ARTICLES

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On the Digital Representation of a Narrative Structure

Event and Implication as Indicators of a Narrative: The Non-Linearity Problem[1]

Narrative is usually defined as a sequence of events (subsequent events, related through cause and effect). Such understanding of a narrative presents it as a structure into which the presence of a cognitive consciousness is inserted – a cognitively-active subject which qualifies something as an event and relates it to other events, based on the laws of causality. According to Daniel C. Dennett, the mind connects events based on cause and effect. Similarly, mechanisms of causality make it possible for us to take action[2]. This means that a narrative is a cognitive construct (Marie-Laure Ryan)[3] and one of the basic dispositions of our mind – its primary act belongs with human experiences and actions (David Carr)[4]. Using digital structures, which are, after all, a product of the human mind, one could metaphorically describe it as an ingredient of a mental software represented in social behaviour, human actions and their effects, or we could say, in textual implementations somewhat projected in the semiotic browser of a textual world. Treating the matter literally, a narrative is a cognitive structure – a tool that allows us to understand, to tame the surrounding reality, and make sense of it; it is a disposition which can be activated through various signs and which finds its numerous implementations in the textual world. These implementations can take shape though various signs – there are verbal, audio, iconic, mixed forms, as well as ones that use moving pictures, audiovisual, interactive. Narrative is present in various media and discourses, while simultaneously revealing itself through them. It can have both a transmedial and a transdiscursive character. It can also mediate social reality and happen in the space of a human life (e.g., in the way a city space is organised).

Semiotics, media, discourses, and genres differentiate between various forms of narrative and ways of its existence. Thus, for example, literature and film are particularly

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[2] See *Człowiek, który zmienił myślenie o umyśle*, dir. K. Jałochowski, book with a DVD, Warszawa 2015.

[3] M-L. Ryan, "Introduction", in: *Narrative across Media*, ed. M-L.Ryan, Lincoln-London 2004; see also: *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*, ed. M-L.Ryan, Baltimore and London 2001.

[4] D. Carr, *Time, Narrative and History*, Bloomington 1986; see also the analysis of H. White's and Carr's narratological thought in modern historiosophy in: K. Rosner, *Narracja, tożsamość i czas*, Kraków 2003, pp. 75–100.

predisposed for intentional creation of elaborate narrative forms[5]. At the same time, a painting, a photo, a piece of music, architecture, dance, a museum, a garden can be characterised as a narrative in their individual implementations[6], which means that they may have a discursive potential, as well as an ability to create in the perceiving subject a chain of thoughts, where every subsequent event is interpreted as dependent on the previous and condition the next one. In this situation, the message becomes an impulse that triggers the recipient's narrative thinking, as they narrativize the perceived element.

The aim of this study is to describe the selected features of narrative and to investigate narrative representations in digital environments. By examining the figure of implication, non-linearity, narrative as a dual construct (with alleged relations), alternative narrative, and narrative expectation in the digital space, this paper explores the specificity of digital narrative.

The basic unit of a narrative is an event[7], which should be understood as a change in the state of things, an occurrence, and the creation of something. When talking about Aristotle's *Poetics*, Paul Ricoeur writes about narrative in the context of its coherence: "On the narrative plane, the event is what, in happening, advances the action – it is a variable of the plot. ... In a general way, any discordance entering into competition with concordance counts as an event"[8]. The event needs to be related to movement (relocation, reshaping of something), action and time. Every change, even the smallest, is made through movement and is a consequence, a display or a tool of action; each one also happens in time or creates time.

Both the narrative (as well as narrativity and narrativizing) are constituted on the figure of implication (entailment, succession), which is a figure of thought and decides about the figurative character of the narrative[9]. This figure is created by any sensually perceived element of an event, which is characterised by its ability to create causal entanglements and/or the order of succession with another event's element. In other words, it is every event, which is sensed as causing or connecting to another event in more or less necessary ways. In textual implementations implication is a narrative-organising figure; the rule according to which causal events are connected. This is especially true for a narrative

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[5] Structure creation, described by M.-L. Ryan as being a narrative, is deemed by the scholar to be an intentional feature of texts, regardless of their semiotic shape (as opposed to "having a narrative" – the ability to trigger narrative scripts). See: M.-L. Ryan, "Introduction", in: *Narrative across Media, op. cit.,* p. 9.

