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Contents

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The Implied Book and the Narrative Text: On a Blind Spot in Narratological Theory – from a Media Studies Perspective

Abstract: This article is concerned with the formal definition of a factor in narrative which, being of mainly theoretical relevance for western literature of the modern age, has largely gone unnoticed in narratology, but should be recognized as a general constituent of narrative form: the impact of the material appearance for which a narrative is *destined* on its structure.

Recent research on the materiality of texts has pointed out that the spatial arrangement of a text's script makes up a substantial part of the formation of its meaning in the process of reception. In the case of narrative literature, this state of affairs affects the level of the plot: The fashion in which a text is visually aligned on its pages and the fashion in which its book is designed for use regulate the dispensation of plot information to the reader and the way in which the reader is guided to connect elements of the plot. They thus contribute significantly to the formation of narrative coherence and meaning.

This only fails to stand out because, from approximately the eighteenth century onwards, western narrative literature has typically been printed in a stereotyped low-key linear layout that strongly de-emphasizes the spatial dimensions of script and text. Books from this period are generally presented with single columns of continuous, monochrome, non-illustrated text, without variations in font size or other forms of spatial emphasis, with only static headers or none at all, and with chapter headings which, if at all extant, normally do not serve the purpose of dispensing or connecting plot information, but rather serve the purpose of setting pauses, providing bridges or creating tension. This type of linear presentation, however, is a poetologically specific and historically recent convention that can be tied to the emergence of distinctively modern strategies of constructing narrative temporality and causality. It forms only a comparatively brief episode in the history of the material shape of narrative (and is, at present, being systematically supplemented by hypertextual and other spatial forms). In contrast, European narrative literature of the later Middle Ages and the early modern period is typically presented in highly differentiated spatial layouts based on frequent chapter divisions, hierarchical systems of initials, informative rubrics and illustrations, while, in turn, high medieval narrative is typically based on another type of linear presentation.

The article points out that the immanent structure of a text, as regards to its form and contents, has to conform to that of its material presentation. Thus, if the spatial arrangement of a narrative text affects its plot, and if this plot is, naturally, strategically conceived by the author, then it is already during the process of production that the – anticipated – material shape of a narrative text contributes to its structure. To conceive a narrative, then, includes pre-visualizing a graphic, spatial layout that accompanies the linear process of writing and thereby flows into the composition. Unless authors are, as for instance in avant-garde literature, intentionally aiming at experimental graphic designs for their texts, they will (consciously or subconsciously) have in mind a material shape corresponding to their respective historical-cultural prototypes.

If one thus imputes to the author a mental vision of the appearance of the narrative he is composing, then this vision has importance for the form which he will accord to his text: the spatial dimension is, as it were, inscribed into the narrative – before it even exists. The text henceforth contains the spatial dimension ›negatively‹ or abstractly, that is, independently of its actual (and possibly quite different) material form. It becomes an implicit factor of the text's structure.

These considerations lead to an analytic concept that, cautiously echoing Booth's ›implied author‹ and Iser's ›implied reader‹, is designated as the ›implied book‹. It denotes an author's historically assumable, not necessarily conscious idea of how his text, which is still in the process of creation, will be dimensionally presented and under these circumstances visually absorbed. Assuming that an author's knowledge of this later (potentially) substantiated material form influences the composition, the implied book is to be understood as a text-genetically determined, structuring moment of narrative. Historically reconstructed, it thus serves the methodical analysis of structural characteristics in a completed text.

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1 Two Dimensions of Text

On February 1, 2003, after two weeks in space, the US space shuttle *Columbia* broke apart and burnt to pieces upon its re-entry into the atmosphere. The United States of America were faced with one of the greatest tragedies in the history of human space travel. It marked the beginning of the end of an old dream: less than

a year after the catastrophe, President George W. Bush announced the termination of the American space shuttle program.

But the destruction of the *Columbia* could have been avoided. The cause of the accident was a breach in the left wing which occurred during take-off. The NASA ground team had noticed the damage, and spent the entire two weeks of the *Columbia*'s mission discussing whether or not it posed a threat to the *Columbia*'s flight and whether its crew should attempt to repair it. In an act of fatal miscalculation, NASA determined the risk to be minimal.

Immediately after the tragedy, an independent board was charged with investigating the cause of the accident. It submitted a six-volume final report that designates faulty methods of information processing and transmission within NASA as having played key roles in the occurrence of the disaster. The investigation board paid special attention to a series of viewgraphs – presentation slides which NASA engineering analysts created using Microsoft *Power-Point* in order to inform their superiors of the possible effects of the shuttle's wing damage in an emergency meeting. The final report asserts that the visualization of the results of the analysis through *PowerPoint* led to the misrepresentation of important factors. The results of the analysis – that the risk of an accident could not be determined – were cognitively distorted by the viewgraphs.[1] Based on the briefing by the NASA engineers, who had essentially correctly interpreted the relevant data and tried to relate this information visually via *PowerPoint*, the entire management team of the *Columbia* mission had failed to recognize the extent of the risk.

The faults of the unprofessionally created NASA viewgraphs have been analyzed in great detail on various occasions;[2] in the present context, I will look at only one aspect of their failure, which illustrates an important yet barely noted factor in textual semantics in a simple fashion. The NASA engineers' summarizing viewgraph consists purely of text – a text which is formally structured in the manner of a running text and whose content is structured causally.[3] Following the implicit requirements of the *PowerPoint* medium, the engineers, however, presented their linear text – which was designed to be understood successively – spatially: not by altering its form and reformulating it, for instance, as a diagram, but by following a largely arbitrary process in which they separated each syntactic unit and displayed

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1 Columbia Accident Investigation Board 2003, vol. 1, 182–183, 191. The commission here follows the analyses of Tufte 2003, 7–11; cf. also Tufte 2006, 8–14.

2 See esp. Tufte 2006, whose arguments are strongly simplified in the following explanations.

3 See the illustrations in Tufte 2006, 10–11. The complete slideshow is archived at http://www.nasa.gov/columbia/foia/ (under ›Boeing Debris Impact Assessment Charts‹ [22.04.2012]).

each one individually. In the NASA emergency meeting's central viewgraph, varying kinds of enumerative signs, indentations, bold type, larger and smaller type create the cliché of a hierarchical, visually structured text – without any connection between form and content. It seems that the only purpose of the visualization was the spatial, two-dimensional transmission of the text which the medium requires (if not automatically generates).

The grave consequence of this medium-based *reductio ad absurdum* is that the most crucial point of the analysis, its result – which, according to the linear structure of the text, comes last – ended up being placed at the very bottom of the text-dense slide. At this location on the NASA analyst's key slide – in fourth and fifth place in the arbitrarily arranged hierarchical system, split into two seemingly unconnected units, written in the smallest type – lay the statement that there was no comparative data available to NASA that could permit an estimate of the damage or a resulting risk prognosis. The risk of a catastrophic accident happening was unforeseeable.

