reader's reassessment in terms of subgenre. The major reason for this is that after the first

reading, memory processes and the segmentation of all the events happening in the story are completed.

Thus, when the reader rereads the book, she may have—always to a certain degree—different questions about the text than she had with the first reading. Concurrently, the reader remembers chunks of information from the former reading that both do and do not fit the current question. But the text answers new questions, too; therefore, it appears to the reader as if there are new things written in the book. Therefore, the second reading of a book is richer than the first one.

In order to prevent the shift in the perception of *Woyzeck* as a character study (a question we engage with later on in this chapter), the reader needs to receive some background so she does not ask so much who Woyzeck is, but rather how Woyzeck came to this point. The reader therefore takes on the role of investigator regarding the background of the crime, the motive, and maybe even the justification for the crime. Ultimately, according to this reading, the reader decides whether or not Woyzeck is a criminal. The reader is thus police officer, judge and jury, all at the same time. The constitution of the subgenre within the phase of text comprehension builds on the function of the reader that goes along with the reading experience of the particular subgenre.

In the case of *Woyzeck*, we now can discuss how to construct the introduction so that the reader will ask the question that later leads to constituting *Woyzeck* as a crime story for the subgenre of the drama. Table B shows my suggestion for how to order the scenes in order to implement the structure of a crime story:

## **Table B: Suggestion for the order of initial scenes for a crime story**

6. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Tambour-Major.
15. Woyzeck. Der Jude.
7. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Woyzeck.
2. Marie (mit ihrem Kind am Fenster) Margreth.
23. Woyzeck, allein.
24. Woyzeck an einem Teich.
25. Gerichtsdienner. Barbier. Arzt. Richter.
- ...

The first scene shows us that Marie and the Tambourmajor are having an affair. The next scene shows Woyzeck buying a weapon, which for the reader apparently is a result of the affair, of which (in this arrangement the reader can be certain that) Woyzeck is aware. Then Woyzeck accuses Marie of being “sinful,” and the next scene depicts his murder of her. Before the crime, the reader learns about the relationship between Woyzeck and Marie. The reader experiences a constellation of jealousy in the interaction between Woyzeck and Marie. After the murder, Woyzeck attempts to discard the murder weapon. The scene with the judge follows. I define this set of scenes as the introduction or the first part of the play.

As we can see, the time frame changes dramatically from how the reader experiences the events according to the Reclam edition; the causality of the events also changes. From this point forward, the structure of the crime story is set, because the reader will experience every scene in which Marie appears as a flashback, while every other scene appears either as a flashback or as something that happens to Woyzeck after the murder. However, the decision of this distinction

between whether something happens after a murder, or whether it is a flashback is part of the reader's process of comprehending the text. In fact, one could create another possibility for constructing the structure of a crime story by putting the scene with the judge and the policeman<sup>10</sup> at the very end. This constellation would leave open (for the reader to interpret and imagine) what led to the trial and what happens at the trial. In fact, the court scene in and of itself does not show whether Woyzeck is apprehended or not. By virtue of the shortage of information in the text the structure of the crime story decomposes. In other words, here the reader experiences and finds clues to the fact that Woyzeck is not a traditional crime story; however she would definitely be reminded of such a structure. Because the court scene is so short and conveys so little information, the structure of the crime story would remain more stable if the court scene were to occur at the beginning. The closeness between the scene with Woyzeck (24) and the trial scene (25) leads more probably to the reader's assumption that it is Woyzeck who is appearing in the trial, although he is not in the scene (which again leaves room for interpretation). Towards the end of the play, however, the reader sees and recognizes a break within the structure of the crime story, even if the structure is outlined as I previously suggested. However, such a structure would remind the reader of structures of a crime story, so that she would identify them as such. However to conclude, *Woyzeck*, does not convey sufficient content to fulfill the criteria of belonging to the subgenre of the crime story.

The absence of investigating moments is also the reason why I did not define the outline of the play further in the following scenes. The setup of the structure of the crime story in the beginning guides the reader's mind toward the recognition of the features of the crime story.