[6] The differentiation between narrative, narrativity and narrativizing is also present in the writings by Monika Fludernik. She perceives narrative and narrativity as a feature, an attribute of texts that references human experiences; at the same time she relates narrativization to a description of a reading strategy that relies on mediating narrative structures in order to tame the text, to make it something natural. See M. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, New York 2005, pp. 19, 25.

[7] It can be a central (essential), secondary or episodic plot event; see: E.Dorfman, *The Narreme in the Medieval Romance Epic: An Introduction to Narrative Structures*, Manchester 1969, p. 5–7 (core incidents and marginal incidents); S. B. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, New York 1980 (kernels and satellites).

[8] P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, London 2004, p. 243.

[9] I have adapted this category of logic for narrative theory.

which, according to Ryan, has an intentional character. As narrative is a cognitive construct, a tangible, externalized (e.g., verbal or audiovisual) semiotic presence of events and relationships is not required. The keystone of textual appearance of narrativity is the presence of textual implementations of any perceptive element – by which we mean an element of the event that has a potential to connect through a causal relationship with another element of the event in the receptive consciousness (i.e., an element with the potential to become an impulse of a narrative thinking). Thus, a narrative event can be any event that is conditioned by another event or/and is a condition of another event. Architectonic narratives are a good example[10], just as illustrations in novels or documental photography, which are examples of something that Ryan calls illustrative narrativity, by which she means one where an important factor that participates in the creation of a narrative context – in the above examples it is the context of a fictitious narrative, but also of events which took place in a social reality.

Event and implication as conditions for the existence of a narrative and narrativity are also the basis of textual implementations of digital narrative[11]. Digital environments, which are characterised by the same form of recording textual information, programmability, demand that the recipient execute actions on texts, giving the narrative a specific textual shape. Digital narrative is a hybrid form: transsemiotic, transmedial and transdiscursive – it engages all the textual forms created by the existing state of culture. Created as an effect of the users' actions, different every time, it is an alternative narrative, accentuating self-agency and based on presumed relationships.

The essence of a hypertext narrative is commonly thought to be its non-linearity. When confronted with a traditional book narrative, where the act of reading takes place in one order, in accordance with the convention of a printed book (by which we mean the order of subsequent words, sentences read, in our culture, from left to right), hypertext, however, is perceived as being introduced by anchors and links that allow the reader to leave this order of reading (i.e., it has a non-linear character). We should be more precise, because what is described as non-linearity is in fact another way of organising the texture (i.e., the semiotic and material organization of text) and by that the level of textual implementations, a method that can be realized due to technological capabilities of a digital medium. Its specificity lies in the fact that the organisation of the texture allows choosing elements of the text, and through that establishing the order of discourse. The choices allow the user to establish a certain narrative order, which makes the very process of reading linear. After all, the user does not open a few links at the same time, but one after another. His choice of a link establishes the order of reading, connecting lexias (i.e., segments of text), which in the representational layer are usually organised in the same order as a narrative texture in a printed version.

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[10] K. Kaczmarczyk, "Umiejscowienie narracji. Afektywność i performatywność narracji architektonicznych", *Tekstualia* 2015/4, pp. 113–132.

[11] Digital narrative is here used as a common name (phenomenon) of different kinds of narrative texts in digital environments.

We should obviously expect that the subsequent development of digital narrative forms will lead to new methods of organising text (e.g., changes in the structure of lexia). Already in the digital texts created today the texture in lexia is movable, pointing the cursor at the written words or verses causes new fragments of texture to appear, words to disappear or change shape – and all of this takes part in the receptive shaping of a narrative. It also turns out that the actual reading of printed texts does not always follow the conventional order, that reading of the whole is increasingly being replaced by non-linear skimming[12].

Pierre Bayard writes: "When we have a book in our hands, it is rare that we read it from cover to cover. ... The notion of skimming or flipping through books can be understood in at least two different senses. In the first case, the skimming is linear. The reader begins the text at the beginning, then starts skipping lines or pages as, successfully or not, he makes his way toward the end. In the second case, the skimming is circuitous: rather than read in an orderly fashion, the reader takes a stroll through the work, sometimes beginning at the end. This second method implies no more ill will on the part of the reader than does the first. It simply constitutes one of our habitual ways of relating to books"[13].