In their fatal failure, the viewgraphs of the American space agency could almost have been designed to illustrate two important conditions of textual communication:

1. A text is not a text. Even at a low level of complexity, the meaning of a written text is not only constituted on classic linguistic levels (from the phoneme to syntax and the lexis) and not only dependent on a linguistic, historical, cultural, institutional or other context – but also directly dependent on its visual arrangement. The example of the NASA slideshow demonstrates that processes of communication can be effectively disrupted, if the visual structure of a text does not correspond to the structure of its form and content.

2. The thus described visual semantics of a written text develop on a basic level through the difference between two principles in the written impartment of information and coherence: the linear, which depends on the successive registration of information in a running text, and the spatial, which depends on discontinuous, relational access to information in a text via its graphically designed surface. These two principles correspond to the two conventional dimensions of alphabetic script, a medium whose signs condense in a linear progression to form spatial entities – such as words, sentences, paragraphs, columns or type areas – which thus assume a semiotic value. The first, linear dimension of script is (in the case of alphabetic script) a consequence of the fact that it reproduces spoken language through the technique of replacing discrete phonetic units with concordant, sequentially ordered graphemes; the second, spatial dimension follows from the principle of visual impartment and is, in its particular relation of equivalency to the linear dimension, the

consequence of the characteristic feature of phonographic scripts which replace »an eye [with] an ear«.[4]

2 Script and Text

Cultural studies were late and never systematic in removing a »theoretical oversight« (»theoretische[s] Versehen«, Gross 1994, 61) that results from this specific relation of equivalency: the conceptualization of script as a sequential principle. Influential theoretical examinations of the cultural phenomenon of script – such as Havelock's *Preface to Plato*,[5] Leroi-Gourhan's *Gesture and Speech*,[6] McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy*,[7] Flusser's *Schrift*,[8] De Kerckhove's *Civilisation vidéo-chrétienne*[9] or, famously, Derrida's *Of Grammatology*[10] – are based on a concept of script whose vanishing point is alphabetic linearity. This is even, or perhaps especially, the case where (as, for instance, with Derrida or Flusser) the linearization of writing techniques is seen as a deficiency in the process of cultural evolution and non-linear writing techniques are envisioned. Thus, that which is not alphabetically readable and yet still makes up a substantial part of the semantics of script and text goes unnoticed: their – linearly created – spatial order. This spatial order is already an inevitable consequence of the distribution of a text on the surface on which it is perceived; it furthermore becomes an expression of a strategic visual regulation of reception when that surface is structured with the help of macro-typographical processes or further additions, such as illustrations or diagrams.[11]

Studies from the past few decades, by contrast, have explicitly highlighted the potential that lies in the spatial dimension of layouts, and in the spatial

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4 McLuhan 1962, 30–31 (»an eye for an ear«). This analogous treatment of written and spoken language is a simplification; cf. Krämer 1996; Stetter 1997, as well as the following.

5 Havelock 1963; cf. 1982; 1986.

6 Leroi-Gourhan 1964/65.

7 McLuhan 1962.

8 Flusser 1987; cf. also 1978; 1988.

9 De Kerckhove 1990, esp. 22–27.

10 Derrida 1967a, esp. 85–87; 1967b; cf. also 1968.

11 From the wide-ranging literature in typographical studies, cf. esp. Willberg/Forssman 1997 and Ernst 2005, which particularly underline the relevance of the typographical design of a text for its semantics; cf. further the historical investigations of Wehde 2000.

formation of linear script in particular.[12] Gross (1994, 61–62) programmatically reassessed Leroi-Gourhan's (1964/65, 212) concept of the cultural achievement of the »subordination of graphism« to the laws of spoken language as that of a »liberation« (»Befreiung«, 61) from those very laws: the laws of temporality and linearity. Equally programmatically, Raible (1991, 6) had previously seen the »written text's big chance« in its »two-dimensionality« (»Die große Chance des geschriebenen Textes ist [...] seine Zweidimensionalität«). Kiening and Stercken's representative collection (2008) even refers to the »Dimensions of Script« (»Dimensionen von Schrift«) in its subtitle.

It is a result of the different specific and disciplinary interests in the context of which these approaches stand that they have thus far failed to create a practical awareness of obvious consequences of their important new perspective for literary analysis. The focus remains on script as a material – that is to say, materialized – phenomenon: be it, abstractly, on the theoretical implications of its potential as a medium or, concretely, on its share in the creation or transmission of the meaning of a given text in its actual layout. Yet the two dimensions of script constitute more than the meaningful transmission of a text in its material(ized) layout. Above all, they comprise that which the layout merely presents: the abstract structural formation of the semantic text – independently of its actual materialized shape.

The negative example of the NASA slideshow can again serve to demonstrate how the structure and semantics of a text are connected with the dimensionality of its script. In this case, already at a low level of complexity, the – unintended – meaning of a specific text constituted itself in direct dependence on its spatial-visual arrangement. The failure of the transmission of the intended meaning was a result of this spatial arrangement, which did not correspond to the structure of the text – or, put differently, it was the result of a textual structure which did not

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12 Among others Raible 1991a; 1991b; 1997; 2006, 97–133; 2010, 14; McGann 1991, esp. 101–128; Nink 1993, esp. 5–20; Frank 1994, esp. 12–29; Groß 1990; Gross 1994, esp. 61–66; Jochum 1996, 32–33; Koch/Krämer 1997; Wehde 2000; Greber et al. 2002; Krämer/Bredekamp 2003, in this esp. Krämer 2003; Grube et al. 2005, in this esp. Krämer 2005; Strätling/Witte 2006, in this esp. Krämer 2006a; D'Haenens 2004; Giuriato/Kammer 2006; Curschmann 2007, 26–27; Kiening/Stercken 2008, in this esp. Kiening 2008; Danneberg 2009. Cf. also the early contributions of Cancik 1979; Meschonnic 1982, 297–335 (on typographical ›rhythms‹). Chartier's socio-historical studies were also already essentially based on insight about the semiotic function of book shape and text shape; cf. for instance Chartier 1982–1990. In traditional research on the history of the book, Laufer in particular emphasized the role of the »espace visuel« of the book early on: Laufer 1977; 1982; 1984; 1985. Not least one should also point to Frege, whose *Begriffsschrift* was already based on awareness of the spatial semantics of script: see Frege 1882, 111.

correspond to its actual arrangement in the space provided. Tufte found the counter-example: He pointed out that the engineering analysts' results, whose significance had escaped the management team of the *Columbia* mission as a result of the *PowerPoint* briefing, had circulated via email around lower personnel levels in the form of a running-text transcription of the slideshow text. Transmitted and received in a primarily linear manner, the meaning of the text became immediately apparent to its (alarmed) readers:

> [L]ower-level NASA engineers were writing about the possible dangers to the Columbia in several hundred emails, with the Boeing reports in P[ower]P[oint] format sometimes attached. The text of about 90% of these emails simply used sentences sequentially ordered into paragraphs [...]. These engineers were able to reason about the issues without employing the baroque hierarchical outlines of the original P[ower]P[oint] pitches.
> (Tufte 2006, 11)

If the written transmission of information occurs not only linearly, but also spatially; if, simultaneously, script creates text only in its specific spatiality; and if, thus, a significant part of the text's semantic potential lies in the interplay between its linear and its spatial structures, then these two dimensions of written text and their specific corollaries create an analytical need which textual disciplines, such as literary studies, need to address – not, in the first place, in a specialized field of material culture studies and not necessarily on the basis of concrete script, but as a part of general textual analysis. The heuristic potential of the two-dimensional analysis of text and literature, however, has yet to be exploited; too much, one might suppose, literary studies takes for granted the separation between the study of interpretation and material.[13] Where the two-dimensionality of text has been observed and highlighted, it has, in the present state of reflection, been a matter of tracing the path from the structure of the text to the specific dimensions of its script, that is, the script's structure – but not the path from the (anticipated) script structure to the structure of the text. In terms of literary studies, following the latter path only seems viable where layouts are explicitly and markedly[14] aimed at transmitting meaning by being aestheticized,

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13 Among Anglo-American researchers, Jerome J. McGann has pointed out this methodological deficit since the 1980s in a series of publications, cf. for instance McGann 1983; 1985; 1991. It is due to his impulses that we owe pertinent anthologies and monographs which have hardly gained any recognition in the germanophone world, such as Bray et al. 2000, Gutjahr/Benton 2001, Bornstein 2001, Barchas 2003. Cf. also Nink 1993, 5, 14–20, and elsewhere.
14 Fricke 1981: on the graphic markings of deviation, therein 16–23, 95–96.

as is the case in visual poetry[15] – not, however, where it would lead to »privileged« mechanized forms of script »that become invisible in the process of transmitting information, which appear transparent and place the identity of the symbols above the diversity of the signs« (»die sich im Prozess der Informations-übermittlung unsichtbar mach[]en, die transparent wirk[]en und die Identität des Symbols über die Diversität der Zeichen setz[]en«, Kiening 2008, 11). But it is precisely in this privileged form, precisely in its transparency and invisibility, there, where one is to look »through the signs«, not »at the signs« (»durch die Zeichen«, »auf [die Zeichen]«, ibid., 16) that script works as a medium in the strictest sense of the term.[16]

3 Text and Book

Whether, how, how intensively, with what weighting and to what extent relative to each other written texts put to meaningful use their two dimensions – the linear and the spatial – varies: on the one hand, as shown by the NASA engineers' *PowerPoint* text, this variation is situational and based on the media system in use; on the other hand, as will be shown below, it is a cultural-historical matter and also varies according to text type or genre. The following argumentation is concerned with narrative texts. It seeks to illustrate the importance of the relationship – the formal contrast and the conceptual interplay – between the linear and the spatial dimensions of text in the process of the strategic transmission of information and the formation of narrative coherence. This only becomes apparent when looked at from a historical perspective, as in the following explanations, which will focus primarily on German narrative literature from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, alongside some francophone and anglophone counterparts.

The dominant medium for narrative literature of this historical period is the book. The technical specificity of this medium requires an additional differentiation regarding the spatial dimension of script, which must be divided into two further aspects: *Book-form script, conceived as text, possesses a total of three extensions – next to the linear (one-dimensional) extension of its sequence of signs and the planar (two-dimensional) extension of its arrangement on the page, there is*

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15 Cf. for instance Adler/Ernst 1990, Ernst 1991. Even the corpus of investigation in Gross 1994 stems exclusively from visual poetry. On the phenomenon of the aestheticization of script, see, for instance, Fricke 1981, 95–96 (»Superisation«), Lapacherie 1984, Kiening 2008, 10–16.
16 Kiening 2007, 287; on this subject matter, from a different perspective, see Assmann 1988.

the actual spatial (three-dimensional) extension of its expansion through the body of the book.[17]

To seek to analyze the interplay between these three dimensions with an eye on strategic, intentional processes for constructing coherence – that is, from a (in the widest sense of the term) text-genetic perspective – requires a further conceptual leap. It is necessary to expand the question of the dimensional structure of the text by another two, or rather, three further dimensions: by the linearity of the writing process as analogous to the linear dimension of the conventional page layout of western text, and by the spatiality of script – as anticipated in the linear process of writing on the page and in the book.

This perspective requires an explanation. It throws light on the difference between two forms of being of textual dimensionality – an implicit and a real one – on which the following argumentation depends.

4 The Linearity of the Writing Process (and Its Transgression)

Writing is a linear process. Only the invention of computer-based word-processing has neutralized this basic condition: I wrote this very sentence on a computer long after the one that follows had appeared on the screen – and this process has a system.[18] In writing by hand and also with the typewriter,[19] if not universally,[20] then certainly in principal, letter follows letter, word follows word, line follows line or verse follows verse, and, as a rule, page also follows page.

The typical appearance of a book page of German narrative literature from the early thirteenth century shows that reading such a page was an equally linear process. For example, there is the Cologne manuscript of Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois*, from around 1220. This oldest complete text of a courtly romance from this time was probably read, and can to this day only be read, as it was written – linearly: perhaps not letter by letter,[21] but certainly word by word, verse by verse, line by line and page by page. In continuously written text in a single column where the verses are not presented as separate lines, without any organized

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17 Cf. also Müller et al. 2009, Bohatsch 2010.

18 Cf. Giuriato 2006b, Suter 2006.

19 Cf. Giuriato 2005, Viollet 1996, Hoffmann 2005.

20 Cf. Hughes et al. 2008.

21 Cf. Gross 1994, 7–15, 62; Hunziker 2006 (on experimental subjects from the late twentieth century).

layout, table of contents, index or even numbered folios,[22] this romance of nearly 12000 verses fills the book which transmits it with its highly complex plot on densely covered pages. In its written appearance around 1220 – that is, the closest possible approximation to its mediality at the time of its conception – *Wigalois* can hardly be comprehended in any other way than by means of a movement which repeats that of the writing process that first created it: by taking in its content in a continuous fashion, successively proceeding page-wise from the top left to the bottom right of each page through to its back cover.