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<sup>10</sup> The very last scene that apparently (communicatively) functions as a comment on the events is rather ambiguous. The reader does not know whether he or she is at the crime scene, at a court, or in a completely different situation. From a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective, the scene could also take place in a hospital. The fact, however, that a Gerichtsdienster is present, indicates that this scene is at a court. Therefore, I refer to it as the court scene.

## ***Scenario 2: Woyzeck as a character study***

If we want to present *Woyzeck* in such a way that the reader interprets it as a character study, in contrast to a crime story, we want the reader to ask different questions and therefore fulfill a different function. As already mentioned, the reader's interest with this understanding should not focus so much on what happens or on what has happened, but it should rather concern the main character, namely Woyzeck himself. The basic question we want the reader in this scenario to ask is: Who is Woyzeck? What are his motivations, what drives him, what personality traits does he have? Is he mad, obsessed, violent, or just a misunderstood introvert? If the reader entertains such questions during her reading experience, the reader will more likely experience *Woyzeck* as a character study. Here we can already see how close the different subgenres are to each other. There is a very fine line between asking what leads to the crime and wondering about the character of the protagonist. Since the content of the scenes (except the story's causal structure) does not change, the overall genre does not change (as the reader perceives it). Therefore the changes on the level of the subgenre leaning one way or another (for example, towards being a character study instead of a crime story) are generally subtle. However, we can identify when the subgenre changes.

One way to arrange *Woyzeck*, as I have mentioned above, in such a way as would give the reader the impression that he or she encounters a character study, is to move the murder scene to the very beginning. However, this would not clearly indicate to the reader what genre he or she is dealing with, nor would it encourage the formulation of a question within the reader's mind that subsequently would constitute the subgenre. The reader would additionally be overwhelmed by the amount of information, first, because he or she would not know Woyzeck and, second,



because he or she does not understand anything he says. Since the script does not show the act of the murder, the reader would not necessarily draw the “right” conclusions. However, if the murder were moved to the very end of the play, it would function as the climax of the narrative to which everything, in terms of events and dynamics, was lead. Then the focus of the reader would rather lie in the action and in what happens next. Thus Woyzeck would appear more as a person in the middle of a social environment who keeps different plot strings moving forward.

Therefore, I suggest putting the murder scene in the middle of the play:

**Table C: Suggestion for the order of scenes for a character study**

5. Der Hauptmann. Woyzeck. Hauptmann auf einem Stuhl, Woyzeck rasirt ihn.
2. Marie (mit ihrem Kind am Fenster) Margreth.
16. Kaserne. Andres Woyzeck, kramt in seinen Sachen.
8. Woyzeck. Der Doctor.
14. Woyzeck. Der Jude.
6. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Tambour-Major.
7. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Woyzeck.
22. Woyzeck, allein.
23. Woyzeck an einem Teich.
1. Freies Feld. Die Stadt in der Ferne. Woyzeck und Andres schneiden Stöcke im Gebüsch.
3. Buden. Lichter. Volk; Unterofficier. Tambourmajor. Das Innere der Bude.
25. Gerichtsszene.
- ...

According to this order, the figure of Woyzeck appears opaque and uncanny; by seeing his odd behavior and manners, the reader soon has the impression that Woyzeck is not “normal” like the people who surround him. At the same time as this “opaqueness” is present, the reader wants to know more about the character. In the contrast between the different scenes with Woyzeck’s peculiar behavior we find the reason for the reader’s reaction. By arranging the play in such a way that the murder happens in the middle of it, the new order of the scene causes the reader to see how the murder changes Woyzeck’s character and amplifies any madness that the reader had already witnessed beforehand. However, throughout the whole play, the reader’s attention and focus stays on Woyzeck. He is the center of the reader’s interest. Of course, the reader will see Woyzeck’s stand within society and may even come to the question as to whether a social drama takes place here; however, since Woyzeck remains at the center of the reader’s attention, the reader’s interest concerns Woyzeck and his particular demeanor. By contrast, another question of subgenre concerns whether the array of scenes in such an order does not trigger the impression of a crime story. I think that the possibility of such a reading does exist. However, in this particular arrangement of scenes, the reader’s focus is guided more to Woyzeck as character and less to his (criminal) action from the perspective of an investigator. If one wants to choose what profession comes close to the reader’s function, the perspective here is more that of a psychological therapist.