The result is our tendency to pick textual elements (i.e., parts of the text) and constitute relations between them (create the narrative) somehow on our own, despite the existing rules. We follow different orders and methods of reception not only in the case of hypertext texts, but also with printed ones. Thus, non-linearity, understood as an existence of numerous orders of reading out of which the recipient chooses, is not the sole property of artistic hypertext, or even digital space. This specificity is marked by the fact of including non-linearity understood in such a way and the actions of the user on the texture of the authorial intention, which is one method of organising a digital text and the conventions of its reception. Non-linearity and the user's actions are normative features of the digital discourse, as linearity – of a printed text and simultaneity – of iconic ones (e.g., painting or photography).

Duality of Digital Narrative: Alleged Relations

Hypertextual narrative is a dual construct: one can therby separate the microstructure and macrostructure levels. Microstuctures are created through events and causal relationships, cause and effect are articulated through individual lexias. They use narrative forms, based on less or better articulated figure of implication, with linear discourse. Microstructures are ingredients of macrostructures, its units being lexias connected by links in an order determined by the user.

Macrostructure is constructed as a set of lexias (segments of text), where the recipient has acccess to individual lexias with links leading to subsequent lexias. On the macrostructure level, implication is rarely articulated – the narrative is often reconstructed

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[12] For more details on skimming see: E. Szczęsna, "Komparatystyka mediów. Poetyka, semiotyka, komunikacja medialna", in: *Komparatystyka dla humanistów*, ed. M. Dąbrowski, Warszawa 2011, pp. 314–319.
[13] P. Bayard, *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read*, trans. J. Mehlman, New York 2007, pp. 29–30.

by the recipient, who extracts important events out of individual lexias and binds them together through causal relationships, creating a story. On this level, the order of lexias depends mostly on the choices made by the user. The reader constantly updates the plot, verifies it based on new data, reconstructs the sequence of events, updates the sense of the entire story. This is the reason why the order in which the fragments are selected does not influence the sense of the whole in a decisive manner, though this depends on the assumption that the user will reach all segments that are important for the plot of a hypertext.

Authorial intention of an artistic hypertext includes a certain kind of consent for not reading the whole text. This awareness, but also fear that the user will not open all the lexias, is reflected in the fact that the lexias deemed by the author to be particularly important for setting a certain trajectory of the narrative and giving sense to the whole text, can be accessed from a number of different fragments. This method of reading based on choosing anchors and, as a consequence, the segments of text, has to be incomplete – it must accept, and even suppose or write into its onticity the fact that the recipient will not reach all the segments of the text. This acceptance of an incomplete reading of a narrative text creates an important hole in the requirement of a close and full reading of a text, especially a canonical one, introduced by the culture of printed text.

Digital narrative has a trans-semiotic and remediative character – it is co-created by different sign systems (transitions from words to pictures, animations, sounds) and the digital employment of media. Moreover, it is hybrid – textual elements that represent different discourses can be engaged in the process of telling a story. For example, in Jakub Jagiełło's *Kosmos* (*Cosmos*) some links "take the reader out" of the fictional world into the sphere of scientific or popular science discourse – we might point out here, for example, links to the webpages explaining astronomical phenomena. The effect of such an action is a revision of the suspension of disbelief, which results from the reader's engagement with different discursive orders and, through that, with different axiological orders. Engagement in a transmedial narrative requires a critical approach from the recipient as well as alertness while separating different orders by their value.

The relationships on which the figure of implication is based – cause-effect, incentive-reaction – can be articulated in a text in various ways. They can be explicit and direct (e.g., *John tripped and fell, hurting his knee*) or effaced (e.g., *John pulled the blinds, sat in the armchair and engrossed himself in a book*). In the latter case, the narrative is created by the subsequent actions which are related to one subject and are connected (by the recipient) through alleged causal, advisable or temporal relations.

The alleged relations reference knowledge, experience, awareness of the rules of human communication that we possess. They allow for the implementation of the narrative intention, not explaining every relationship between events, every form of implication. In the act of reception, however, they engage the recipient with the narrative – they are what the recipient supposes, making sense of the whole narrative. Thus, the act of interpretative supposition of relationships between events is, on one hand,

an act of involvement in the creation of the narrative and, on the other hand, an act of interiorising the story.