And yet script does not have to reflect the linearity of the process that creates it: writing cultures have always developed techniques for transgressing the linearity of the sequence of signs and the – only partial – linearity of the cognitive process of its acquisition. Book readers of present times can hardly conceive of it otherwise: in principle, from the moment in which organizational marks – such as chapter breaks, running heads, paragraph shifts, blank lines, italics, variation in fonts, font size or color – appear in a text and thus allow it to be differentiated into a variety of orders, a book page offers the possibility of deliberately selective, discontinuous access alongside the possibility of a successive uptake of its content that is tied to the sequence of lines. Graphically designed book pages, of which the primary example in German narrative literature of the thirteenth century is the *Große Bilderhandschrift* of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Willehalm* (around 1270/75)[23] with its parallel columns of text and illustration – an exceptional case –, rely from the outset on a visual structure which is not limited to linearity and a set order for the perception of their content. The book pages of the *Große Bilderhandschrift*, for example, are dominated by their wide picture columns, which can be perceived only in spatial terms. At the same time, selective, prominently placed indicators ensure that the correct connection is made between text and image when either element is accessed in a discontinuous manner. This does not, however, preclude the possibility of a linear approach to the text.[24]

In the space of the book, too, the linearity of articulated language and its representative, the letter sequence of alphabetic script, can be systematically transgressed: Through search aids such as tables of contents, indexes, column headings or thumb indexes, through illustration cycles, and fundamentally even through pagination and folio numbering, books can be prepared for non-linear usage. It is no coincidence that such methods cannot be found in German

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22 It is only in the second half of the fifteenth century that the practice of enumerating leaves would be developed, in the sixteenth century that of pages: Saenger 1996, 402–405.
23 Cf. Starkey 2004, esp. 97–148; Manuwald 2008.
24 On this cf. esp. Manuwald 2008, 301–313.

narrative literature of the thirteenth century. Beyond narrative literature, how-
ever, these techniques of arranging page and book spaces can be found through-
out the entire Middle Ages.[25] It is only in the late Middle Ages that two- and three-
dimensional space-based layout processes are systematically developed for all
genres[26] – and fully expanded.[27]

5 The Implied Spatiality of the Writing Process

Writing, however, is a linear process. It is necessary to conceptually relate this
premise to the normal case of a non-linear, and in this respect predictable structure
of written texts. The writing process thus acquires a further dimension. Reception-
orientated writing means to transform, through a likewise linear process, the
linearity – that is, the temporality, or rather represented temporality – of the
linguistic text as a series of discrete sounds, letters, words and sentences into a
spatial shape whose order, in its decisive form, is only implicitly present beyond
the concept's medium: in the two-dimensional shape of the – anticipated – book
page and in the three-dimensional shape of the – anticipated – book. It is at this
point, in the passage from the linearity of language to the anticipated dimension-

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25 On this cf. Palmer 1989. From the by now considerable number of pertinent investigations, cf.
especially the following representative anthologies or illustrated volumes: Martin/Vezin 1990;
Martin 2000.

26 An epochal transition from the ›monastic‹ to the ›scholastic‹ treatment of texts and the
corresponding new techniques of optical page and book arrangement in western Europe is
usually associated with the twelfth century: Parkes 1976; Rouse/Rouse 1976; 1982; Châtillon
1985; Palmer 1989, 56–62; Illich 1991; Frank 1994, 83–88; Raible 2006, 106–109. This place-
ment is basically correct; the exclusive emphasis – stemming above all from Illich's (1991)
popular study – placed on it in contemporary media theories, however, neglects important
systematic factors. With few exceptions, the new scholastic arrangement of books of the twelfth
and thirteenth century was limited to (Latin) scientific writing, that is, theology, law and natural
history. Moreover, the historical line drawn by Illich 1991 apparently only begins in the high
Middle Ages, but late antiquity and the early Middle Ages were already familiar with spatially
based, optical layouts. In the Old High German tradition, for instance, they are more often the
rule than the exception.

27 This process can be followed exemplarily for German literature on a relatively wide material
basis and through a variety of genres in the Berlin collection of manuscripts and incunabula:
Becker/Overgaauw 2003; Braun-Niehr/Ott 2003 highlight innovative high points in the visual
arrangement of pages. Examples of maximized use of the spatial potential of book pages and
book space can be found above all in the knowledge-imparting literature of the late Middle Ages
which was intended for the layman; cf. for instance the labeled plates of the *Washington
Illuminated Manuscript* from the first third of the fifteenth century.

ality of the book-medium and in the logical implications of the conceptual ›spatialization‹ of literature in the writing process, that possibilities for accessing the process of literary textual production and structure-forming are at their most numerous.

Book literature – which in this context must be understood as literature written in and for a book – possesses a double structure which corresponds to the two dimensions of script and the two (or rather three) pragmatic-technical orders of the book medium: the linear-temporal one and the (twofold) dimensional-spatial one. This specific double structure distinguishes the book and its literature from all other mediums.[28] One of an already small number of mediums that systematically preserve the two dimensions of script, the book as a medium is unique in the special dynamic potential of this doubling. In the book, both potentially paradoxical orders of written text exist alongside and can flexibly be combined with each other, or even pitted against each other. That this – it must be said – is not the normal use of books with a narrative text by present-day readers is a historical phenomenon of the recent modern era. It is therefore rewarding, and has thus far barely been attempted, to follow how and under what circumstances knowledge of the double structure of books and book literature has influenced the writing process – and its results – at various different points in the history of media culture.[29]

The starting point of a recently published »›inner‹ history of writing« (»›innere‹ Geschichte des Schreibens«, Ludwig 2005, blurb) is that the »actual process of writing [...] is not within our sight« (»der eigentliche Vorgang des Schreibens [...] unseren Blicken entzogen ist«, Ludwig 2005, 5).[30] It is precisely this seemingly unrealizable desire for a visualization of the mental processes behind the practice of writing, however, which designates what can, from a changed perspective, become the object of coming to terms with them: the spatial-visual orientation of strategic writing. Thus the intangible ›interior‹ of writing becomes the focus: the writer's vivid imagining of how his text will be presented on the page and in the

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28 On this, cf. among others Bickenbach 1999, 71–76; Rautenberg 2003; 2009, 51–59. Dembeck's abstracting new definition of the term ›paratext‹ on the basis of his consideration of »*the disruption of textual linearity* [...], that is a disruption which nevertheless does not create a new text, but rather is abrogated in the unity of the text« also relies on the double structure of the book medium (»*in der Unterbrechung textueller Linearität* [...], und zwar in einer Unterbrechung, die gleichwohl keinen neuen Text erzeugt, sondern in der Einheit des Textes aufgehoben ist«, Dembeck 2007, 20; emphasis in original); cf. similarly Bunia 2007, 284–291, esp. 287.
29 Cf. from a related perspective Meffert 2010, as well as the Anglo-American approach of a ›Sociology of the Text‹ as developed in McKenzie 1977 and 1986.
30 On the aporia of our view on the writing *process*, see also Kammer 2006.

entirety of the book – before that page, before that book even exists. This not (yet) existing, imagined book with its not (yet) existing, imagined pages is to be established as a methodical parameter and probed as a factor in textual analysis. If the structure of a text, with respect to both form and content, must be appropriate to its visual presentation, and if this structure is created strategically and intentionally throughout the writing process, before the text actually visually appears, then the structure of a text is not only visually, but also pre-visually determined.