### ***Scenario 3: Woyzeck a social drama***

While the difference between reading *Woyzeck* as a crime story and regarding it as a character study depends more on how the reader asks questions to the text, interacts with it, and

then processes the given information, the social drama as a subgenre is less dependent on the chronological order in which the reader perceives the scenes. The focus of a social drama lies more in the content of the scenes. We have to keep in mind that all subgenres depend on content and that to a degree the order of this content matters in creating a certain subgenre as well. Moreover, the social drama as a subgenre is less dependent on the structure of the order of the scenes than the crime story is. Furthermore, the social drama is also a subgenre that may be easily combined with other subgenres. For example, a crime story can thus be a social drama at the same time. In order to avoid such confusion, however, and to demonstrate how the order of the scenes does affect the reader's attribution of the subgenre, we need to carefully avoid such interferences from different subgenres, although, strictly speaking, such overlaps (almost) always exist to a certain extent. For the sake of clarity, we consider the three subgenres to be separate, and in order to show the impact of the order of scenes, we want to create instances in which one of these subgenres occurs and the others do not.

Indeed, I claim that there are factors with regard to the order of the scenes in *Woyzeck* that amplify the characteristic of a social drama. Generally speaking, and in contrast to the crime story and the character study, with the social drama the reader is concerned with the dynamics between society and the main protagonist—in our case *Woyzeck*. Furthermore, the protagonist often does not appear to be autonomous or really the one acting. Moreover, he or she is forced to behave or act in certain ways *because of* his or her social surroundings. In other words, society appears to be the (criminally) acting element, and the play then depicts the character as a victim. In order to guide the reader's focus to such a constellation, I suggest following order:

**Table D: Order of the scenes of *Woyzeck* as a social drama**

1. Freies Feld. Die Stadt in der Ferne. Woyzeck und Andres schneiden Stöcke im Gebüsch.
2. Marie (mit ihrem Kind am Fenster) Margreth.
3. Buden. Lichter. Volk; Unterofficier. Tambourmajor. Das Innere der Bude.
4. Marie sitzt, ihr Kind auf dem Schooß, ein Stückchen Spiegel in der Hand.
5. Der Hauptmann. Woyzeck. Hauptmann auf einem Stuhl, Woyzeck rasirt ihn.
6. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Tambour-Major.
7. Straße oder Gasse; Marie. Woyzeck.
8. Woyzeck. Der Doctor.
9. Straße oder Gasse; Hauptmann. Doctor; Woyzeck kommt gelaufen.
10. Die Wachtstube. Woyzeck, Andres.
11. Wirthshaus. Die Fenster offen, Tanz. Bänke vor dem Haus. Burschen.
12. Freies Feld. Woyzeck.
13. Nacht. Andres und Woyzeck in einem Bett.
14. Wirthshaus. Tambour-Major. Woyzeck. Leute.
15. Woyzeck. Der Jude.
16. Marie. Das Kind. Der Narr.
17. Kaserne. Andres Woyzeck, kramt in seinen Sachen.
18. Marie mit Mädchen vor der Hausthür.
19. Marie und Woyzeck.
20. Es kommen Leute.
21. Das Wirthshaus.
22. Kinder.
23. Woyzeck, allein.
24. Woyzeck an einem Teich.
25. Gerichtsdienner. Barbier. Arzt. Richter.

Table D has the same order as Table A and therefore also reflects Reclam's recent suggested restoration of the original play. I chose this order because of its clear depiction of Woyzeck's

status in contrast to that of other social classes in the society around him. As each scene follows the preceding one, Woyzeck's relationship with different people of various professions and social backgrounds is depicted. All these interactions with characters and literally treatments, for example, by the doctor lead to the climax of the murder. The crime is the result of the society that to some degree formed Woyzeck and made him into what he has become. Therefore, the murder scene fits best into the ending of the play. With this scenario, the social drama as a subgenre is the necessary categorization of the text for the reader's immediate interpretation.

