

Narratology and Imagology

Abstract:

Summarising recent developments in postclassical narratology and imagology, the article traces affinities between the two disciplines in order to observe the challenges that await the researchers of image and narrative in what Baudrillard called the simulation culture. Two case studies presented in the article (one devoted to Instagram visual narratives, the other – to a YouTube advertising campaign) illustrate challenges for the study of eventfulness, narrativity, and fictionality, and suggest – in line with the postulates of Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen – that a radical change of educational and communicative practices is needed in contemporary Western societies. A change of this sort, it is postulated, might be instigated by the collaboration of researchers in visual studies and narrative theory.

Keywords: post-classical narratology, imagology, visual studies, eventfulness, narrativity, fictionality, social media, Instagram, media philosophy, interdisciplinarity

ADMIRING FRIEND: "My, that's a beautiful baby you have there!"
MOTHER: "Oh, that's nothing – you should see his photograph!"
(quoted in D. J. Boorstin's *The Image*, p. 7.)

"Technology... the knack of so arranging the world that we don't have to experience it"
(Max Frisch)

"Images are not everything, but [...] they manage to convince us that they are"
(W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, p. 2)

The Visual is the New Verbal: New Post-Classical Challenges

Suffering from none of the decadence conveyed by the "post" prefix (as in "post-apocalyptic", "post-truth", "postmodernist" and "post-mortem"), postclassical narratology is alive and kicking. Constantly preoccupied with new paradigms, with ambitious methodological orientations, with more adequate modes of analysis, as well as with new objects of study and new lexicons that will accommodate its complex agenda, narrative theory is, in fact, capable of fashioning a trendy, up-to-date outfit for practically

any contemporary occasion: whether for a debate on fictionality (so gripping in the age of Trump), a volume on unnatural narration, or a well-justified discussion on the new media, theoreticians boldly address some of the most burning questions concerning the nature of contemporary storytelling. Aware of its own progressive nature, the discipline is the theoretical and interpretive phenomenon of our times: dynamic, diverse, proactive, networking, multitasking and, perhaps, narcissistically self-interested. Narratology, as Christine Brooke-Rose claimed, likes to write its own story, too¹.

Without doubt, reassessments are narratology's forte. Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik observed the changing territory in 2010:

While traditional narratologists such as Stanzel and Genette primarily focused on the eighteenth-century to early twentieth-century novel, transmedial approaches seek to rebuild narratology so that it can handle new genres and storytelling practices across a wide variety of media such as plays, films, narrative poems, conversational storytelling, hyperfictions, cartoons, ballets, video clips, paintings, statues, advertisements, historiography, news stories, narrative representations in medial or legal contexts, and so forth².

In a similar vein, Alber and Per Krogh Hansen summarised the developments in their 2014 volume *Beyond Classical Narration*:

Postclassical approaches differ from classical structuralist narratology in three significant ways. First, one can observe a movement away from the predominant narratological interest in prose narratives (i.e., the novel and the short story) toward the investigation of new media and genres. Second, postclassical narratology closely correlates with the inclusion of other disciplines or approaches such as discourse analysis, cognitive studies, feminism, postcolonialism, Marxism, queer theory, rhetoric, and so forth. Third, in contrast to structuralist theorists, postclassical narratologists no longer try to develop a grammar of narrative; rather, they seek to put the narratological toolbox to interpretive use³.

Maria Grishakova and Marie-Laure Ryan narrativise the recent developments in a similar manner:

Like a rock thrown into a quiet pond, the concept of narrative, introduced on the intellectual scene by French structuralists, has generated a series of ripples that expand its relevance from language-based, book-supported literary fiction to other disciplines (discourse analysis, medicine,

¹ "Whatever happened to narratology?", Brooke-Rose asks in *Stories, Theories, Things* (1991). "It got swallowed into story seems the obvious answer, it slid off the slippery methods of a million structures and became the story of its own functioning. Like mathematics, which has never claimed to speak of anything but itself, or even to speak at all" – Christine Brooke-Rose, *Stories, Theories, Things*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1991, p. 16.

² Postclassical Narratology. *Approaches and Analyses*, ed. J. Alber and M. Fludernik, Columbus: Ohio State UP 2010, p. 8–9.

³ Jan Alber and Per Krogh Hansen, *Beyond Classical Narration*, Berlin: de Gruyter 2014, p. 1. In 2015 Page added: "The need for a media-sensitive approach can be understood as part of the expansion of post-classical narratology" – Ruth Page, "The Narrative Dimensions of Social Media Storytelling: Options for Linearity and Tellership", in: *The Blackwell Handbook for Narrative Analysis*, ed. A. de Fina and A. Georgakopoulou, Oxford: Blackwell 2015, p. 329.

theology, law, history), to other semiotic modes (visual, aural, kinetic, interactive), and to other technologies (painting, photography, TV, film, the computer)⁴.

As recently as 2017 James Phelan reported:

In 1999 David Herman proposed the term *postclassical narratology* to describe the then-current state of narrative theory, a term designed to capture the field's many revisions of structuralist narratology. Since 1999, the postclassical movement has continued its robust activity, adding important developments in feminist, cognitive, and postcolonial narratology (to name a few) and developing new approaches, such as unnatural narratology and enactivist narratology⁵.

In a similar mood, Hansen et al. tried to determine the "emergent vectors" for the quickly developing discipline, pondering on the dynamics of the intellectual debate: "Is narratology consolidating or is it diversifying?"⁶. The question seems justified today, too. Does the generally progressive orientation of contemporary narratology in any way depart from the ambitions of what David Herman first called "postclassical narratology"⁷? If we are to seriously reconsider the paradigms the term has brought into the discipline of narrative theory, and if the rethinking is to be consequential, we need to make a bold step forward and apply the lessons of the academia in a broader spectrum of educational and communicative practices – by translating narratological observations into a praxis that will continue to adequately respond to technological developments and social change. Thus, narratology could defend itself against the allegations Christine Brooke-Rose put forward in 1991, accusing the discipline of excessive self-preoccupation⁸. One very liberating instance of a non-self-centred broadening might consist in an even more comprehensive interest narratology takes in visuality and the image as crucial factors in contemporary culture. Today, the visual is the new verbal. Having acknowledged and described this paradigmatic shift, narratology – if it is to maintain its wide focus – will not only continue its transmedial expansion, but will even more closely ally with imagology. Meritocratic motivations for such an alliance, numerous as they are, are explained in what follows.

Why Image?