The alleged relations that create implication are present in hypernarratives both on the narrative microstructure and macrostructure levels – in the relationships between the linked lexias.

Here is a fragment of Jakub Jagiełło's hypernovel, *Kosmos*:

> I woke up, not even certain when. And by God, I'm not quite sure where! The walls of the room started emitting a magical glow. Delicate whitened violet of the walls shifted its colour so that it became even more intense than pure <u>quinacridone violet</u> pigment.
>
> Then, the colour began to sing, and on the outside, among the white night, a colourful aurora glittered unfeasibly.
>
> Through the expanse of the door fell in an unreal beam of shimmering silvery light. And I don't know, <u>whether it's a dream</u>, or reality, or an illusion created by looking into the light for too long, but slowly <u>I was starting to feel</u> somewhere in the depths of my soul a magnetic compulsion <u>to get up</u>, go through the door, streets, move past the buildings and go, <u>run through the forest in the night</u>. To touch leaves and trunks, look for shimmering sparks of stars, hidden among the entangled branches of the trees![14]

The speaking subject – the hero – talks about his perceptual and mental experiences after waking up. These are mostly synthesised visual and audial experiences, through which he detects appearances: shapes, colours which are enlivened, basically anthropomorphised (colour which sings). These experiences conjure feelings and desires in the hero, which he attempts to name. Thus, a triad appears: awakening – perceptual experiences of what is happening in the room – emotional experiences, desire. The impressions and emotions of events are entangled according to the principle of consecutivity or the alleged effect (if the hero had woken up and opened his eyes, it means he had to see something, and that something conjured certain emotions and desires in him).

There is a number of links in the fragment cited above. The first one is appointed to the phrase: "quinacridone violet" and show a segment of text[15], which is a type of semiotic and semantic expansion and commentary. The link is based on the associative and semantic relation. Provided are: Latin name of the colour, the chemical formula, and there is also a metatextual digression – concerning the sound of the colour's name, and directed to the recipient. In this communication, the recipient is encouraged to read

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[14] http://jaboja.pl/%E2%9C%AA#✩ [access: 30.11.2016]. Starting here, the underlined words denote links in the quoted text.

[15] http://jaboja.pl/%E2%9C%AA#◇ [access: 30.11.2016].

the name out loud, which is described as melodic and colourful. Metatextual elements, which concern the same discourse, additionally make it easier to shake the user out of suspension of disbelief.

Another link is entangled with the words "I was starting to feel" and presents synthetic experiences, feeling of the subject:

> A shimmering spark of a flame. Reflexions pulsing on my hand. Light dissolving, dissociating into rainbow colours. Hear the delicate sound of red! Trembling and vibrant orange, delicate bells of yellow, melodic green, dissolving in a steady noise blue, falling into a harmonious ultramarine and synthetically clattering violet ...
>
> And then, with a delicate movement, turn your hand above the green-hued paraffin of the candle. Feel the warmth – smell of the field of grass on a May night. Tawny-red touch, rays delicately passing through the hand, subtle waves of warmth, like a feeling of content that is conjured up in your soul when you manage to do something difficult and everyone rejoices with you, that there's finally been a success, that the dusk is finally approaching and one can finally enjoy The Accomplishment.
>
> Rise slowly, let the fabric on your body bend into a drapery, feel it tickling, the sparks of rubbing – delicate green of mint, blue of a May sky – turn around, dance in circle – the sound of drums, the warmth of wood, rotten in the night.
>
> Look into the beam of light, in to the magic of a flame and brightness of the start. Allow yourself to be tempted by the ultramarine beauty, the rush of sky. Go! Run through the forests![16]

The fragment above remains in an associative relation to words that elicit it. The indicated relation can be alleged to be directed to emotional and sensual experience of the surrounding reality. Thus, we have tawny and red touches, subtle waves of warmth, tickling of a fabric, all related to the second-person form of "feel". The elusiveness of feelings, the difficulty of naming them is reflected in the equivalency structures, but also in the way synesthesis is employed – clarification of colours with categories that reference sound (e.g., ringing of red, vibrant orange, bells of yellow, melodic green, noise of blue, clattering violet, etc.) and finally, in the invitation directed to the reader to create an analogous experience in himself.

