

**International Symposium on
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Department of Literature and History of Ideas
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*Organized by Anežka Kuzmičová and Göran Rossholm, Stockholm University,
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ABSTRACTS AND SPEAKER INFORMATION
(alphabetical order)

Peter Alberg Jensen (Stockholm University): *'Situation' and 'situative' as aesthetic fundamentals*

In modern prose the importance of 'events' has decreased in favour of 'situations'. This focal change is due not only to the obvious fact that the lives of ordinary people are less eventful than those of traditional narrative heroes, but also to the hitherto disregarded fact that 'situation' is in itself an aesthetic category which 'event' is not: 'situation' demands an imaginary mode in order to be perceived. The paper will develop this thesis.

Peter Alberg Jensen is Professor Emeritus in Russian Literature at Stockholm University. Main area of research: Russian Literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, in particular theoretical aspects of the development from classical to modernist prose (with Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Pil'njak, and Pasternak as exemplary authors).

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Marco Caracciolo (University of Groningen): *Distorted embodiment and literary meaning-making: a phenomenological convergence*

The point of departure of this paper is that readers' engagement with narrative lower-order, bodily experience is inevitably bound up with readers' meaning-making at a higher, culturally mediated level. In particular, I examine how the narrative representation of distorted, grotesque or non-ordinary bodies can elicit embodied simulations in readers and, at the same time, impact the socio-cultural meanings they construct.

I use as case studies two novels published in 1963—Edoardo Sanguineti's *Capriccio italiano* and Italo Calvino's *La giornata di uno scrutatore* (The Watcher)—which represent human bodies that are variously distorted and deformed. Sanguineti's novel tells a more or less ordinary story of husband and wife through an oneiric lens, so that the characters' bodies appear distorted by multiple experimentations with style and narrative form. Calvino's text adopts a more realistic approach: spending a day in a hospital for patients affected by all kinds of bodily and mental impairments, the protagonist becomes absorbed in an extended meditation on human nature. Despite their many points of contact, these texts differ in a significant aspect: Sanguineti's novel is relatively devoid of thematic "commentary," therefore leaving the audience free to engage with—and interpret—the distorted bodies that recur throughout its pages. By contrast, through the protagonist's quasi-philosophical reflections,

Calvino's novel presents the reader with already formed judgments about physical deformity and its significance.

Does Sanguineti's text provide the basis for an interpretation of distorted embodiment similar to the one offered by the protagonist of Calvino's novel? Or does it point the audience in an altogether different direction? My paper answers these questions at two levels: historically, by looking at the debate between Calvino and neo-avant-gardist writers such as Sanguineti in the context of the Italian literature of the 1960s; and theoretically, by exploring the implications of my case studies for the way in which we conceptualize the interaction between embodied engagement and higher-order forms of literary meaning-making.

Marco Caracciolo is a post-doctoral fellow at the research center "Arts in Society" of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He recently completed his PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of Bologna in Italy. Marco has been visiting scholar at the Ohio State University (Project Narrative) and at the University of Hamburg (Interdisciplinary Center for Narratology). He is mainly interested in cognitive approaches to literature and in literary aesthetics. His work has been published or is forthcoming in journals such as Poetics Today, Storyworlds, Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, and Partial Answers. Marco's current project is a book-length study focusing on how literary texts figure the quality or texture of conscious experience.

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Staffan Carlshamre (Stockholm University): *Fiction reading as Bayesian reasoning*

One of the things that readers must do when confronted with a fictional work is to figure out what is supposed to be true in the fictional world, what is supposed to be fictional in exactly this fiction. Modern approaches to this problem are often based on possible-worlds theory and in particular on David Lewis' theory of counterfactuals – following Lewis' seminal article "Truth in Fiction" (1978). In my presentation I explore another framework for constructing the fictional content, namely Bayesian reasoning, as employed in belief-revision theory. The basic idea is that the reader takes the narrow content of the fiction – what is actually "asserted" in the text – as new evidence in relation to a prior distribution of make-believe probabilities, and successively modifies this prior distribution according to Bayesian principles. The framework is shown to provide natural solutions to some standard problems of possible-worlds theories. It is also flexible enough to accommodate a range of different types of text and of different approaches to the same text, in surprisingly illuminating ways, by variations both of the prior distribution and of the ways of utilizing the "evidence" of the text.