Two assumptions have to be made: firstly, that planned, intentionally structured writing occurs, consciously or unconsciously, with a view towards a spatial, visual structure; secondly, that this view, consciously or unconsciously, reaches beyond the actual writing material to the spatial dimensions of a later visual presentation of the text in the anticipated book. To conceive a text, then, also means to pre-visualize, to think of a graphic, spatial layout that accompanies the linear process of writing and thereby flows into the composition. If one thus imputes to the author a mental vision of the appearance of the text he is composing, then this vision has importance for the form which the writing, mentally anticipating person will accord to his text: the spatial dimension is, as it were, inscribed into the text – before it even exists. The text henceforth contains the spatial dimension ›negatively‹ or abstractly, that is, independently of its actual, in Mersch's sense already – and then again – ›negative‹[31] mediality. It becomes an implicit factor of the text's structure.

6 The Implied Book

If one were to understand ›structure‹, as in a frequently quoted phrase by Althusser, as »a cause immanent in its effects«[32] then the pre-visualized, imagined page, the mentally anticipated, imagined book would be part of the text structure, just as both – *in absentia* – are part of the (*in praesentia* negative[33]) mediality of their text. These factors form an analytic concept that, cautiously

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31 Cf. for instance Mersch 2007. In view of his pertinent, but different use of the term ›negative‹, I am avoiding it in connection with identifying implied dimensions of mediums, which are the concern of this paper.
32 Althusser/Balibar 1965, 189. Cf. Nünning 1993, 17–23, who, with reference to this sentence, encourages the conception of a ›virtual‹ (19) structure of the narrative text. Cf. the critique of Nünning's concept in Kindt/Müller 1999, 273–277; 2006, 112–114.
33 Cf. note 31, above.

echoing the ›implied author‹[34] and the ›implied reader‹[35], I would like to designate as the ›implied book‹. The echo is predominantly terminological and is misleading insofar as the models differ from each other in their preconditions, their design and their aims.[36] While Booth's implied author and Iser's implied reader are both logical constructions without reference to a real existence, the implied book is intended to describe the blind spot of a factually anticipated real book. (Both factors can coincide in the factual existence of a real book that corresponds to the implied one.) This has an effect on their respective text-internal statuses: Where the implied author and reader are conceived of as proxies for a real author and reader in the text (and are thus of a re-present nature), the implied book, as the trace of a merely anticipated and possibly never real book, is present in the text insofar as the text directly reflects its characteristics. While the implied author and reader can thus only be determined through interpretation, the implied book should be conceived of in the first instance as an analytical category: it is held to be empirically reconstructible with recourse to standards of historical book studies. If one wished to systematically integrate the implied book into the communication model of narrative texts[37] – which would require further differentiations, could not be limited to the question of spatial dimensions and is not my intention here –, this model would be enriched by a further analytical perspective, which nevertheless has long been considered self-evident in narratological theorizing: the media-specificity of narrativity.[38]

    As a mental image, the implied book remains empirically out of reach. It does not, however, remain in the dark: it is the object of historical book studies to describe prototypical, expectable layouts of books – on the one hand, with

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34 Booth 1952, 164; 1961, 71 and elsewhere.
35 Iser 1972; 1976, 50–67.
36 The term ›intended book‹ could help avoid the similar-sounding names of the various models; however, this would mean relinquishing the reference to the immanently present structural moments which are my primary concern.
37 Summed up, for instance, in Lahn/Meister 2008, 13–15.
38 Cf. for instance Ryan 2004; Mahne 2007; Ryan 2009. However, as a rule, narrative theories in media studies refer to the media-specificity of different technologies (radio play, television, film, video game, etc.), not to the relative specificity of hand-written or printed narrative texts, the object of classical narratology. At best in marginal areas such as serially conceived (magazine) literature, there is an awareness of the direct consequence of the specific presentation of a narrative text in its medium on its narrative form: cf. for instance Meyer 1998, 240–248, and further Fludernik 2010, 26–30, 34–36. – Within medieval literary studies there is an awareness of the media-specificity of narrative structures in the context of superordinate questions (such as orality and literacy, manuscript and print, text and image), but rarely as a self-contained problem. An exception can be found in the ideas of Starkey 2004; cf. therein esp. 16, 72–73.

reference to the historical time of their creation, and on the other hand, with reference to factors such as genre, the environment in which they were conceived or the language of their texts. The implied book is thus a historical phenomenon: It is historically conditioned, historically variable – and fleeting. What, at a specific historical point in time and in a specific context, forms the prototype of a normal, predictable book page, can change within a few decades, as was the case in the German-speaking world in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and then again in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and in the eighteenth century, all phases of distinctive change in terms of the history of the book. However, one can hardly ascribe an awareness of this kind of historicity – of the change in medium to come in the near future – to the medieval writer, just as little as one could ascribe to him an awareness of the far more profound media revolution of the distant future, which has determined the appearance and thereby the reception of his texts to the present.

The critical debate in literary theory surrounding Booth's and Iser's models of the implied[39] has shown that the value of these concrete, (anthropo)morphized designations lies rather in their vividness than in their terminological or conceptual precision. They may provide opportunities as plastic formulas – analytically, however, they refer back to the underlying concept of structure; conceptually, they refer back to the relationship between notions of literary meaning that are based on authorial intentionality and ones that are text-based;[40] methodologically, they refer back to the question of the differentiation between description and interpretation.[41] What has here been denoted with the convenient formula of the ›implied book‹ should be understood as the set of conditions of a constructively defined structure of the literary text that is only potentially realized as designated by authorial intention in the reception process. Such a conception of structure at the intersection between the perspectives of the aesthetics of production and the aesthetics of reception corresponds to the semiotic conception of an ›open work‹ with an ›absent structure‹ as developed by Umberto Eco since the 1960s. At first distancing himself from the rigid textual basis of classical structuralism, and later from contemporary tendencies in reception theory and the criticism of interpretation, Eco conceives of texts as tactically, strategically formed compositions to which a designated reception – Eco is of course con-

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39 Cf. Kindt/Müller 2006 (with a complete bibliography and research report). On the current state of discussion cf. the special issue of *Style* 45/1 (2011) entitled *The Implied Author*.
40 Cf. Jannidis et al. 2003, 16–19; Spoerhase 2007.
41 On this cf. esp. the critique in Kindt/Müller 1999, 284–284; 2006, 84–121. Cf. also Danneberg 1996, Kindt/Müller 2003.

cerned with interpretation – by a ›model reader‹[42] is inscribed through authorial intention, even if the actual understanding of the texts by empirical readers can deviate from that:

> We can say [...] that *a text is a product whose interpretative destiny must be part of the actual mechanism of its creation*: composing a text means pursuing a strategy of which the expectations of the moves of another person form a part.[43]

Furthermore, such an understanding of structure corresponds, in its orientation towards the medium's »taking part in creating meaning« (»sinnmiterzeugende [...] Kraft«), to Sybille Krämer's philosophical conception of a medium as the »trace of something absent« (»Spur eines Abwesenden«) which is preserved in its message.[44] Both models are connected by their establishment of the position of something absent – the anticipated reader (Eco) or the past medium (Krämer) – as the vanishing point of the semiotic process. With the inclusion of the implied book, on the one hand, Eco's concept is extended in that its bipolar author-reader perspective is amended to include (as with Krämer) the perspective on the medium; on the other hand, Krämer's concept is expanded in that its retrospective perspective on the medium as something once present is (in analogy to Eco) supplemented by the visionary perspective on something that is to become present in the future.