Finally, the last two links – the first one is started by the words "to get up", and the second "run through the forest in the night". The exit moment is the "magnetic compulsion" felt by the hero. In both cases, lexias connected with the link somehow fulfil this compulsion. In the first case, the hero gets up and approached the door, intending

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[16] http://jaboja.pl/%E2%9C%AA#火 [access: 30.11.2016].

to leave[17]. The second link, anchored in the phrase "run through the forest in the night" can also be alleged to be an implementation of the experienced compulsion, but this time, it receives a shape of a moving picture. Placing moving green sketches resembling the shape of trees on a black background could be a representation of a forest, as perceived by a running person.

In case of both fragment in which the hero gets up and approaches the door, as well as in the referenced animation, the relationship between the words that constitute the point of exit and the lexia, is one of a succession – the appearance of desire to do something is followed by an implementation. In effect, both lexias are related to each other through a structural and semantic analogy.

Alternative Narrative: Narrative Expectation

The factor deciding about the idiosyncrasy of programmed plots' narrative is their multivarietal character. The programmability allows to project plot, which can be implemented by the user in numerous discursive orders, but also one in which the story will be shaped differently. However, as it is more likely that experiencing many variants of a discourse or many variants of the story usually happens in a clinical environment (multiple reading by a scholar), not during a normal reading by a literary hypertext user[18], which is usually accompanied by the feeling of making a choice, the category of alternative narrative seems more apt. I describe the alternative narrative as a type of narrative where the user decides about the order of discourse and/or events, as well as relations between them (the story told); the number of possible combinations is set by the author.

The choice of a link-anchor that leads to a different segment of the text (lexia) is – which should be stressed – the choice of the moment of passage, not a choice of the lexia that hides behind the link and is not known to the user. To demonstate it, one simply has to imagine a room from which he can move to another by opening one of a few doors, each of them looking different and conjuring different connotations, but also hiding a space which we know nothing about. We also do not know whether the connotations created by the doors will be convergent with what one finds behind them.

The moments of passage to the subsequent lexias are such doors-words or iconic representations that mean something and are entangled with certain connotations. Because of that, they have the ability to inspire the recipient to create a narrative expectation, which is different from the expectations characterised by Hayden White as a state characterictic for the reception of a narrative[19] as it is related to designing events that are suggested by the sematics of the moments of passage to a subsequent lexia, as well as by being directed to an expected, "announced" by semantics of the anchoring place, continuation of the events.

Narrative expectation is also different than suspense – suspension of action, slowing it down or a digressive move away (by introducing another description or plot thread)

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[17] http://jaboja.pl/%E2%9C%AA# [access: 30.11.2016].

[18] Though it may not apply to "playable" literature.

[19] H. White, *Poetyka pisarstwa historycznego*, ed. E. Domańska, M. Wilczyński, Kraków 2000, p. 146.

in order to magnify the tension felt by the recipient waiting for a continuation of the action, settlement of the conflict. The receptive expectation, which consequence is initiation in the recipient a narrative activity displayed by designing the next part of the story, is especially successful in action, adventure and criminal plots – wherever the events are expressive and emotionally charged. It can also be achieved by plot measures or measures that use the external organisation of the text, on the compositional and discursive level. We can observe this within episodic pieces (films or novels), where a receptive projection of the expected subsequent events can take place during the wait for the next part. According to Wolfgang Iser, "the serialized novel uses a cutting technique"[20], which, by stopping the narrative and engaging the reader in finishing it, makes the reader a co-author. In the episodic form cuts are more calculated then in a continuous reading, created by "strategic purpose". Because of that, there is an increase in "degree of indeterminacy"[21]. As Iser states: "In view of the temporary withholding of the information, the suggestive effect produced by details will increase, thus again simulating a welter of possible solutions. ... The reader is forced by the pauses imposed on him to imagine more than he could have done if his reading were continuous"[22].