### ***The reader's perception: order → time → causality → subgenre?***

By virtue of our project of contouring these structures of subgenres, we can see how the order of the scenes in Woyzeck influences the reader in the reading experience. Specifically, the order directly influences the reader's interpretation of the text, although the reader might reevaluate this experience in the final interpretation and might finally come to other interpretations than in the immediate interpretation. We can thus define a causal chain that leads to the attribution of a subgenre to a certain piece of text.

Particularly in *Woyzeck*, in which the narrator and reader are de facto the same, the effect of the order of scenes on a reader is important for her interpretation. We can see the effect of changes within the order as a more "pure" phenomenon, i.e. one without the interference of a narrator indicating any temporal or causal relations. All features that indicate such temporal or causal structures are either implicit within the scenes of the play or not accessible at all for the

reader. Therefore, we can see how the reader implements her own version of a temporal and a causal structure within the texts.

The order in which the reader perceives the events and scenes therefore influences the way time is perceived. Here the *PESP* comes into perspective again because, as the reader perceives one scene after another, he or she experiences the time within the play. Only logical or implicit story gaps lead the reader to reconsider these structures of time. For example, the appearance of somebody who was apparently murdered in a previous scene would be such a case in which a logical gap occurs. However, if none of these instances emerge, the reader will have the experience of linearity in the play. If the order affects the reader's perception of time, the causal structures automatically change, too. However, there are some exceptions to this rule, which are constraints on the causality-time-interdependence in stories.

The first constraint that the causality-time-interdependence states is that only because something happens first does not necessarily mean that it also is the cause for a later effect the reader can witness. In other words, causal structures represent a different dimension than temporality and simply indicate influences of different objects on other things in a causal way. Sometimes causal structures are parallel to temporal structures (for example, one scene follows after a previous one, not only temporally, but also as a result of a causal relationship; thus a scene happens *because* of the previous scene). In another instance, several scenes take place in between two scenes, which are causally related.

The second constraint of the causality-time-interdependence is based on the traditional reading experience and states that nothing can ever causally affect anything that temporally precedes it. In other words, once something has happened, it will not change as a result of that

which happens after it. Now, this statement is only true for the story world existing in its own line of time, and some attempts to break this constraint have been made (for example, in Martin Amis' novel *Times Arrow*), but as a general rule of reading (that has its exceptions) it remains true and also is part of the reader's expectation. Therefore, if for example, as we suggested earlier, a logical gap appears, a dead person suddenly appears alive again (without noticeable change), we then assume automatically that the scene does not occur after the murder scene. The reader thus repairs the logical gap. For the reader's perception of the causal structure, however, the appearance of the murdered person (assuming we are not talking about a ghost story here) changes, too: after the reader has "witnessed" the crime, he or she automatically assumes that the second scene with the supposedly dead person is causally very important to the murder itself.

To summarize, the causality changes to some degree, but not as much as the perception of time. Here we can ask the question of how or even if at all the causal structure influences the reader's interpretation of the whole piece, so that the reader is eventually influenced by her assigning of a subgenre to the text. This previous question asks whether the reader therefore categorizes the text in a certain way according to causal structures, or whether other factors are more relevant than causality to her interpretation.

To find an answer to this question, we have to focus on what constitutes the subgenres. As we have discussed, the (overall) genre (poem, drama, novel, etc.) does not change by virtue of conditions such as time or causality alone; other aspects within the text are more relevant for one's identification of the genre. However, as I claim, order and time do influence the category of the subgenre the reader assigns according to her reading experience. And, as we have seen, from a top-down approach, these tendencies to interpret a text in a certain way suggested through a certain order do exist. The categories we have looked at, namely order and time are responsible

for the change in the interpretation. However, we cannot claim the linear dependency of causality and interpretation without also mentioning time as an important factor.

Especially when we talk about the difference between the social drama and the crime story, we can see that those types of texts only differ in terms of in causality with regard to Woyzeck as being a perpetrator or a victim. With the social drama, society is responsible for the murder. Woyzeck is only the victim and he fails in his attempt to escape the structures of domestic violence outlined in the story. In *Woyzeck* as crime story, however, the ongoing plot and action in the play result from the murder. The scene in which the murder occurs is then placed at the beginning to implicitly indicate this causal structure.