Staffan Carlshamre is professor of theoretical philosophy at Stockholm university. He has worked on different aspects of the philosophy of the humanities, in particular on the philosophy of interpretation. His current focus is on the cognitive aspects of narrative form, both in factual and fictional contexts.

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Ellen Esrock (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute): *Bodily strategies of reading*

Scholars and educators are just beginning to recognize the experiential, bodily dimension of reading literature and its impact on the reader's grasp of upper level, conceptual knowledge. Close, phenomenological examination of a reader's bodily awareness, in conjunction with research from psychology and the cognitive neurosciences, indicates two, interconnected modes of engaging the verbalized worlds of literature. One is a *simulation*, modeled upon current formulations in other disciplines, and the other is here termed a *transomatization*. In a simulation the reader imitates something that occurs in verbalized world and experiences,

to differing extents, this simulation as if it were a component of this world. By contrast, with the transomatization the reader imitates something that occurs in the verbalized world yet does not actually deploy the body imitatively to do it. Through a transomatization the reader uses some bodily part or process as a substitute – a non-mimetic somatic (trans-somatic) replacement for some aspect of the verbalized world created by literature and experiences her transomatization, to differing extents, as part of this world. Investigation of these two bodily reading strategies brings into question the theoretical adequacy of our current notions of reading consciousness.

Ellen Esrock is an Associate Professor of Literature at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from New York University and a B.A. in Philosophy from Washington University St. Louis. Her publications include The Reader's Eye: Visual Imaging and Reader Response (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) and a translation of Umberto Eco's Poetics of Chaosmos (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). She has also published "Embodying Art: The Spectator and the Inner Body," Poetics Today, 31:2 (2010): 217-250; "Embodying Literature." Journal of Consciousness Studies, 11, No. 5-6 (2004): 79 –89; "Touching Art: Intimacy, Embodiment, and the Somatosensory System," Consciousness and Emotion, 2:2 (2001): 233-254. Professor Esrock teaches courses in modern and postmodern literature and visual art, psychology and literature, visual culture, women writers, and theory/history of photography.

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Elspeth Jajdelska (University of Strathclyde): *Why might good writers produce bad descriptions? Folk theories of mind and non-vivid description*

Psychologists have known for a long time that some intuitive beliefs about how our minds work are wrong. For example, people often intuitively believe that the most effective way to describe a face to a third party is to break it down into a catalogue of items, and describe them one by one. But there is clear evidence that this is ineffective. The philosopher Andy Clarke has discussed a range of mistakes we are likely to make about the way our own brains work of this kind, suggesting that they often arise from our bias towards processes of which we are conscious rather than unconscious, such as symbolic representation.

In this paper, I wish to consider the role of two theories of mind, called for convenience “folk theories”, which might bias literary writers towards descriptions that, despite the writer’s best intentions, are unlikely to be vivid. The first case is that of faces, where feature by feature descriptions seem intuitive but are unlikely to be as vivid as holistic descriptions. The second case is that of sex. It is notoriously difficult to describe sexual acts effectively in literature; one UK literary journal even has a prize for bad sex scenes. I wish to suggest that the representation of sex is problematic in human culture generally and not just in literature. A folk theory of mind concerning the way verbal representation works generally means that writers often ignore this difficulty and therefore produce unsuccessful representations. A case study of Nabokov suggests that there are ways around the problem of sex, but they are only available to a writer who understands that such a problem exists.

Elspeth Jajdelska is a lecturer in English Studies in the School of Humanities at the University of Strathclyde. She is a member of the Literary Linguistics Reading Group there. Much of her work to date has focussed on the history of reading in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with a particular interest in imagined relationships between writers and readers and their connections to real relationships. More recently she has begun interdisciplinary work in the psychology of literary reading, leading to a publication in Poetics Today in 2010: "Crying, moving and keeping it whole: what makes literary descriptions of face vivid?". She published Silent Reading and the Birth of the Narrator in 2007 (University of Toronto Press) and is currently completing a monograph titled From Impertinent Writers to Imagined Readers: Speech, Print and Decorum, 1660-1760.