While expecting and projecting subsequent events in episodic novels is inspired by previous action and its suspension, in hypernarrative it is also related to the meaning of the linked word, the act of its choice and the interaction in which the previous plot participates, especially the semantics of a particular lexia with the semantics of the word that is the moment of passage for the next lexia. To put it more simply, semantics of the linked word play an important role in creating the narrative expectation, as well as the fact of this, or different choice of a passage. For example, in the fragment of Susan Gibb's *Blueberries* quoted below this could be an expansion of the plot thread concerning dream and dreaming, caused by, for example, a desire for the recipient to learn about the specifics of the dream; sensory thread that connotes touch, corporeality or the eventual thread related to a sexual act. I am quoting:

> I dreamt of blueberries, brown bags full of berries as large
> as apples. I still catch their cool scent, feel their plump bodies
> in my hands.
> Blueberries smell of morning breeze and sex with white cotton curtains blowing out open windows.
> After that I painted canvases covered in blueberries.[23]

The additional difference between the suspense and projecting narrative expectation in the case of hypertext is that the suspense is a deliberate narrative technique based on delaying an important event that the audience is waiting for in a state of emotional tension. For this technique to work, it has to appear relatively rarely. In short, the effect

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[20] W. Iser, *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*, Baltimore-London 1993, p. 11.
[21] *Ibidem*, p. 7.
[22] *Ibidem*, p. 11.
[23] http://www.cddc.vt.edu/journals/newriver/09Fall/gibb/blueberries/blueberries.html [access: 07.02.2017].

of suspense is stronger when it is not used too often within one plot and when the audience does not have to wait too long for the resolution. Too long a delay can cause irritation or fatigue.

Meanwhile, projecting narrative expectation is a structural feature of hypertextual plots, the rule controlling the choice of the moment of passage to the next lexia. The suspense factor is pushed into the background; the factor of projecting the expected course of events becomes more important, even dominating. By choosing a textual element of a certain meaning, the user expects (or maybe even demands) further development or introduction of elements (plot threads) that are suggested by the meaning of the chosen word and the meanings and associations created in interaction of the word with a particular lexis and previous knowledge the recipient had about the plot. Choosing the passages, the user sets the order of the appearance of lexias and somehow includes the selected elements within the plot, makes them into another element of the story, partaking in creation of the narrative.

Especially important here is the emphasis on the act of participation. The user choosing the linked word does not create the lexia related to it. His narrative expectation – to discover something about a topic which, in his receptive opinion is suggested by the chosen link, is not always fulfilled. It means that the lexia, which hides behind the linked word, can stay in various relation to the source lexia, as well as sematics and the field of association of this word. The movement made by the reader, from the lexia related to the particular word can open a new thread, not related semantically to the previous lexia. Semantics of the linked lexia might not fit into the connotation field created by the recipient's narrative expectations. In such a case we should speak of a disappointed expectation, which directs the interpretative narrative onto a different track. Nonetheless, in every case, the conjured segment of the text triggers off an interpretative activity in the recipient, tending towards semantically linking the subsequent lexias in order to create a coherent narrative.

Alternative narrative is characterised by an occurrence of numerous potential orders of discourse. Each act of reading is usually related to another order of selected links, and, in effect, a different order of discourse, while it is possible to keep the same story or create a new one. The last case can be used to describe the so-called playable plots, where talking about events is dominated by projecting them. The existence of many possible orders of discourse does not equal a necessity to experience this multitude by the user. A single reading of a piece with retaining the choice of the lexias will create an effect of experiencing a single order of discourse, although the recipient will be aware of possible existence of other orders of discourse – ones he did not choose. In this case, we can speak of a potentially alternative narrative. Only multiple readings, with various choices of links, will create an effect of a real alternative narrative experience for the recipient.

Other than the choice of anchors, the choice of the concept (method) of getting to know the piece is also possible – it can be, for example, choosing the subsequent anchors in such a way that it will mean perpetually leaving a particular segment, but,

for example, philological reading is also possible, based on perpetual return to an already known segment in order to set off subsequent passages to other segments, studying the relations between a particular segment and segments related to it.

In an alternative narrative the relation between the order of discourse and the story told can be shaped in two directions. Firstly, a different choice of anchors during the subsequent readings of the text by one reader (or the difference of choice of anchors that emerges as a result of reading the text by different users) entails an entire or partial change of the story. It means that a multiplicity of discursive orders determines the multiplicity of stories. Secondly, a different choice of anchors during the subsequent readings does not cause a particular change in the story, which means that the multiplicity of the possible narrative (discourse) orders does not have a meaningful impact on the story.