An advantage of the play as a genre in general is the fact that the time within each scene remains the same. In other words, since the purpose of the script is to facilitate an actual performance, the element of real time is inherent to the script. However, we cannot talk about the congruence between *narrative time* and *narrated time*, because the private and silent reading of the play script probably take less time than the actual performance of the play. However, the actual performance, as indicated in the dialogues or directions, remains relatively the same in *Woyzeck*. Finally, the reader's perception of time in the play and her interpretation of causality together form the reader's identification of the subgenre of the text.

In the end, we need to discuss the limits of the influence of time and order and ask how the influence of order and the perception of time function cognitively. In other words, after having built a reader model that leverages both disciplines, the sciences of the mind and narratology, and after having analyzed the variations in the possible interpretations of *Woyzeck* with different ordering of the scenes, we now need to ask the question of how this interpretation happens from



the perspective of cognitive sciences. In the final chapter, we will attempt to find an answer to this question.

# Chapter 4: Conclusion

## Beyond the Boundaries of Narratology

### *The reader's purpose*

Following my analysis of the reader's role in the different scenarios, we can see how the reader's function changes, and therefore how the subgenre changes, too. Furthermore, we can conclude that the reader's function is directly connected to her interpretation with regard to her identification or assignment of a subgenre to a given story. In other words, once we understand how the reader interprets and how she functions with a given story, we can see how the reader's interaction with the text directly influences her experience, too. More specifically, if the reader sees the potential to interact with the text, her experience is part of the text, because the text allows and guides the interaction between the reader and the story.

In the case of *Woyzeck*, the reader needs to fulfill at least three different functions: The first kind of functions is comprehension; the reader always has the task to comprehend what she reads. The second function is to imagine. The reader's comprehension and imagination partially overlap, since the reader cannot understand the text if she does not imagine the events at all. However, if the reader begins to completely immerse herself in the events and scenes that take place, the reader's experience gains an additional quality beyond the mere understanding of what happens. In other words, the reader's experience turns more into the experience of a story rather than the mere comprehension of events from the story. The fact that the reader has to imagine what takes place on the screen of her mind is especially true for the reader of a play such as *Woyzeck*.

Since *Woyzeck* is a play, there is no narrator mediating the story to the reader. Therefore, the imaginative act is even more necessary in the case of *Woyzeck* than it is in a novel, in which events unfold independently of the reading time; *narrated time* and *narrative time* can tremendously vary with a novel. However, in *Woyzeck*, since the intention behind the play as a medium is to achieve a performance on stage with actors, each event that takes place in front of the viewer must be in real time; in other words, the viewer must be able to discern and to experience what happens in front of her. The reader of the play—in contrast to the viewer—has to utilize her imagination more strongly, because none of the elements on which the director and the theater crew would normally decide in order to create a performance are in the play, except for basic indications of actions, settings, and situations.

However, comprehension and imagination are not the only functions the reader has to fulfill; she also needs to remember the different events; furthermore, she needs to deduce interrelating structures in terms of time and causality. In the case of *Woyzeck* the task is particularly complicated, because in order to comprehend the play the reader needs to identify temporal and causal relationships. In addition to these categories, there is also a limit to how much comprehension is possible, and at a certain point the reader has to actualize particular gaps that are underspecified and therefore ambiguous. From those gaps on, the reader can only interpret and more or less guess on the basis of her understanding what specifically happens in the scenes (or in between different scenes).

In the second chapter, we saw how the reader draws conclusions about time and the timeline in the story world. To summarize, the reader has the expectation that—if not indicated otherwise—the scene or event that comes first in terms of the description in the text also comes first in the story world. I call this phenomenon the principle of event-sequence perception

(PESP). PESP is the first important step of the reader's processing of the text in terms of order and causality. The second step consists of following the guidance the text offers and therefore asking questions of the text. As we saw in the third chapter, for example, the difference between the crime story and the character study consists of the difference between the question of what happens to Woyzeck next (the crime story) and the question of who he is Woyzeck (the character study). Therefore, the reader's question and the text prodding of the reader to ask these questions lead to the construction of the subgenre.