One of the most notable uses of the global network is to create, send, and view images of all kinds, from photographs to video, comics, art, and animation. The numbers are astonishing:

⁴ *Intermediality and Storytelling*, ed. M. Grishakova and M.-L. Ryan, Berlin: de Gruyter 2010, p. 1. Ruth Page and Bronwen Thomas, in turn, comment in the following way: "The diversity of contemporary narratology is characterized by expansion beyond classical narratology's literary perspectives and data set" – *New Narratives: Stories and Storytelling in the Digital Age*, ed. R. Page and B. Thomas, Lincoln: Nebraska UP 2011, p. 6.

⁵ James Phelan, *Somebody Tells Somebody Else*, Columbus: Ohio State UP 2017, p. 3.

⁶ *Emerging Vectors of Narratology*, ed. P. Krogh Hansen, J. Pier, P. Roussin, W. Schmid, Berlin: de Gruyter 2017, p. III.

⁷ David Herman, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology", *PMLA* 1997, vol. 112, no. 5, p. 1046–1059.

⁸ Brooke-Rose, op. cit., p. 27.

three hundred hours of YouTube video are uploaded every minute. Six billion hours of video are watched every month on the site, one hour for every person on earth. The 18–34 age group watches more YouTube than cable television. (And remember that YouTube was only created in 2005.) Every two minutes, Americans alone take more photographs than were made in the entire nineteenth century. As early as 1930, an estimated 1 billion photographs were being taken every year worldwide. Fifty years later, it was about 25 billion a year, still taken on film. By 2012, we were taking 380 billion photographs a year, nearly all digital. One trillion photographs were taken in 2014. There were some 3.5 trillion photographs in existence in 2011, so the global photography archive increased by some 25 percent or so in 2014. In that same year, 2011, there were 1 trillion visits to YouTube. Like it or not, the emerging global society is visual⁹.

With the immense proliferation of images in contemporary culture, a demand for additional, acute sensitivity to the visual might appear trivial. We are, it seems, already quite aware of the role the omnipotent, ubiquitous image plays. But are we, really? Although we know only too well that “modern life takes place onscreen”¹⁰, it sometimes escapes our notice that in a major number of cases the omnipresence of images translates into the omnipresence of stories. “One of the most striking features of modern culture has been the intensive, almost compulsive collaboration between practitioners of the word and practitioners of the image”, W. J. T. Mitchell claims, as if aware of the double preoccupation of postclassical narratology¹¹. What networks add to quantity, media contribute to the quality of images and narratives. “In other words, it is not possible or desirable to talk about the social construction of meaning and messages without reference to images as sites of communication, miscommunication, mediation, and intelligence”¹². For its semantic and structural focus to remain sound, narratology has to, therefore, both acknowledge and highlight the fact that images are not only additive structural components to language, but semiotic, semantic generators of narrative material themselves.

To eradicate preconceptions about the inferior position of the visual to the verbal in the narratological apparatus is a task that postclassical narratology has consistently maintained in its agenda but has still perhaps not promoted enough. It is not surprising, of course – the discipline has always been progressive, but never revolutionary. It has maintained a sense of decorous continuity. Today, however, we need more and more focus on non-verbal narrative phenomena. Markku Lehtimäki signalled the sensitivity of this area already in 2010 when he claimed that “structuralist studies of verbal and visual representation have often stressed the pre-eminence of language,

⁹ Nicholas Mirzoeff, *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More*, New York: Basic Books 2016, epub edition, p. 13.

¹⁰ Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London: Routledge 1999, p. 1.

¹¹ “We inhabit a world so inundated with composite pictorial-verbal forms (film, television, illustrated books) and with the technology for the rapid, cheap production of words and images (cameras, Xerox machines, tape recorders) that nature itself threatens to become what it was for the Middle Ages: an encyclopedic illuminated book overlaid with ornamentation and marginal glosses, every object converted into an image with its proper label or signature” – *The Language of Images*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1980, p. 1.

¹² Ron Burnett, *How Images Think*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2004, p. 8.

but the relationship between the photo-image (or other still pictures) and written text is complicated, and cannot be reduced to some general textuality¹³. The textuality of image, the imagery of texts, the visualisation of discourse, the discursiveness of visuality – the amalgamation of concepts surrounding the no man’s land between imagology and narratology, *Bildwissenschaft* and *Erzähltheorie* (Germany is indeed an important locus for both fields), is indicative of how hesitantly the two disciplines cooperate. As several researchers have pointed out¹⁴, a certain suspicion marks these interdisciplinary interactions between narratology and imagology:

The suspicion toward images resulted from the encounter of two types of arguments, which have always been very closely intertwined. The first one was ideological, and had to do with the distinction between high and low art: the image was seen as more ‘female’ than ‘male’; visual literacy was seemingly easier to achieve than verbal literacy; and industrial evolutions in print technology demonstrated a clear link between the increased role of the image on the one hand and mass communication on the other. [...] The second argument underwriting the suspicion toward images was mediological, and had to do with the distinction between the fictional character of storytelling and the non-fictional character of a certain type of picture, namely, the photograph¹⁵.

The range of views brought into the discussion is wide: from those claiming that the image cannot be narrative¹⁶, to those embracing the visual as a key narrative medium. The intersections of image, text, story, discourse, and rhetoric (both visual and narrative) are indeed complex. As I shall argue later, the complexity has so far escaped the attention of the wider public – including the organisers of educational systems. John Bateman has commented on it in a competent manner:

The common notion of ‘literacy’ in education is one that is solidly conjoined with the understanding of text. Being literate means that one can read written language. Moreover, as argued by many commentators, the past 200 years has seen such a focus on language, particularly written language, that the very notion of intelligence has been strongly linked with verbal literacy. Education consequently focuses on extensive training in the use of language. Other forms of expression either are considered specialised arts for those so gifted or are left implicit¹⁷.

¹³ Markku Lehtimäki, “The failure of Art: Problems of Verbal and Visual Representation in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*”, in: *Intermediality and Storytelling*, op. cit., p. 188.

¹⁴ John A. Bateman, *Text and Image: A Critical Introduction to the Visual/Verbal Divide*, London: Routledge 2014; Jan Baetens, “Image and Narrative”, in: *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. D. Herman, M. Jahn, and M.-L. Ryan, London: Routledge 2005, p. 236–237; Lehtimäki, op. cit.

¹⁵ Baetens’ elaboration is very instructive: “The success of classic theories about the expressive power of words versus images (see, e.g., Lessing’s *Laokoon* (1776)) explains why fixed images have long been considered incompatible with narrative devices and storytelling. Emphasising the differences between word and image, i.e., between time and space, Lessing attacked the idea that literature was ‘painting with words’ and painting ‘narration with colour’. He saw the two media as predisposed to the representation of different meanings: description for painting, narration for language, and he was sceptical of attempts by one medium to invade the territory of the other. His ideas, which remained influential until the mid-twentieth century, were questioned by the emergence of mass-media as well as by the avant-garde, both of which refused the strict separation of words and images” – Baetens, op. cit., p. 236.