It thus becomes possible to track down the – inverted[45] – ›trace‹ of the implied book, as it was intended with the ›expected moves of another person‹ in mind, in the structures of its text. In the particular case of narrative texts, it can be seen what effects the inscribed spatial dimensions have up to and including the level of the narrated plot. A thus conceived heuristics of the implied book is at the same time only possible as a historical concept and perhaps only relevant as a historical concept – independent of whether the term ›historical‹ denotes the concrete case of the thirteenth century or the twenty-first century. This is so for several reasons, of which the most obvious (not the most important) is that texts of distant historical epochs are usually not read by their modern readers in the media format in which, or better, *for* which they were written, and have, as a rule, not even been

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42 Eco 1979, chapter 3. For Eco's theory of interpretation up to the 1980s cf. Eco 1962; 1968; 1987. For a critique of his more recent studies see Müller 2000.
43 »Possiamo dire [...] che *un testo è un prodotto la cui sorte interpretativa deve far parte del proprio meccanismo generativo*: generare un testo significa attuare una strategia di cui fan parte le previsioni delle mosse altrui« (Eco 1979, 54; emphasis in original).
44 Krämer 1998, 78–82 (quotes: 73, 81). Cf. also Krämer 2006b; 2007a, esp. 14–18; 2007b.
45 Cf. Krämer 2007a, 17.

transmitted in this form. What plays a more important role is that writers before the age of the technical reproducibility of art – in this case, before the age of such a systematically technical reproduction of text as was not known even in the early printing era – could hardly foresee the extent of the »situation split« (»Situations-spaltung«,Warning 1983, 193) between composition and reception[46] which would arise in a for them unknown future with its media possibilities.

That the structural factor of the implied book has, as far as I can see, not played a role in modern narrative theories or in media studies is due to this link to a historical perspective: This perspective conflicts, on the one hand, with the too narrowly conceived corpus of narratology and, on the other hand, with the too broadly conceived perspective of media studies. Where the former must still[47] be seen as the theory of narration from around the eighteenth to the twentieth century – an era, which (as will be shown) pursued the systematic standardization of the implied book – the latter is either primarily concerned with technological media of the twentieth century or tends to aim at a comprehensive history of human mediality.[48] However, it will be shown that the textuality of modern literature is as inseparable from the materiality of its medium and its implied spatial structure as is the textuality of medieval or early modern literature.

7 The Implied Book and the Narrative Text

The Cologne *Wigalois* manuscript (cf. 391–392, above) provided a representative example of a kind of written narration which relies on the linear dimension of the book medium alone. It is not an exception in the early thirteenth century: In the same period, a comparable configuration presented itself in the codices to which, for example, the earliest fragments of Wolfram's *Willehalm* and *Parzival*, *Crescentia*, *Eneas*, *Tristrant* or *Graf Rudolf* belonged. Amongst the roughly 30 German texts of worldly or spiritual narrative literature that have actually been preserved from the four centuries surrounding 1200, there is hardly a single exception to the

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46 Nuanced differently: »between body and script« (»zwischen Körper und Schrift«, Kiening 2003, esp. 12–14). Cf. also Müller 1988; Strohschneider 1997; 1999; 2004; Kiening 2007, 344–348. The systematic separation of both categories in the modern era has been retraced by Koschorke 1999. Warning's term »Situationsspaltung« stems from the communication theory of sung love poetry in the Middle Ages.
47 Cf., however, Störmer-Caysa 2007; Haferland/Meyer 2010. On this question in general: Nünning 2000; Fludernik 2003; Nünning 2006.
48 On this cf. programmatically Kiening 2007; Kiening/Stercken 2010. A notable exception in this respect can be found in Kittler 1985; cf. further, for instance, Koschorke 1999.

prototypical layout which relies on the sequence of letters and lines alone to present text and narration.[49] In their capacity as a surface, book pages such as these may be two-dimensional; in their capacity as an object, the books to which they belong may be three-dimensional – the text which they contain, however, does not rely on these spatial dimensions: it leaves the spatial potential of visually transmitted written literature unused.

Written (German) narrative in the early thirteenth century is thus obviously tied to a codicological prototype and through this to a single – linear – dimension of comprehension. This prototype differs systematically from contemporary layouts for other kinds of texts such as non-fiction, and historically from the codicological dimensions of narrative literature from the entire late Middle Ages and the early modern period. Beginning in the fourteenth century there was an increasing tendency towards the practice of spatially arranging narrative texts. With the targeted and increasingly subtle use of the dimensionality of script and book, chapter divisions, hierarchical systems of initials, paragraphing, rubrics (chapter headings, captions or comment-like insertions in different types of relationship to the narrated plot), occasionally marginalia and above all illustrations became a perfectly normal part of narrativity in its optical presentation:[50] »With this innovation we encounter a new type in which the traditional manner of structuring Middle High German verse texts [...] underwent a fundamental change« (»Mit dem Aufkommen dieses neuen Strukturprinzips erfassen wir einen neuen Typus, bei dem die traditionelle Gliederung der mittelhochdeutschen Dichtung [...] einer grundsätzlichen Umwandlung unterzogen worden ist«, Palmer 1989, 73) – a type which became the standard at the beginning of the fifteenth century and which would determine the appearance of the medium of narrative literature in the German-speaking world for centuries to come. It shows written narration in its most empirical form: a genuinely spatial one.[51] A narrated world does not possess any structure of progression (even if it can be realized and staged in a temporal process), rather, it exists, with all its components, before the act of narration (as a secondary phenomenon) or the act of reception (as a tertiary phenomenon) have

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49 Cf. Palmer 2005; Wolf 2008, 242–284.