Generally speaking, we can categorize these functions the reader fulfills. For the crime story as an example, although one might argue that the lack of a detective defies the categorization of *Woyzeck* as a crime story. However, if take a look at what the reader basically does when we change the order of the scenes, as I suggested in the third chapter, we can find the aspect of the investigator to be ontologically present. However, if one reads *Woyzeck* with a different order of the scenes the element of investigation is completely missing. The reason for the difference is that the aspect of the investigator is only actualized and realized on the reader's part. The order of the scenes alone in *Woyzeck* allows the reader to experience the representation of the detective or the investigator.

Therefore, the category of order is especially important, not only because it determines the subgenre the reader assigns to a text in her interpretation, but also because order is responsible for features like the presence or absence of the function of an investigator, even though a structural analysis does not show any evidence of this function. From a narratological perspective, now that we know that order retains the possibility of adding and erasing features of a text, we can see how the different narratological categories Genette introduced reach their limits.

The paradigm of the discipline of narratology is the idea that all components of a story are structurally implemented within a text and that the reader therefore has an experience according to such a structure. However, the case of *Woyzeck* demonstrates how the structures one wants to define by undertaking a narratological analysis are interdependent and overlap. In fact, although Genette clearly distinguishes between time and order, *Woyzeck* proves how in a case where there is a lack of a narrator in a play these categories not only interfere with each other, but also constitute each other. Furthermore, the reader as a variable in a dialogue or interaction with the text introduces a certain contingency regarding how the text may be interpreted and how therefore different interpretations occur. Genette's terms and categories thus dissolve and become aspects of stories and their interpretations rather than independent analytical categories for analyzing stories. From the perspective of narratology, we can see that the boundaries of time and causal structures lie in the scope of the narrator and not in the content of the events in terms of what happens. We can thus see that some of the Genettian categories, which narratologists assume are an intrinsic part of the story, are less easily identifiable for the reader as parts or aspects of the story; in other words, the categories of *narrated time*, *narrative time* and *causality* completely depend on the order in which the reader perceives the events and scenes. Therefore these categories are interrelated.

### ***The limits of narratology and beyond***

Narratological discourse reveals its boundaries especially in the discussion of order, time, and chronology and their impact on the reader's interpretation. In classical structural narratology, the reader's contingency of experience and interaction with the text do not belong in a

narratological account. The lack of this consideration of the reader as part of the analysis thus would form the boundaries of narratology, if we did not extend the scope of the analytical repertoire with which we analyze literature. Therefore, to include the reader as an instance in narratological discourse, we need to incorporate cognitive science and its focus on the human mind into narratological exposition. In other words, the structural approach underlying the discipline of narratology is insufficient for a broad interpretation of a text. As I have discussed, a structural analysis only reveals the information in a given story, but it does not show the information that the reader has to add by filling out the literary gaps with his imagination. Only when we consider a basic reader model featuring cognitive aspects and components can we gain insights on how interpretation works and what mechanisms are involved in it.

The text's realization of the different subgenres we discussed in the third chapter is dependent on reader's cognitive capacities and her training in, or knowledge of different subgenres one can generally identify; for a reader to interpret a narrative as a crime story she needs to know what a structure of a crime story looks like. The reader's training in identifying subgenres and her acquaintance with narrative structures in general, however, remains an unknown factor. In order to receive reliable results from analyses one would have to use statistical data about the target reader, as Moretti suggests. However, the cognitive information we have about the reader can lead to an expanded view on the field of narratology.

### ***Order and interpretation***

In order to verify the changes in interpretation regarding the order of a story, we need to take a closer look at how the reader's internal process of interpretation works and what stages are

important for it. The basic distinction we need to make in the process of reading is between comprehension and interpretation. As we have discussed in the first chapter, the phases or stages the reader goes through occur to a large degree simultaneously; however, we can distinguish the systems operating according to their functions and the results they produce. Generally speaking, the reader understands the text on what we can call a language level or sentence level, which means that she processes and therefore understands the information in a text on the basis of the meaning of words and sentences. On a higher level the reader recognizes certain events that are separate from other events. This realization of different events and the segmentation of the text into different events happen without the reader being aware of the process. However, the results of this process of segmentation are emotional representations. More specifically, if the reader wants to recall certain scenes, for example, when she discusses the text later on, these representations allow the reader to reconstruct the events according to the emotional experience of the events during the reading experience. It is thus accurate to say that the more immersed the reader is, the more probable it is that she can recall a particular instance in the story later on<sup>1</sup>.