¹⁶ Lehtimäki, op. cit., p. 197.

¹⁷ Bateman, op. cit., p. 22.

To alleviate the deficits pointed out by the critics of the logocentric educational paradigm¹⁸ is one of the primary tasks for allied narratology and imagology. By explaining how digital forms of storytelling (such as those offered by social media platforms) engage audiences in a textual-visual rhetoric, researchers will be able to prepare ground for more detailed studies of the individual poetics employed by Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, tabloid websites, as well as streaming services.

The disciplines have more in common than just a shared corrective ambition, though. Firstly, specialists in the two fields have been claimed to be preoccupied with their respective cultural “turns”. Both spectacular in their own way, the “narrative turn” affected a variety of disciplines and “is evident in the increased attention that narratives and their characteristic quality, narrativity, have met with over the past few decades”¹⁹. The “visual turn” was the most insightfully discussed by Mitchell (as “pictorial turn”)²⁰ and Boehm (as “iconic turn”)²¹. The shifts have indicated a move away from the argumentative, logocentric logic of historical humanities and installed a progressive reputation for both disciplines – which offered themselves to the study of the new and the postmodernistically diverse.

The second area of common business for the two disciplines results, therefore, from an awareness that traditional forms of dissemination of their objects of study (stories and images, respectively) have changed as a result of technological progress. The teachings of Walter Benjamin²² seem to have predisposed narratologists and imagologists quite progressively in their confrontation with the astounding amount of research material. The questions the allied disciplines might address in this respect are the following: 1. How does the development of high-definition technologies (such as 4K screens, advanced photo cameras, or 360-degree cameras) affect the poetics of fiction? 2. How do VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality), and MR (Mixed Reality) technologies redefine the rhetoric of narrative? What indices of fictionality can be distinguished in these respective media? 3. How do visual narratives contribute to audience engagement in such interactive user-oriented practices as loot-box gaming? 4. Do all

¹⁸ Ibid., James A. Heffernan, *Cultivating Picturacy: Visual Art and Verbal Interventions*, Waco, Texas: Baylor UP 2006; Wolff-Michael Roth, Lilian Pozzer-Ardenghi, Jae Young Han, *Critical Graphicacy: Understanding Visual Representation Practices in School Science*, Dordrecht: Springer 2005.

¹⁹ Werner Wolf, “Narrative and Narrativity: A Narratological Reconceptualization and Its Applicability to the Visual Arts”, *Word & Image*, vol. 19, no. 3, p. 180.

²⁰ W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1994.

²¹ *Was ist ein Bild?*, ed. Gottfried Boehm, München: Verlag W. Fink 1994. In fact, the debate about the differences between “iconic” and “pictorial” turns engaged both scholars in an intensive debate – documented in Gottfried Boehm and W. J. T. Mitchell, “Pictorial Versus Iconic Turn: Two Letters”, *Culture, Theory and Critique* 2009, vol. 50, no. 2–3, pp. 103–121.

²² “Familiar though his name may be to us, the storyteller in his living immediacy is by no means a present force. He has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant. [...] Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. [...] Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn” – Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller”, in: idem, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. H. Arendt, New York: Schocken 1968/2007, p. 83, 84.

of these demand a new conceptual framework? These, and other questions, will surely rely on the narrative and visual aspects of these emerging media.

The third aspect in which the interests of the two fields overlap is the theoretical apparatus. Whether discussing change, temporality, focalisation, point of view, authorial, narratorial and audience positions²³, the two fields might effectively sharpen the focus of their conceptual lexicons and continue to test them against a common research field. As indicated by narratological insight on eventfulness and chronology, for instance (as well as the related history of chronophotography), both narrative and visual records of change and temporality have the potential to become polysemic, rich, intriguing kinds of messages. On a very rudimentary level, all narratives and some images (especially the mechanically recorded ones, like photography) are essentially preoccupied with capturing change and with questions surrounding temporality. Mirzoeff commented:

Time-based media are newly ascendant, creating millions upon millions of slices of time, which we call photographs or videos, in what seems to be ever-shrinking formats like the six-second-long Vine. The obsession with time-based media from photography in the nineteenth century to today's ubiquitous still- and moving-image cameras is the attempt to try and capture change itself²⁴.

The fourth factor that connects the two disciplines is that both observe a relative overproduction of their objects of interest – again resulting from technological progress. With the emergence of digital photography and its various twenty-first-century developments, the praxis of imago-production has become more confounding. What forms of visual production qualify as images today? Is the image an all-encompassing concept? Painting, photography, film, cartoons, moving images, gifs, Boomerang files, looped images, filters, postprocessing, snapchats, Instagram-stories, memes, videoclips, video games, animated Prezi presentations – do all of these qualify for inclusion in the orbit that Imago-logy explores²⁵. The typology of images presented in *Images: A Reader* (2006) includes: “drawings and illustration; paintings; photographs (chemical); TV; film; magazine, newspaper and still ads; computer screen images (internet); scientific images (incl. human sciences); 3-D artefacts (sculptures and buildings); optics; verbal images; mental images; perceptual images; icons, idols, symbols and logos”²⁶. As the abovementioned narratologists have observed, the territory of narrative production has become comparably diverse.

²³ “The kinds of distinctions of perspective, the assertion of contingent causality, variations in choice of narrator and expressions of time that we have seen, all stand as basic strategies available for telling stories. It is then relevant to ask how these strategies can be played out when we have more than just language at our disposal. Can we vary the perspective from which a story is told visually? Can we show different degrees of focalisation and arrange how time flows differently? And what happens to basic narratological distinctions between ‘who tells?’ and ‘who sees?’ when we are in a visual medium? Can anyone be said to ‘tell’ at all? Are there visual narrators?” – Bateman, op. cit., p. 70.

²⁴ Mirzoeff, *How to ...*, op. cit., p. 35. See also: Bateman, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁵ *Images: A Reader*, ed. S. Manghani, A. Piper and J. Simons, London: Sage 2006, p. 12–13. Additionally, the authors quite rightly claim that “no particular typology of images is satisfactory for all issues and approaches”.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Why Collaborate?