50 Cf. Wieckenberg 1969, 27–41; Palmer 1989, 72–76; Curschmann 1999; Backes 2006; Stolz/ Viehhauser 2006; Schultz-Balluff 2010. The so-called *Werkstatt von 1418* and the production collective around Diebold Lauber in Alsace systematized the visual presentation of narrative texts in a special way: cf. Saurma-Jeltsch 2001; Fasbender et al. 2012. – Manuscripts of French-language narrative literature exhibit corresponding methods of structuring earlier, often already in the thirteenth century: cf. Hasenohr 1990 as well as multiple examples in Busby et al. 1993 and Careri et al. 2001.

51 On this view cf. Putzo (forthcoming).

begun. The most important material medium of narration until the late twentieth century – the book – is the systematic realization of this spatial dimension.

At the same time, it would be historically and methodologically unjustified to consider the elaborate visual organization of late medieval and early modern books containing narrative texts an exception. Where this impression arises, it is the result of a biased perception based on the literature to which readers and literary scholars of the present day are accustomed and which is thus pre-consciously accepted as the norm: Typical book pages of the western cultural sphere from around the eighteenth century until well into the twentieth century, and to a large extent still in the twenty-first century, demonstrate a structural appearance comparable to that of the (macro-)narratographic[52] prototype of German narration in the early thirteenth century.[53] This, however, is due to a specific aesthetic need in the arrangement of books from the more recent modern period: to conceal the spatiality of the medium (and its text) and to mask it with the simulation of a temporal dimension. Beginning, at the very latest, in the eighteenth century, narrative texts (despite all the differences in detail) are printed in a macro-typographically consistent layout – and composed with that in mind. The typical page of text in a novel or a novella of this period[54] consists of a single column of continuous, monochrome text without any variation in font size, initially with no paragraph indentations, and later only a few;[55] it has merely static headers, and increasingly none at all. Illustrations of the plot are confined

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52 This term was developed by Stewart 2009, albeit in the sense of a narratological micro-analytical technique which, in contrast to structuralist analysis, aims directly at the linguistic and graphic surface of the text.

53 It should be emphasized again that in the present context, I am expressly concerned with (proto)typical standard layouts of texts conditioned by their genre and historical context; cf. above, 396–397. The numerous examples of purposeful deviation from those typical appearances that arise from the eighteenth century on – from Lawrence Sterne to avant-garde literature – unfold their experimental aesthetic character only against the background of these prototypes and thus are a secondary phenomenon (on this, cf. Fricke 1981). They are precisely not relevant for the implied book as a factor in analysis: it is, in accordance with historical book studies, based on historically changing, expectable *norms* that are consciously or unconsciously anticipated in the process of narrative composition and thus form a natural, but later invisible part of structuring the text. In analyses of texts whose aesthetics are, by contrast, based on purposeful deviance from typographical norms, the parameter of the implied book does not lead to new perspectives.

54 Corpus: Raabe/Frey 2007; Corvey Digital Collection 2011.

55 Macro-typographical paragraph changes, in the form in which they are known today, developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, though they only seem to emerge in narrative texts later on; there are no genre-specific studies. Cf. Laufer 1985; Janssen 2005. Among forerunners with an equivalent function one should note in particular the mostly rubricated paragraph sign (in the running text).

to exceptions.[56] Only the pagination – a basic feature since the standardization of printing technique,[57] but functionless for the actual reading process – as well as possible chapter breaks and headings contribute to the structure of the text. Modern chapter breaks, however, as well as the possibly associated table of contents, do not, as a rule, serve the purpose of orientation in the plot as a whole, that is to say, in the space of the book, but rather the purpose of marking pauses, providing bridges or creating tension.[58]

The emergence of this type of technical realization of the narrative text in the eighteenth century constituted a distinctive break from the forms of presentation of the previous five centuries that cannot be explained by one cause alone.[59] It has meant that the narrative works of Goethe, Fontane or Thomas Mann (even if for different poetic reasons) are to be received in a predominantly linear fashion, much like *Willehalm*, *Parzival*, *Eneas* or *Wigalois*: word for word, sentence for sentence and page for page. Any other method of reading would run the danger of losing orientation in the book and in the narrated plot, as well as of missing out aesthetically.[60] How tightly the narrative texture of these and also other novels of the more recent modern period is bound to their specific, predictable mediality, and in particular to the anticipated spatial dimensions of the medium – to their ›implied books‹ – only fails to stand out because to this day novelistic literature of the past three centuries has largely been printed according to the layout for which it was written – at least on a macro-structural level.[61] Of course, it would be

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56 Hoffmann-Scholl 1980; Martin 2000, 441–443; Braun 2005. It is by no coincidence that in the eighteenth century, alongside writings of the so-called *Volksaufklärung*, children's books and satire, it is reprints of prose romances from the early modern period that were among the regularly illustrated narrative genres: Lühmann 1981, 73–82, 278–302, 447; Kaldewey 1980. Cf. below, 405–406.

57 Cf. note 22, above. On the connection with printing techniques cf. esp. Saenger 1996, 402–405.

58 Wieckenburg 1969; Stevick 1970; Schnitzler 1983, 212–259. Cf. also Dembeck 2007.

59 As a rule, such developments in text structuring (here: its reduction) should be seen in the context of the universal, Europe-wide change in book arrangement of the same time period: cf. on this Barker 1977, 132–134; Lühmann 1981; Jochum 1996, 25–30. – On production in the francophone area, which also served as a model for the structuring of German books in the eighteenth century, cf. for instance Martin 1984; Laufer 1984.

60 Cf. in this context the observations in Dembeck 2007 on the development of processes of »intrinsic framing« (»intrinsische Rahmung«, ibid., p. V and elsewhere) in texts of the eighteenth century.

61 On a micro-level there are, on the other hand, divergences which could certainly lead to new analytical perspectives: Thus, to name only one example, the indication of direct speech and the (potential) separation of its individual parts have undergone different processes of development since the eighteenth century, which only late on merged into uniform standards. The impact of this on the composition of dialogues would need to be examined.

technically possible to realign the spatial dimensions of the text of, for instance, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, Keller's *Grüner Heinrich* or Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. Prepared as hypertext, the dominantly linear conception of all three texts would be rewritten as spatial-linear or as dominantly spatial.[62] The effect would not be without aesthetic appeal – however, new and modified artworks would result: One could hardly ascribe these novels to Goethe, Keller or Mann, despite their identical wordings.[63]

If at various historical and cultural stages in the history of the western European book there are thus layouts which imitate the linearity of the writing process – romances around 1200, novels from the eighteenth century onward – and if these findings are apparently without historical connection with each other, it stands to reason that we should (also[64]) look for the cause systematically, in the particularities of the genre they transmit. While pragmatic textuality has continuously and manifestly been arranged spatially since the early Middle Ages,[65] narrative texts repeatedly – but by no means always – appear in a linear arrangement. It is obviously particularly appealing, particularly appropriate or particularly sensible to reproduce narrative texts in predominantly linear layouts – or, turning to an incidental formulation by Derrida (1967a, 87), according to »the epic model«.