From the perspective of cognitive science, memories, i.e. images and experiences that one can recall, are representations in the mind of these events (cf. Sutton 2010). Therefore, for the recognition of subgenres in overall structures, the emotional representations I touched upon in the first chapter are key for the reader's perception of time in the story world.

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, there are other factors involved in and relevant to the recalling of scenes. Simply because the reader had an immersive experience does not necessarily mean that she must remember it. However, if she does remember it, the memory is probably rather vivid. As, Robert Schwarz and Stephen Gittigan bluntly describe it in an analogy, "most memory research [...] is really about the distortion of details, not central events. A person hit by a car may misremember its color, or the day of the week, but will rarely confuse being hit by a car with, say, falling down a mountain" (21).

## ***Keeping the memory in mind***

We have to keep in mind that the process of recalling does not produce an exact replica of the text read earlier. Specifically, the reader reconstructs and recreates her own text and thus literally forms an adaptation according to the emotional representations created during the reading process. In other words, the reader does not need to be able to recall each word of the text, but she needs to access the information and experience that she decoded and therefore actualized by reading the text. Within this process of recall, the reader adds her own expectation of that experience and mixes it with her expectation about the memory of the experiences. In other words, the reader does not only recreate the text, she also individualizes it; therefore, one cannot make accurate assumptions about how the act of imagining looks like for each reader. In the process of recalling and in the reading experience, adaptation theory applies. If a filmmaker who wants to make a movie adaptation of a novel he or she has to decide what and how the scenes in the movie should look like. In these decisions imagination must occur, since many details important for the viewer to see in a movie may simply not be described in the book. Therefore, as one creates a movie based on a novel, he or she needs to add information; the text expands. At the same time, the text often is reduced because not everything that happens in the book can make it to the movie. Eventually, the viewer must realize that the movie (as a *text* containing information) is very different from the novel as a text. More or less the same process happens in the reader's mind when she "experiences" a story. In her imagination to the degree she immerses herself into the story, which may vary throughout the book, the reader creates her own experience alongside the text. As we saw in the third chapter, the questions the reader asks while reading fundamentally influence the reader's experience of the text.



## ***The validity of top-down structure building***

One of the questions that remain is whether the top-down approach of the second chapter is valid at all. The reason for questioning this approach lies in the fact that we consider not only the perspective of a reader, but also the view of an author, since we interfered with the text as a given and manipulated it. However, as I already touched upon, such interference is justified, since we “only” rearranged the order of the scenes, which ultimately in every version that exists has a creative aspect. Indeed, the “original” order of the scenes is simply unknown, although there are convincing reasons, from a historian’s perspective, to prefer certain outlines to others. However, we do not take the historian’s stance. In this work, we can see the effects of changing one single category within the reader’s interpretation, effects explained by integrating knowledge about the reader from the perspective of the cognitive sciences.

In the case of *Woyzeck*, the reader’s interpretation results from a combination of the order in which he or she perceives the events in the story and the reader’s perception of time in the story. Only these two factors lead to the construction of causal structures within the play. The reader therefore actualizes the story in his or her own mind according to the structures she identifies. Therefore, she comes to conclusions about what kind of text or, more specifically, what subgenre she deals with. From the perspective of cognitive scientists, the question then arises of how the perception of time functions in the reader’s mind. In his article “The experience and perception of time,” Robin Le Poivedin introduces basic philosophical puzzles with regard to the perception of time:

Insofar as time is something different from events, we do not perceive *time* as such, but changes or events *in* time. But, arguably, we do not perceive events only, but also their

temporal relations. So, just as it is natural to say that we perceive spatial distances and other relations between objects (I see the dragonfly as hovering above the surface of the water), it seems natural to talk of perceiving one event following another (the thunderclap as following the flash of lightning) (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/time-experience/#1>, accessed 04/01/2014).

In other words, it is justified to consider temporal perception or intuition not only with regard to real-life situations and experiences, but also in the reader's experience of focusing on a narrative.