In the light of the above, I would like to claim that it is one of the scandals of twenty-first century humanities that the latest reassessments of the status of image and of storytelling – put forward by narratology²⁷ and visual studies²⁸ – have not yet penetrated into the general public debate. Despite the best efforts the Academia has made to monitor, analyse, diagnose and describe the extravagant cultural changes that have remoulded the functioning of what might today be called the visual society, public discourse (on such subjects as education and pedagogy, media, social communication and politics) continually fails to acknowledge the fact that contemporary Western culture is no longer undeniably logocentric. One of the reasons for such a state of affairs is that Academia has never effectively translated its very, very reasonable, magnanimous insight into marketable, followable practices that would be able to instil change in the pragmatics of how we teach, learn, communicate and build relationships. Instead, we have, on the one hand, demonised applicability (in a declarative tone characteristic for the ways the Ivory Tower comments on its own status as purely intellectual), and, on the other, we have refrained from accepting the power of superficiality in contemporary culture. Depth has always been the domain of academic humanities for a good reason. Today, however, as the intersections of image, media, communication and storytelling have intensified, the Academia has to speak louder and make itself visible on a variety of surfaces. If such a restitution is to take place, imagology and narratology have to play a crucial role – specifically because they are devoted to the scrutiny of two master tropes of contemporary culture – that is, of image and of storytelling.

In what follows I would like to illustrate the challenges that specialists in each respective discipline might try to address together – working in conjunction, against interdisciplinary differences, and with the aim of establishing theoretical positions that could significantly contribute to the contemporary practice of communication. Such a contribution is necessary if we are to prove in practice that the theoretical deliberations

²⁷ See, among others, *Postclassical Narratology*, op. cit.; *Beyond Classical*, op. cit.; *Intermediality and Storytelling*, op. cit.; *Emerging Vectors*, op. cit.; David Herman, James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, Robyn Warhol, *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*, Columbus: Ohio State UP 2012; *Current Trends in Narratology*, ed. G. Olson, Berlin: de Gruyter 2011; *New Narratives*, op. cit.; Phelan, op. cit.; *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-conscious Narratology*, ed. M.-L. Ryan and J.-N. Thon, Lincoln: Nebraska UP 2014.

²⁸ See especially Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, Princeton: Princeton UP 2011; Burnett, op. cit.; Andrew Darley, *Visual Digital Culture: Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*, London: Routledge 2000; Patrick Hogan, "Rabindranath Tagore, Implied Painter: On the Narratology of Visual Art", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 2012, vol. 35, issue 1, pp. 48–72.; *Visual Culture*, ed. C. Jenks, London: Routledge 1995; S. Manghani, *Image Studies: Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge 2013; *Visual Culture Reader*, ed. N. Mirzoeff, London: Routledge 1999; idem, *Introduction to Visual Culture*, op. cit.; idem, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*, Durham, DC: Duke UP 2011, idem, *How to See the World*, op. cit.; W. J. T. Mitchell, *The Language of Images*, op. cit.; idem, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1986; idem, *Picture Theory*, op. cit.; idem, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2005; idem, *Image Science: Iconology, Visual Culture and Media Aesthetics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2015; Jacques Ranciere, *The Future of the Image*, trans. G. Elliott, London: Verso 2008; M. Smith, *Visual Culture Studies*, Los Angeles: Sage 2008; Ian Verstegen, *Cognitive Iconology*, Amsterdam: Rodopi 2014.

are well-founded in the reality of contemporary communicative practice – and that narratological and imagological research is not just “art for art’s sake” or merely yet another offshoot of theory’s demonic self-preoccupation²⁹. If postclassical narratology has the genuine ambition to delve into regions yet untrod, it might wish to not only strengthen its alliance with imagology, but also to evidently show the applicability of its insight. I would therefore like to suggest, dear fellow-theorists, that we make it real.

This postulate is inspired by Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen’s seminal *Imagologies: Media Philosophy*, a book that over twenty years ago defined a body of problems that await a theorist-philosopher in confrontation with stories, images, and media³⁰. In their idiosyncratic, visually astounding publication, the authors present a record of their ground-breaking philosophical teleseminar which was organised electronically in two locations – Finland and the US – over the Internet. In their early adventure with digital humanities, Taylor and Saarinen made a number of radical claims about what Baudrillard defined as the culture of the simulacrum. Many of them constitute an interesting context for the proposed alliance of narratology and imagology. Throughout their argumentation, the authors explain that in the culture of the simulacrum (or “simcult”), traditional modes of thought have lost validity. It is so, they argue, because concepts reside not in arguments and in profundity of thought, but in images and surfaces. For this reason, truth (scientific or other) is no longer a crucial factor in contemporary culture. Communication, in turn, is no longer preoccupied with the sending of valuable signals, but with amplification. In such an environment, conventional research and study methods have lost their exclusive status. Consequently, canons are not to be relied upon. In the culture of consumable images, power-controlled surfaces and commercial networks, intellectual explorations are required to follow the dynamics of electronic communication rather than the traditional modes of thought relying on Enlightenment and its *sapere aude* principle. Instead of disciplinary coherence, the study of simulacrum culture should involve searching for mobile points of focus; instead of “daring to know”, we might sometimes “dare to flow”. Above all, however, research results should be communicated in a way that could be consumed the same way as cultural objects are. “What our age needs is a communicative intellect”, the authors claim.

Expert language is a prison for knowledge and understanding. A prison for intellectually significant relationships. It is time to move beyond the institutional practices of trivilege, toward networks and surfaces, toward the play of superficiality, toward interstanding. [...] Responsible thought cannot remain confined within the walls of the academy but must take to the streets. In simcult, the street is the media. There is no reasonable alternative to electronic discourse³¹.

²⁹ Antoine Compagnon, *Le Démon de la théorie: Littérature et sens commun*, Paris: Seuil 1998.

³⁰ Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen, *Imagologies: Media Philosophy*, London: Routledge 1994.

³¹ *Ibid.*, “Communicative Practices”, p. 2, 8, 10.

With the collapse of the literary as a powerbase, the postmodern situation becomes torture for the class of intellectual elites. [...] An age that is not centered around the idea is no longer willing to pay the price for concept-mongering³².

Idiosyncratic as they are, the theses could be reasonably translated into the projection of what preoccupations narratological research might focus on in further stages of its historical development. In order to assure itself an important position in what follows the postclassical period, narratology should strengthen its scrutiny of non-canonical forms (both textual and visual), and develop a popular, applied, mainstream dimension. The said alliance with imagology might offer an effective platform for such a development, as it promises not only to diversify its research area for the benefit of a wider audience; but also to offer new outlets for publication that would go beyond narratological, and – possibly –academic circles. Furthermore, focusing on even more liberal objects of study should be followed by terminological reform; more accessible jargons could penetrate into public debate, together with more marketable, followable argumentations and conceptual work. Larger preoccupations with the narrative capacities of image (and, consequently, with visual studies) will allow narratology to take advantage of the widespread denigration of logos and of the promotion of eikon³³. The resulting reassessment of key narratological phenomena might be then postulated for educational curricula and for the standards of public debate. Only when such a large-scale overhaul is performed, will narratology move beyond its postclassical stage.

