

## Cycles, Recueils, Macrotexts: Theorizing Short Story Collections - Katholieke Universiteit Leuven - 23-24 May 2012

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### Performative Perspectives on Short Story Collections

The paper intends to discuss the concept of performativity (Schechner) in the context of SSC studies, and in particular its pertinence to the relation between autonomy and individuality of the single text and the degree of unity of the macro-textual structure that the SSC generates. Performativity can be applied firstly on the two textual forms (short text, macro-text), secondly on the two perspectives involved in the communicational act (sender/writer - receiver/reader).

How does the the single text affirm its identity performatively? and how can we evaluate the performative affirmation of the whole, that occurs through the act of collection and inclusion of the texts in a book (Audet)? This process needs to be analyzed in both ways: from the perspective of the writer/assembler and from reader's perspective.

The present analysis elaborates premises stated in earlier studies (Ingram, Luscher) and situates the SSC in a different context of narrative strategies than that of traditional narratology (Page). Moreover, it aims to develop a theoretical framework centered on a mechanism operable on all levels and thus transcending a taxonomy based on an infinite phenomenology of authors, texts, geographic areas and eras.

At the same time, it retraces the history of the SSC, as from the origins of Western Literature orality or fictional orality (Baldissonne, Davis), which are forms of performativity, have been the foundation of SSC, to the 19th century when this orality makes way for a different kind of performativity, that introduces the genre of the SSC into modernity and postmodernity.<sup>1</sup>

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