Michael Kimmel (University of Vienna): *Circumscribing the terrain of embodied literary reading: a text-linguistic perspective*

Literary works can be analyzed from the viewpoint of how (and how systematically) they engage the reader in vicarious experiencing of a fictive world via simulations of sensory imagery, kinaesthetic action simulation, as well as body-internal affect. A systematic linguistic analysis, here mainly inspired by cognitive linguistic theory, is of propaedeutic value for behavioral research. In view of the multiple dimensions of the umbrella notion “embodiment” the challenge is two-fold: First, we need to define “effect levels”, the qualitative dimensions of embodied activations: I distinguish body-internal and external loci of a simulation and, furthermore, contrast veridic, iconic, and figurative language-related processes. My second concern is with predicting textual cues that are most likely to produce embodied effects (barring all effects emerging from dispersed clues, which cannot easily be predicted by linguistic means). The reader is made to veridically simulate the storyworld whenever descriptions of proprioceptive and sensory events, force-dynamic interactions, as well as action affordances occur. Some texts augment this, not seldom lavishly, through emotion metaphors, image metaphors, synesthetic expressions, and “contour” words that specify the manner of motion and energy expenditure of an embodied process. Texts display different relative frequencies and distribution profiles across these cue types. I argue that the systematic coding of a literary text for embodiment cues sheds light on authorial cueing strategies of mood, affect, action, perspective taking, and immersion.

Michael Kimmel is a full-time researcher at the University of Vienna, Austria, where he earned his PhD in 2002. His various fields of interest have evolved around a specialization in metaphor research and more recently force dynamic analysis, tools which he has applied both to political discourse and literature. In the latter field, cognitive poetics, Dr. Kimmel has used them to explore embodied reader response, narrative macrostructures and plot comprehension, as well as actancy. Convergent with his text-linguistic work he has also applied psycholinguistic and gesture analytic methods here. A rather distinct area of interest concerns socio-cultural embodiment, particularly the role of image schemas as shapers of thought and action. Currently Dr. Kimmel is the team leader of a cognitive phenomenological project that investigates bodily interaction skills in Tango argentino, Aikido, Feldenkrais, and Shiatsu through the lens of multi-modal imagery. In the past Dr. Kimmel has regularly taught skills for software-assisted qualitative research and developed coding tools for metaphor research.

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Karin Kukkonen (University of Oxford): *Evelina's letter: a case study of curiosity, suspense and surprise*

When Evelina, the heroine of Frances Burney's novel of the same title (1778), receives a letter from her admirer Lord Orville, soliciting an intimate correspondence, she is at once surprised, curious and in suspense. She thought Orville respected her, she wonders how she could have misjudged his character so thoroughly, and she anticipates that interactions in the future with him will be unpleasant. As all three configurations of narrative tension come together, Evelina's mind is in emotional turmoil, which manifests itself in the heroine's grasping for a stable set of probabilities to assess her storyworld from.

With Evelina's letter as an example case, this presentation will rethink Sternberg's (1992), Brewer's (1981; 1996) and Baroni's (2007) definitions of curiosity, suspense and surprise through different accounts of how emotions work as an appraisal of the situations we find ourselves in (Frijda 2007; LeDoux 1999; Damasio 2000).

Karin Kukkonen is Balzan Postdoctoral Research Fellow at St John's College (Oxford). She has published on multiperspective storytelling, metaphor and metafiction in comics and graphic novels. Dr. Kukkonen's main research interest lies in the way fictional narratives engage human cognitive processes, and her current project traces the cognitive foundations of rules of poetics (like poetic justice or the dramatic unities) in these lights.

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Anežka Kuzmičová (Stockholm University): *Narrative (mental) imagery experiences: a survey*

Although readers' reports of their lifetime literary experience abound in recollections of mental images, narrative imagery experiences (NIEs) are rarely examined in their own right. Moreover, there is relatively little potential for comprehensive theory building in the extant body of research concerning readers' mental imagery. Theoretical inquiries into the mechanics of mental imaging are often inconclusive as to their claims on the matter of consciousness. Empirical studies of reader response, when expressly focusing on the conscious experience of mental imagery, typically ask readers to check a generic questionnaire item (e.g., "The text calls up an image in my mind.") but do not solicit further description. Finally, assumptions vary widely across approaches and scholarly traditions regarding the relationship between mental imagery and literary interpretation.