Naturally, to postulate such a reassessment is a radical step – which is nevertheless required by the cultural changes we witness. I would like to discuss two of such changes – both of which constitute challenges for narratology and imagology alike. One consists in the increasing superficiality of visual and narrative representation that has dominated public discourse. The other – in the essential role of fictionality and falsity in the reception of visual narratives today. I will discuss these issues in connection to Internet phenomena characteristic for the culture of the digital simulacrum.

New Challenge: Pseudo-Eventful Narration

Taylor and Saarinen's claims on superficiality³⁴ could be effectively understood in the narratological-imagological domain in the following way: the proliferation of images has contributed to the proliferation of pseudo-events³⁵, and thus, to the overflow

³² Ibid., "Media Philosophy", p. 17.

³³ Analogically, thanks to narratological research and its multidisciplinary connections, the status of the image in other disciplines might be effectively rectified to imagology's favour. Compare Taylor and Saarinen's argumentation: "The move from philosophy-as-argument to philosophy-as-literature is a Kierkegaardian leap far too frightening for Anglo-Saxon philosophers. A still more breath-taking challenge is the leap from current academic practice to image-centered philosophy – to imagology" – *ibid.*, "Media Philosophy", p. 20.

³⁴ "Surfaces fold into surfaces to create convoluted structures that are infinitely diverse, constantly changing and perpetually mobile. To attempt to escape the play of surfaces is to continue the dream of western philosophy and religion. To awaken from this dream is not to suffer disillusionment but to appreciate, perhaps for the first time, the endless potential of superficiality" – *ibid.*, "Superficiality", p. 2.

³⁵ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America*, New York: Vintage Books 1992, p. 7.

of pseudo-stories, which pose severe obstacles to a *bona fide* analysis of eventfulness and of narrativity. “The power to make a reportable event is [...] the power to make experience”, Boorstin claims³⁶. “In the last half century [as a result of what Boorstin calls “the Graphic Revolution”] a larger and larger proportion of our experience, of what we read and see and hear, has come to consist of pseudo-events”³⁷, that is, intentionally generated, allegedly tellable and only apparently eventful manifestations of bogus narrativity.

A pseudo-event [...] is a happening that possesses the following characteristics:

(1) It is not spontaneous, but comes about because someone has planned, planted, or incited it. Typically, it is not a train wreck or an earthquake, but an interview.

(2) It is planted primarily (not always exclusively) for the immediate purpose of being reported or reproduced. Therefore, its occurrence is arranged for the convenience of the reporting or reproducing media. Its success is measured by how widely it is reported. Time relations in it are commonly fictitious or factitious; the announcement is given out in advance ‘for future release’ and written as if the event had occurred in the past. The question ‘Is it real?’ is less important than, ‘Is it newsworthy?’

(3) Its relation to the underlying reality of the situation is ambiguous. Its interest arises largely from this very ambiguity. Concerning a pseudo-event, the question ‘What does it mean?’ has a new dimension. While the news interest in a train wreck is in *what* happened and in the real consequences, the interest in an interview is always, in a sense, in *whether* it really happened and in what might have been the motives. Did the statement really mean what is said? Without some of this ambiguity a pseudo-event cannot be very interesting.

(4) Usually it is intended to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The hotel’s thirtieth-anniversary celebration, by saying that the hotel is a distinguished institution, actually makes it one³⁸.

Boorstin’s model not only offers a fascinating context for narratological work on eventfulness, but also illustrates the intriguing challenges that the reader of contemporary image-mediated culture has to face – the story-images that purport themselves as valuable surfaces – as conglomerates of attention-grabbing phenomena that frequently do not possess a profound structure of narrative meanings, but are capable of generating immense audience response. Their communicative effectiveness does not result, therefore, from an intelligible semantic superstructure, but from a superficial arrangement of stimuli, of signals that are required to amplify one another rather than build a complex semantic universum.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 12. John Berger’s observations confirm a dissociation of image and experience: “For the first time ever, images of art have become ephemeral, ubiquitous, insubstantial, available, valueless, free. They surround us in the same way as a language surrounds us. They have entered the mainstream of life over which they no longer, in themselves, have power” – John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London: BBC and Penguin Books 1972, p. 32.

³⁸ Boorstin, op. cit., p. 11–12.

I would like to discuss the question of pseudo-events in relation to an electronic platform that has effectively utilised image and narrative for the creation of powerful social bonds and for commercial success. Highly unstable in its ever-changing forms and functionalities, Instagram remains a peddler of visual stories and pseudo-stories, and continues to challenge the theoretical notions of seriality, eventfulness, audience engagement and narratorial identity. Unorthodox as they might seem in the context of this article, the profiles of Instagram celebrities constitute a large body of diverse material for analysis very much in line with postclassical ambitions of narratology³⁹. To illustrate the concept of pseudo-event in this visual medium, I wish to examine the content gathered in the account of Deynn (Marita Sürma-Majewska), a celebrated Polish blogger and fashionista, whose profile is currently observed by 1.2 million Instagram users, and contains 549 images (4th December 2018).

The narrative structures and visual conventions that are employed in Deynn's account are indicative of a larger trend that organises the functioning of the platform. What started as an offshoot of her fashion blog, developed into an autobiographical narrative in daily instalments – an abundantly visual, narratively traditional story of a self-made young woman whose physical metamorphosis, love relationship and consistently straightforward style of expression have garnered the attention of the Internet community and the support of sponsors and media publishers. The profile manifests a range of visual conventions in which the centrality of the self-portrait is undisputable. Whether in the form of selfies or of posed, formally neat long-shots, the photographs underline three motifs: muscularity, skin decorations (make up and tattoos), and fashionable outfits. All three have translated into the discursive practice that the profile generates throughout the publication period of the last four and a half years. User comments include a variety of (characteristic and predominantly enthusiastic) responses to 1) what Deynn looks like, 2) how radical her physical transformation is, 3) how inspiring her performance proves to be to the users, 4) what suggestions she might offer on dieting and work-out, 5) what shopping counselling she can provide the followers with. The repetitive form of the photographs is mirrored in the responses in a radically ritualistic way – in its rhetoric, the visual Deynn narrative encourages the audience to make analogous judgements about subsequent portions of the story material, relying on endless sequences of repetition-cum-difference as a guarantee of audience engagement.