One of the reasons for this is that narrative texts, alongside the temporal order of language and writing – which the writing process converts into a spatial order –, possess their own, parallel temporal order: that of the narrated story,

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62 On the aesthetic implications of hypertext structure see, for instance, the survey in Mahne 2006, 84–110.

63 Exemplary for the complete lack of this perspective is Goodman 1969, who determines the nature of different art types' authenticity with reference to their potential for reproducibility and postulates a »sameness of spelling« for literature: »Let us suppose that there are various handwritten copies and many editions of a given literary work. Differences between them in style and size of script or type, in color of ink, in kind of paper, in number and layout of pages, in condition, etc., do not matter. All that matters is what may be called *sameness of spelling*: exact correspondence as sequences of letters, spaces and punctuation marks. [...] To verify the spelling or to spell correctly is all that is required to identify an instance of the work or to produce a new instance« (Goodman 1969, 115, emphasis in original). This argument, however, is only valid with reference to the prototypical appearance of literary texts of recent centuries which Goodman seems to understand as being time- and culture-transcending. More recently, even Reuß 2006, 57–58, an advocate of the typographically faithful edition, argues similarly: »The immanent formation of the text has always been largely immune to the coincidence of its typographical shape« (»Die immanente Formierung des Textes hat sich immer schon weitgehend immunisiert gegenüber der Zufälligkeit ihrer typographischen Gestalt«, 58).

64 Cf. note 59, above.

65 Cf. Palmer 1989.

which itself likewise gains (imaginary) spatial dimensions: those of the narrated world, which, viewed from this perspective, correspond to those of the (actual) book as a material object.[66] From the perspective of a possible narratology that could conceive of narration as a phenomenon of (written) linguistic impartment, what is thus named is the difference between *histoire*, the story, and *discours*, the presentation of the story – in the mode of their codicological phenomenology. Thus, in the case of narrative book literature the analogy between two double structures proves to be a key element: that of the narrated world, which unfolds successively in the course of the plot, with the elapse of fictional time, and is yet always already completed; and that of the order of the book medium, which is realized through the linear continuity of words, lines and pages, and yet is simultaneously spatial and open to discontinuous access. This double structure has effects on the narrated plot: certain phenomena of plot structure can be determined by the implied book of a narrated text and can (in certain circumstances: only) be explained in this manner.

8 Analytical Perspectives

The ›implied book‹ denotes – in shorthand – an author's historically assumable, not necessarily conscious idea of how his text, which is still in the process of creation and intended for the book medium, will be dimensionally presented and under these circumstances visually absorbed. Assuming that an author's knowledge of this later (potentially) substantiated material form influences the composition, the implied book is to be understood as a text-genetically determined, structuring moment of the text. Historically reconstructed, it thus contributes to the methodical analysis of structural characteristics of a completed text which cannot be sufficiently explained on the basis of text-internal factors.[67] For the previously described reasons relating to book history, but also for reasons of scholarly practice, new perspectives are to be expected on texts *before* the long-lasting macro-typographic minimization of narrative texts which began around the eighteenth century. In terms of general literary studies, the new perspectives lie in awareness of the historical conditions of this convention and its effect on narrative structuring.

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66 Werth 1999; Gavins 2007. Cf. also Dennerlein 2009, 46–72, and Putzo (forthcoming).
67 For extensive analyses of a representative selection of narrative texts from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, cf. Putzo 2012. The present paper is intended as a methodological counterpart to this study; its argumentation is based on observations made therein.

Thus, one can demonstrate,[68] for instance, how the sophisticated intrinsic network of correspondences in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (1200/1210) is the expression of a shaping which is intended for the only kind of reading that a German epic manuscript from the beginning of the thirteenth century permits, a kind of reading which, at the same time, can only unfold its effect in this form – if readers are habitualized correspondingly: a dominantly linear perspective, which almost negates the spatial dimensions of the book medium, and, in place of their structuring effect, demands specific mnemotechnic facilities from the reader. It is no coincidence that this occurs in analogy to the zero-dimensionality of oral presentation, a form of reception which, along with reading, is to be assumed in the semi-literate mixed culture from around 1200. Readers of *Parzival* as early as the late Middle Ages failed to grasp the complex plot inside of the conditions of its implied book (as have their successors up to the present): Actual *Parzival* books of this time disrupt specifically the linearity of the development of the text; the thus obscured coherence-building references of the romance are (literally) rewritten into the dimensions of the book space.[69]

Thus, new perspectives also on the literature ›run wild‹ of the late Middle Ages are opened: In implied, spatially arranged books of this period, romances are written that are linearly near unreadable. Stierle's dictum of the »Verwilderung des Romans« in the late Middle Ages, in which »narrative structure becomes complex to the point of being unmanageable« (»die narrative Struktur bis zur Unüberschaubarkeit komplex wird«, Stierle 1980, 260) has become an influential catchphrase for a historical form of narration which is hardly comprehensible to the acquired pattern of cognition of modern-era reading (which is, again, oriented at linear perception, but instead of mnemotechnic accomplishments demands of the reader to open himself to the illusion of a seemingly natural progression of time and an according succession of information dispensation).

Thus, to offer one last example from the early modern era, Clemens Lugowski's concept of the *mythisches Analogon*,[70] which has received considerable attention recently and which he first described in connection with prose romances of the sixteenth century, can be newly illuminated from a fresh perspective. A glance at the implied book of these romances – that is, at the arrangement

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68 In more detail, cf. Putzo 2012.

69 For example, by means of rubricated subheadings with directives such as: »*Lift the previous page* and you will find written how a wild woman came riding to King Arthur's court while he was sitting at a meal« (»*Heb an dem vorderm blat an* ſo vindes dv ge ſchriben wie ein wildez wip qvam geriten vf kvnic artus hof die weil er faz vnd az«; Heidelberg, UB, Cod. Pal. germ. 364, fol. 42r; emphasis added).

70 Lugowski 1932.

of the preserved typical prints that the authors probably anticipated – shows that the idea of an overall, time-transgressing presence of every single element of the narrated story at every single point in it, on which the *mythisches Analogon* is largely based, originates first and foremost in the prototypical appearance of romances in the mid-sixteenth century. This is an alternating layout of minimally structured, strictly linearly arranged text pages and frequent interruptions of the text by inserted plot-based illustrations with orientating captions – selective, marked points at which the reader steps back from the course of the plot to see it in its totality, a perspective which can be adopted at any time through targeted skimming without considering the succession in which information is dispensed in the course of the narrative. In Lugowski's words: »Everything that happens at every point of the narrative refers to a structure of timeless *Being*«.[71]

Translated by Camillo de Vivanco.

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71 »Alles, was geschieht, ist in jedem Punkte der Erzählung auf eine Struktur von zeitlosem *Sein* bezogen« (Lugowski 1932, 28; emphasis in original).

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