In order for us to see the effect of the reader's perception of time in the case of *Woyzeck*, the change of scenes represents an ideal case. Since there is no mediation to the reader by a narrator and no indication of how time evolves (except for the intrinsic information of the scenes, such as the appearance of someone murdered, which leads to the interpretation of a flashback regarding time in the story world), the reader is left on her own to figure out what happens first, what comes next, etc. The reader faces the events directly during her reading experience.

### ***A last notion on order***

In order to understand the Genettian term *order* and the overarching category *time*, we need to focus on what these categories mean and how they affect the reader and her interpretation. Interestingly, most approaches to categorizing genres or, more broadly, types of narratives do not contain specific orders or timelines of events as a criterion for distinguishing between different kinds of stories. However, as we have seen with the example of *Woyzeck*, order (and the

perception of the timeline in a story world) alone can change the reader's interpretation regarding a subgenre. Therefore, the category of order needs to receive further attention.

Of course, we need to keep in mind that *Woyzeck* as a play and as a drama contains and lacks features that a novel has. The lack of a narrator is a specific feature that enables us to see how the order in which the reader perceives the scenes can have such a huge impact. Typically, a narrator clearly indicates timelines and precedence or foreshadowing, which gives the reader a rather clear concept and perception of time in the story. Also, when a narrator is present in a given story, causal structures and time perception do not collapse together and are not dependent on the category of order, as we have experienced with *Woyzeck*, where, as I already mentioned, the categories start to dissolve.

From this point, it would also be interesting to trace other cases of literature, maybe fragmentary novels, in which reordering is possible, and to narratologically analyze how different arrangements of the content would affect the reader's interpretation, perception of time, and view on causality in the text. Such a case would show how a narrator does indeed influence these areas and whether the reader's perception of these categories is based more on the narrator's involvement in the story's presentation, or whether the reader rather forms her own perception independently from the narrator's mediation of the story.

However, in the end, the fact that it is possible for a play (namely *Woyzeck*) to let us dissolve narratological categories, despite the fact that this play is a classic narrative according to Genette's system of narratology, shows the boundaries of narratology. The fact that this case is possible emphasizes the necessity of considering the reader as more of a determining factor rather than the structure of the text. Therefore, we need to implement increasingly the sciences of

the mind into the expanded field of narratology, not only to allow us to understand better what happens to us when we read, but also to understand better what we read and to gain new insights into the text. Many scholars have started to analyze and think along the lines of where they implement categories and mechanisms that neuroscientists have discovered in the discipline of narratology. For example, David Herman lays out what the cooperation between narratology and cognitive sciences can look like. He even suggests that narratologists not only implement results of researchers of the cognitive science in narratological analyses, but also that cognitive sciences could start to think about how to create experiments that are motivated by narratological considerations and theories. In Lisa Zunshine's *Getting Inside your Head: What Cognitive Science Can Tell Us about Popular Culture*, we can find another interesting approach of encountering the reader's cognitive disposition as a necessary part of understanding (literary and) culturally relevant texts.<sup>2</sup> There are many scholars who follow the lines of defining a cognitive narratology. As Monika Fludernik and Greta Olson describe the phenomenon of cognitive narratology,

[i]n cognitive narratology, one no longer pursues the naming and the elucidation of stable aspects of narrative and their function. Rather than pursuing one single question, the researcher now sets about addressing a series of questions concerning how narratives reveal the phenomenology of perception, how they engage with the functions, possibilities, and limits of thought, and how they control the decision-making processes by which we intuit how stories are most likely to turn out. (5)

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<sup>2</sup> Especially interesting is her discussion on how the viewer of a movie involuntarily projects emotions to faces seen on the screen. This effect could be seen as one instance where the viewer has to fill in gaps.

In addition to merely focusing on the text as a constant, on its structures and hierarchical components, we can now analyze the variables, for example, the reader as an important element in the actualization of text. Such a cognitive approach allows the reader to find a broader understanding of stories and of herself as an interpreter of narratives. In the end, we do not only learn how the reading of stories functions, we can also learn and discover how the reader's mind works in cooperation with the story. In other words, if we continue the implementation of cognitive science in narratology, we might find an answer from the perspective of cognitive science to the question asked already by Aristotle and which I paraphrase here: why do stories fit the mind?

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