A selection of comments will illustrate the audience response most adequately. "Darling, you look charming! Like a million dollars! It is lovely to see both of you together"; "I would like to kindly ask if you could tell me what this charming model of glasses is 😊😊😊". "Me too! I would also like to know what frames these are! They're so lovely! ❤️". "For something completely different, did you get vaccinated before going to the Dominican Republic?", users responded to a post published on 6th June 2018. "Out of curiosity... How did your skirt size change after you had shaped your culo?",

³⁹ See Page, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

another user asked two days later. Seemingly improvised and unedited, the responses indicate a crucial area for narratology to explore – the rhetoric of audience response constituted in relation to visual social media narrative.

The astounding effect the publishing activity of Deynn has generated consists in the building of a large community of devoted users whose interactions are not only centred around the authoress, but also develop independently of the original input. If Deynn fails to explain what model of sneakers she is wearing in the picture, her followers will investigate and offer advice to one another. Thus, in the hands of the e-celebrity, Instagram becomes a generator of solidarity bonds and of communitarian exchanges of (common-sense) knowledge and emotional expression.

The narrative instability that arose in early 2018 in connection to Deynn's argument with her sister has (in some e-circles, at least) become an epitome not only of how rapid the fall of electronic personas might be, but also what such a decline means to the visual representation of their experience. When in January 2018 tabloid press and portals reported the allegedly belligerent collisions the two sisters went through, the ever-successful and usually expressive blogger did not elaborate on her viewpoint beyond a single disclaimer message (removed from the account soon after) in which she refused to be involved. The conflict seemingly destabilised the image of the Instagrammer as continuously flawless; it threatened her narratorial (and commercial) reliability and evolved into what the social media semiosphere observed as a major event. A certain doubt arises here, though: is the event manifested on the visual level? Is any verbal expression devoted to it? It seems that the only indicator of an eventful change could be observed between 15 January and 28 March 2008, when – unusually – no posts were added to the profile.

Absence and discontinuity as reactions to negativity and crisis are characteristic for pseudo-eventful Instagram narrations: in communication with the audience, the superficial, mundane activities and situations that are presented in Deynn's regular posts are assigned a high status and are celebrated not as (real, resultative, unpredictable, persistent, irreversible, non-iterative⁴⁰) changes, but as repetitive, amplification-oriented components of a larger, semantically consistent message. The spectacle is not the result of profundity or change but of superficial cohesion. In the case of Deynn, what – in an extratextual doxa could seem a highly eventful change (an unexpected conflict with a family member) – did not manifest sufficient tellability to be included in the visual-narrative profile. In other words, an eventful crisis was screened out for the excess profundity and negativity as it failed to comply with the conventions of success established by the personal narrative.

As I have observed elsewhere, tellability is connected to the textual and extratextual norms and readerly judgement⁴¹. In social media narratives – of which Instagram is a powerful example – the repetitiveness of the visual material⁴² (even as it frequently

⁴⁰ Wolf Schmid, *Narratology: An Introduction*, trans. A. Starritt, Berlin: de Gruyter 2010, p. 9–12.

⁴¹ Mitosz Wojtyna, *The Ordinary and the Short Story: Short Fiction of T.F. Powys and V.S. Pritchett*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015, p. 165.

⁴² Wolf speaks of a “chronological, causal and teleological coherence between elements of the represented world – with results that occupy a whole spectrum of ‘stronger’ and ‘weaker’ narratives” – Wolf, op. cit., p. 189.

borders on the redundant) generates what Herman in a different context called “a constellation of story-like constructs corresponding to [the character’s] hopes, anxieties, desires, beliefs and plans”⁴³. This is where the attractiveness of first-person, autobiographical Instagram narratives rests: in the voyeuristic, almost addictive observation of reassuringly stable, consistent images-stories. In the age of the simulacrum, the process of selectivity that constitutes every narration⁴⁴, promotes superficial redundancies (pseudo-events or non-events) rather than highly eventful happenings. The morning latte, the afternoon selfie, the evening shopping session are apparently very tellable (showable). Consequently, the bonds constitutive of audience engagement do not result exclusively from a high level of eventfulness or instability, but also from repetition and consistency – especially if it is supported by a stable, comprehensive visual aesthetic.

The radical shift in what is and what is not tellable – made all the more intensive by electronic media – was anticipated by Walter Benjamin.

It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences. [...] One reason for this phenomenon is obvious: experience has fallen in value. And it looks as if it is continuing to fall into bottomlessness. Every glance at a newspaper demonstrates that it has reached a new low, that our picture, not only of the external world but of the moral world as well, overnight has undergone changes which were never thought possible⁴⁵.

Sensitive as he was to the changes that the “age of mechanical reproduction” brought to our communicative practice, Benjamin was wrong about one thing: experience is still being communicated. Exchanges continue between us – images are passed on from eye to eye and from screen to screen. Stories are told and shown in quantities more astounding than ever. Their quality has changed, though, legitimising the fears that Henry David Thoreau expressed in *Walden*.

I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or lot of grasshoppers in the winter, we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all news, as it is called, is gossip and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip⁴⁶.

⁴³ David Herman, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002, p. 59.

⁴⁴ Matthias Brütisch explains: “To narrate is an activity which necessarily involves the following processes [...]: selection of characters actions and corresponding qualities from an infinite number of events; composition (temporal ordering and possibly linearization) of this selection; and presentation of this artificial array in a specific medium” – M. Brütisch, “How to Measure Narrativity? Notes on Some Problems with Comparing Degrees of Narrativity across Different Media”, in: *Emerging Vectors*, op. cit., pp. 315–335, p. 331.

⁴⁵ Benjamin, op. cit., p. 84.

⁴⁶ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1882, p. 148.

As we very well know, it is not only “old women over their tea”. The social circulation of the allegedly trivial social media content means that it is academic knowledge and academic discourse that are at the peril of becoming trivialised and obsolete. To postulate a change for narratology and imagology is to, following Taylor and Saarinen, refuse the elitist bemoaning of superficiality, and instead to study it with as serious devotion as we have offered to the study of the canonical. The second challenge I want to present combines interest in traditional research questions with genuinely current, imago-centric – and perhaps trivial material.