An example of the first direction could be a digital adaptation of Artur Marciniak's *Antyczny relikwiar* (*Antique Reliquary*)[24], where multiple readings can uncover a few stories. For example:

Story 1. A stranger approaches von Kramp as he is sitting in a tavern, and proposes a lot of money for stealing a reliquary. Von Kramp:

1a. does not agree and as a result is stabbed to death by the stranger.

1b. does agree, but does not promise to keep a secret and as a result is stabbed to death by the stranger.

Story 2. A stranger approaches von Kramp as he is sitting in a tavern, and proposes a lot of money for stealing a reliquary. Von Kramp takes the job. At night, he goes to the mansion where the reliquary is held. As he approaches the fence, he hears dogs on the other side:

2a. convinced that the dogs have always liked him, he jumps over the fence, but is killed by the animals.

2b. comes back to the tavern for a piece of meat which he feeds to the dogs, turning their attention away. He enters the mansion by a back door, where he dies, shot by a servant.

Story 3. A stranger approaches von Kramp as he is sitting in a tavern, and proposes a lot of money for stealing a reliquary. Von Kramp takes the job, at night he goes to the mansion where the reliquary is held, as he approaches the fence, he hears dogs on the other side. He comes back to the tavern for a piece of meat which he feeds to the dogs, turning away their attention. He enters the mansion by a back door, reaches the reliquary. Suddenly, he is surprised by the host, who tells him that inside the reliquary there is a vial of potion, which will give eternal life to the person who drinks it first (in this case, von Kramp) and a desired death to one who drinks it afterwards (in this case, the host).

3a. von Kramp drinks the potion.

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[24] http://www.antyczny-relikwiarz.cba.pl [access: 30.11.2016].

3b. von Kramp gives back the potion and saves the host from eternal life, which became a burden to him.

In both cases, the story ends with the same quote by the host, which gains different meaning in light of the events that led up to it. The choice of a particular anchor equals access to a particular lexis, while excluding another one at the same time. Lack of access to all lexias is the reason why the subsequent readings of the whole story and choice of different links create different stories (the summary above does not list all the possible sequences of events).

Meanwhile, an example of an alternative narrative that keeps the fundamental unity of the story is given by *Blueberries*, where every time the reader chooses different anchors, different segments of the text, he reaches the same information, albeit in a different order. It might lead to interpretative reallocations, though it mostly serves a reconstruction of a single story.

In case such as *Blueberries* alternative narrative concerns the order of discourse – the choice of different anchors leads to revealing the events in different orders. But every time, the reader gains access to the same segments, essential for the whole text, which can be reached from different fragments, this, in consequence leads, to uncovering essentially the same lexias, though in a different order. The narrative activity of the recipient is revealed through semantic ordering of the uncovered fragments, reconstructing the story, arranging the events in a temporal order, connecting them in a causal manner, giving sense to the whole though semantic coherency. Multiple reading and different order of segment choices can modify secondary meaningful characteristics of the text, lead to noticing elements that have been missed before, move the balance point – from some event to another. But it will not have impact on the cardinal events

Between both cases – multiplicity of stories and its fundamental unity, are located intermediate forms – a partly-modified story or one that moves the balance point from some events to others. Here we should also place the changes in the conotative field of a paricular event. There changes also result from the fact of changing the context. Whether the hyperfiction reader first learns about the event "x" placed in a particular lexia (when other events are not known to him yet) or later – when his knowledge is fuller; his interpretation of the event is conditioned by the fact of reaching lexia with the event "x" from a particular position in the text, the context in which he learns about it. In effect, such a construct of the piece reveals the part that the recipient plays in creating a narrative, presenting it as a mental structure.

The strategies used in digital narratives presented here are not all of the strategies of plot and are not limited to essential story events. Analogically, the features of digital narrative indicated in this text do not exhaust the list of its characteristics. They, however, point toward modelling and textual as well as discursive measures that were made possible by digital technologies, which in contact with a narrative readiness of the recipient as his constant mental disposition, engage him intellectually and corporally in the creation of the story, entangling it with the singular act of reception and the personality of the user.

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