In response to the above, my talk offers a tentative survey of the basic NIEs, grounded in a circumscribed set of parameters. Roughly speaking, I will argue that NIEs can be either direct (story-based) or verbal (discourse-based). I will further argue that within these two categories, they can be either more or less fully embodied. This will allow me to isolate four NIE prototypes, each with a specific combination of properties relating to reflective higher-order meaning-making, i.e., interpretation.

Anežka Kuzmičová (Department of Literature, Stockholm University) is completing a doctoral dissertation on mental imagery in the reading of literary narrative. Her journal articles have appeared in *Semiotica and Samlaren*. She is also one of the contributors to *Mimesis: Metaphysics, Cognition, Pragmatics* (ed. Gregory Currie et al., 2012) and *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative* (ed. Lars Bernaerts et al., forthcoming 2013).

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Martin Pokorný (Czech Academy of Sciences/Charles University Prague): *Coming to know situations*

The paper focuses on the role of situations in literary representations and in their cognitive import. Situation is not an object, its topography is not "objective" in the traditional sense. And while works of literature certainly do not outline a theory of situations, they do present a cognitive challenge in this respect. One possible way of formulating the problem is to ask whether narratology is an inquiry into quasi-objects, i.e. narrative entities, or an inquiry into situations and effects, as suggested by the work of Meir Sternberg.

Martin Pokorný received his PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Pennsylvania. Currently he teaches at the Department of Comparative Literature of the Philosophical Faculty, Charles University Prague, and works at the Philosophical Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. His current project focuses on the interface between theory of language, phenomenology of the rhetorical situation, and theory of literature.

Göran Rossholm (Stockholm University): *A contribution to the epistemology of fiction*

Picking up Roman Ingarden's idea that fictive worlds are incomplete, I will critically discuss a few different cases of "incompleteness", with the conclusion that the very idea of incompleteness is basically wrong. I will then ask why this mistake is commonly made (not only by Ingarden); as an answer, a more general "epistemology" of fiction will be proposed, with particular emphasis on the relation between fictive information and direct, unmediated, experience.

Göran Rossholm is professor of literature in the Department of Literature and History of Ideas at Stockholm University. His research interests include literary analysis and, mainly, literary, narrative, aesthetic, and semiotic theory. He has published To Be And Not to Be. On Interpretation, Iconicity and Fiction (2004) and edited Essays on Fiction and Perspective (2004) and (together with Christer Johansson) Disputable Concepts of Narrative Theory (2012), all three books with Peter Lang.

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Marie-Laure Ryan (Independent scholar, U.S.A.): *The role of top-down and bottom-up knowledge in literary reading and literary theory*

The concepts of top-down and bottom-up processes are used in cognitive psychology to denote expectations (top-down) and close attention to actual data (bottom-up). Literary theory has not awaited contemporary cognitive science to describe the activity of reading in terms of top-down and bottom knowledge. These two concepts can be used to describe not only how ordinary readers process literary texts but also how literary critics deal with them: top-down is the application of external theories to texts, bottom-up is a close reading that seeks to let the text speak for itself. In my presentation I will review the various forms of top-down and bottom-up knowledge that have been proposed in literary criticism and I will discuss cognitive approaches to literature in terms of which one of these two types of processes they prioritize.

Marie-Laure Ryan, an independent scholar, was most recently (2010-2011) Johannes Gutenberg Fellow at the University of Mainz, Germany, where she researched the phenomenon of narrative distributed across various media. She is the author of Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory (1991), Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media (2001), and Avatars of Story (2006). She has also edited Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory (1999), Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling (2004), Intermediality and Storytelling, with Marina Grishakova (2010), and together with David Herman and Manfred Jahn, The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory (2005). She is presently editing The Johns Hopkins Guide to New Media and Digital Textuality with Lori Emerson and Benjamin Robertson. Her scholarly work has earned her the Prize for Independent Scholars and the Jeanne and Aldo Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literature, both from the Modern Language Association, and she has been the recipient of Guggenheim and NEA fellowships.