Old Challenges Redux: Fictionality, Falsity, and Educational Deficits

Almost four decades after Jean-François Lyotard diagnosed the end of grand narratives as the central feature of the postmodern condition⁴⁷, an equivalent report on knowledge in the twenty-first century would have to return to the notion of credulity and incredulity towards information in general, and towards stories in particular. Fictionality, fictiveness, falsity and fake are the aesthetic dominants of contemporary storytelling, visual culture. If imagology and narratology are to develop their social and educational impact, these are where they need to start.

On the one hand, the emergence of dubitable epistemological phenomena (such as “post-truth” and “fake news”) in current public debate has only aggravated the degree to which information (especially that circulating in the form of images and image-mediated narratives) confounds popular audiences around the world. What President Trump’s counsellor Kellyanne Conway casually claims to be “alternative facts” in connection to the photographs of Trump’s and Obama’s inaugural crowds⁴⁸, appears to have become a key element in the inclination contemporary culture has for substitution. Alternatives are offered for canonical texts, for recognised plots, for narrative conventions and for visual aesthetics. An undermining of reliable sources of information (e.g. the photograph) is not merely a gesture of political antagonism, but rather a striking manifestation of a profound distaste for documented, empirical knowledge. It is a tribute paid to both speculative fearmongering and to the navigable, user-oriented culture of media convergence in which there is no room for Grice’s maxims of conversation, but plenty of space for falsity and verisimilitude.

On the other hand, the growing interest in fictional worlds certain cultural forms (such as the TV series or the video game) have manifested indicates a radical preoccupation with the non-empirical. Contemporary culture has become increasingly open to new reception processes that rely on participatory input, user-experience and on a certain relativity of interpretations. We have witnessed a bombastic proliferation of fictive discourses with the rise of such genres as fanfiction, mockumentaries, docufiction, memes, or the creepypasta. All of them not only problematise the stylistically significant boundary

⁴⁷ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington, B. Massumi, foreword by F. Jameson, Minneapolis: Minnesota UP 1984.

⁴⁸ Kellyanne Conway in an interview offered as part of the “Meet the Press” cycle on 22 January 2017.

between factuality and fictionality but also largely depend on the electronic media, that is, communicative channels that have been developing more rapidly than our understanding of them. In what follows, I would like to illustrate an example of a narrative text which, originally composed as a piece of manipulative story material (a hoax, a falsity), uses a fictional form to frame the deceptive narrative into an aesthetic convention.

The Internet advertising campaign presented in March 2017 by Reserved to anticipate the launch of a new men's collection illustrates the mechanics of fictional truth and its origin in sequentiality, aesthetic verisimilitude and readerly dynamics. What began as an apparently spontaneous amateur video published on YouTube by an individual non-corporate user, attracted the attention of over 2 million views in just five days⁴⁹, and subsequently developed into a social event of substantial resonance. The three-minute video features a young American woman, "Dee Dee" (Destene Kinser), who has embarked on a romantic quest and is looking for a young man from Poland with whom she fell in love during a concert in Europe. Aesthetic judgements of the video complement the interpretive processes here: amateur framing of the stationary shot (characteristic for a laptop webcam) combined with the girl's ostensibly improvised speech, as well as the relatively low quality of the image, legitimises the otherwise implausible main undertaking – to find the boy with the help of the community of Internet users. What seems to be at stake in this strikingly controversial click-baiting video is that its relative lack of formal ambitions (legitimising its alleged factuality) is accompanied by its open-ended structure. The concise narrative micro-account of the beginnings of a quintessentially romantic engagement encourages audiences not only to acknowledge the spirit of the age (the omnipotence of individual Internet communication) but also to read for the continuity of plot. Indeed, in the next segment of the larger overriding narrative Dee Dee announces the successful completion of her quest, expresses gratitude to the viewers, and announces a trip to Warsaw – all of this in an even more strikingly verisimilar simulation of real-life events and real-life aesthetics⁵⁰.

What follows, however, is a third segment that violates expectations in a variety of ways. Not only does it reveal the actual fictionality of the entire enterprise (the lovers unite in Poland only to disclose their actual identity as commercial actors)⁵¹, but it also resigns from the aesthetic convention for the sake of a perfectly professional visual style of a state-of-the-art music video clip, entirely implausible in the context of the previously used non-artistic convention. This final aesthetic shift, followed by the disclosure of the fictionality of the narrative, resulted in an ethical response that undermined the actual *raison d'être* of the video narrative itself. The resulting outrage of audiences (who were put off by the dubious ethics of the commercial campaign)

⁴⁹ The original "Polish boy wanted" video is currently unavailable in YouTube. Various related versions of the same material can be found in other YT profiles, though.

⁵⁰ "Dee znalazła wojtkę", YouTube video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EloBV4HJB50&frags=pl%2Cwn>

⁵¹ "RESERVED #POLSKICHLOPAK – POZNAJ HISTORIĘ VOL. 1", YouTube video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufexqSawtbM&frags=pl%2Cwn>

was symptomatic both of the cognitive dissonance that stylistic and thematic instabilities generated and of insufficient interpretive competences that audiences made use of. Sequentiality and stylistic verisimilitude contributed to an increase of plausibility and, consequently, to the resulting creation of an engaging fictional truth. In the viewers' hermeneutic apparatuses, a narrative referring to romantic love seems to have automatically assumed factual status. All in all, the use of indicators of fictionality (that is, conventions characteristic of fictional narratives), in the Reserved campaign legitimises misinformation as story.

Such a misappropriation of fiction is symptomatic of reception practices in our post-truth imago-centric culture. In the conglomerate of images that surround us, reliability is no longer linked with factuality, but with stylistic visual verisimilitude⁵². An increase of audience gullibility is significant. What looks true, is true. Therefore, what seems at stake in teaching and understanding narrative interpretation and image analysis today is not just the lionised "suspension of disbelief", but its very opposite – an alertness to nuances resulting from the very overabundance of stories and images on the one hand, and fictive discourses on the other. To understand these intricacies of contemporary visual culture is a challenge that educational institutions, intellectual elites and media users still have to undertake. They might do so with the help of narratological and imagological research apparatuses (and thus better understand the rules governing narrative and visual rhetoric), but only on condition that both of these disciplines liberate their jargon and their choice of objects of study.

In the above argumentation I have suggested that an alliance of narrative theory and imagology might result in a larger focus on the crucial intersection between stories and of images and in an intensified debate on such issues as eventfulness, repetition, fictionality, superficiality, logo- and imago-centrism, the value of information, as well as on media communication and media philosophy. While any such interdisciplinary effort will surely be appreciated by the Academia, it seems that a larger initiative is at stake here: to redefine educational paradigms and to establish new standards of public communication in which postfactual and postverbal forms of expressions will not generate the radical cognitive dissonance that the emergence of simulation culture has generated amongst more conservative thinkers. Ultimately, an ambitious task for postclassical narratology would be to employ the outstanding apparatus it has developed in the study of literary and electronic fictions to the study of socially powerful discourses – of the multileveled, superficial conglomerate of words, images, things and stories available in what Taylor and Saarinen refer to as "the mediatrix", the "electronetwork that mediaizes the real"⁵³.

⁵² Saarinen and Taylor claim that "in media philosophy, performance displaces truth" – Taylor and Saarinen, *op. cit.*, "Media Philosophy", p. 13.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, "Communicative Practices" p. 2, 5, "Pedagogies", p. 2.

Bibliography:

- Baetens, Jan, "Image and Narrative", in: *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. D. Herman, M. Jahn, and M.-L. Ryan, London: Routledge 2005, pp. 236–237.
- Bateman, John A., *Text and Image: A Critical Introduction to the Visual/verbal Divide*, London: Routledge 2014.
- Belting, Hans, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, Princeton: Princeton UP 2011.
- Benjamin, Walter, "The Storyteller", in: idem, *Illuminations: Essays and reflections*, ed. H. Arendt, New York: Schocken 1968/2007, pp. 83–109.
- Beyond Classical Narration*, ed. J. Alber and P. K. Hansen, Berlin: de Gruyter 2014.
- Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, London: BBC and Penguin Books 1972.
- Boehm, Gottfried, and W. J. T. Mitchell, "Pictorial versus Iconic Turn: Two Letters", *Culture, Theory and Critique* 2009, vol. 50 no. 2–3, pp. 103–121.
- Boorstin, Daniel J., *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America*, New York: Vintage Books 1992.
- Brooke-Rose, Christine, *Stories, Theories, Things*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1991.
- Brütsch, M., "How to Measure Narrativity? Notes on Some Problems with Comparing Degrees of Narrativity across Different Media", in: *Emerging Vectors of Narratology*, ed. P.K. Hansen, J. Pier, P. Roussin, W. Schmid, Berlin: de Gruyter 2017, pp. 315–335.
- Burnett, Ron, *How Images Think*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2004.
- Compagnon, Antoine, *Le Démon de la théorie: Littérature et sens commun*, Paris: Seuil 1998.
- Current Trends in Narratology*, ed. G. Olson, Berlin: de Gruyter 2011.
- Darley, Andrew, *Visual Digital Culture: Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*, London: Routledge 2000.
- Dee znalazfa wojtka, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EloBV4HJB50&frags=pl%2Cwn>
- Emerging Vectors of Narratology*, ed. P.K. Hansen, J. Pier, P. Roussin, W. Schmid, Berlin: de Gruyter 2017.
- Herman, David, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology", *PMLA* 1997, vol. 112, no. 5, pp. 1046–1059.
- Herman, David, and James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, Robyn Warhol, *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*, Columbus: Ohio State UP 2012.
- Herman, David, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.
- Hogan, Patrick, "Rabindranath Tagore, Implied Painter: On the Narratology of Visual Art", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 2012, iss. 1, vol. 35, pp. 48–72.
- Images: A Reader*, ed. S. Manghani, A. Piper and J. Simons, London: Sage 2006.
- Intermediality and Storytelling*, ed. M. Grishakova and M.-L. Ryan, Berlin: de Gruyter 2010.

- James A. Heffernan, *Cultivating Picturacy: Visual Art and Verbal Interventions*, Waco, Texas: Baylor UP 2006.
- The Language of Images*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1980.
- Lehtimäki, Markku, "The Failure of Art: Problems of Verbal and Visual Representation in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*", in: *Intermediality and Storytelling*, ed. M. Grishakova and M.-L. Ryan, Berlin: de Gruyter 2010, pp. 183–206.
- Liotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington, B. Massumi, foreword by F. Jameson, Minneapolis: Minnesota UP 1984.
- Manghani, Sunil, *Image Studies: Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge 2013.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*, Durham, DC: Duke UP 2011.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London: Routledge 1999.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas, *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More*, New York: Basic Books 2016, epub edition.
- Mitchell, W. J. T., *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1986.
- Mitchell, W. J. T., *Image Science: Iconology, Visual Culture and Media Aesthetics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2015.
- Mitchell, W. J. T., *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1994.
- Mitchell, W. J. T., *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2005.
- New Narratives: Stories and Storytelling in the Digital Age*, ed. R. Page and B. Thomas, Lincoln: Nebraska UP 2011.
- Page, Ruth, "The Narrative Dimensions of Social Media Storytelling: Options for Linearity and Tellership", in: *The Blackwell Handbook for Narrative Analysis*, ed. A. de Fina and A. Georgakopoulou, Oxford: Blackwell 2015, pp. 329–348.
- Phelan, James, *Somebody Tells Somebody Else*, Columbus: Ohio State UP 2017.
- Postclassical narratology. Approaches and analyses*, ed. J. Alber and M. Fludernik, Columbus: Ohio State UP 2010.
- Ranciere, Jacques, *The Future of the Image*, trans. G. Elliott, London: Verso 2008.
- RESERVED #POLSKICHLOPAK – POZNAJ HISTORIĘ VOL. 1, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufexqSawtbM&frags=pl%2Cwn>
- Roth, Wolff-Michael, and Lilian Pozzer-Ardenghi, Jae Young Han, *Critical Graphicacy: Understanding Visual Representation Practices in School Science*, Dordrecht: Springer 2005.
- Schmid, Wolf, *Narratology: An Introduction*, trans. A. Starritt, Berlin: de Gruyter 2010.
- Smith, M. *Visual Culture Studies*, Los Angeles: Sage 2008.
- Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-conscious Narratology*, ed. M.-L. Ryan and J.-N. Thon, Lincoln: Nebraska UP 2014.

- Taylor, Mark C. and Esa Saarinen, *Imagologies: Media Philosophy*, London: Routledge 1994.
- Thoreau, Henry David, *Walden*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1882.
- Verstegen, Ian, *Cognitive Iconology*, Amsterdam: Rodopi 2014.
- Visual Culture*, ed. C. Jenks, London: Routledge 1995.
- Visual Culture Reader*, ed. N. Mirzoeff, London: Routledge 1999.
- Was ist ein Bild?*, ed. G. Boehm, München: Verlag W. Fink 1994.
- Wojtyna, Miłosz, *The Ordinary and the Short Story: Short Fiction of T.F. Powys and V.S. Pritchett*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015.
- Wolf, Werner, "Narrative and Narrativity: A Narratological Reconceptualization and Its Applicability to the Visual Arts", *Word & Image*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 180–197.