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Character Engagement and
Digital Community Practice:
A Multidisciplinary Study of
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This dissertation is accepted for the commencement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Folkloristics on 20.12.2017 by the Institute of Cultural Research and Fine Arts, University of Tartu.

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Commencement: 19.02.2018 at 12.15 at UT Senate Hall, Ülikooli st 18–204,
                    Tartu

"Graspings: wholes and not wholes, convergent divergent, consonant dissonant, from all things one and from one thing all"
Heraclitus, CXXIV

"The first form of intellectual activity is active, practical thinking. This thinking that is directed toward reality"
Vygotsky (1987[1999]:63)

"[M]eaning is pure relation"
Voloshinov (1930[1973]:28)

"Cognition with respect to books and to other people's words and cognition inside one's head belong to the same sphere of reality"
(*ibid.*:34)

"[A]ll culture is participatory first"
Howard (in: Owens 2013:x–x)

"To those who wish and know how to think participatively"
Bakhtin (1993[1999]:19)

PREFACE

I recall a rather precise moment years past, when, during one of those characteristically morose and rainy Estonian autumn evenings, I was sitting in front of my desktop. I had just finished viewing a local television broadcast of *Lost*. Now, it is obviously impossible to recall every tiny detail involved, but the show had likely ended with one of those nail-biting "cliffhangers" and out of nowhere I got the urge to check on the Internet. I wanted to see what *other people* were saying happened. And down the proverbial rabbit hole I went, readily "immersed" into a "world" I didn't previously know even existed.

This dissertation, whether you presently hold it in your hand or engage with it by some digital means, is not about *Lost*, though. Or it is, indeed, by way of its spectre haunting whatever "complex TV" ensued. But less for the reason of there being considerable publications on *Lost*, and more due to certain strategic choices, the present dissertation centers on the Internet reception of *Breaking Bad.* It speaks of how these aforementioned *other people* engage with by making sense of the *other* (kind of) *people.* It is about the meaningful intersections of humanly occurrences on the "small screen" and behind it, as it were. It is about characters taken as *persons. Narrative persons.* It is about real persons' spirited quest in scrutinizing narrative persons, in hypothesizing and assuming about them, and, in so doing, actively construing their "intentional Other." It is about lives that are observed, first perhaps from a distance, but thereafter—as the "narrative" unravels—ever more intimately. And ultimately, it is about analyst's active role in this 'mess of living.' It is about interpreting how people construe and become absorbed *by* "the lives of Others"—although ones considered *normatively* "unreal." Or so the wisdom of scholarly convention decrees, at least.

in Tartu,
August 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conveying gratitude can be a risky undertaking, for one might always hazard to overlook someone. Hence I will start by being greatly obliged to everyone for the invigorating exchange of academical ideas, however (in)directly to the work at hand they might have come about. All the possible shortcomings revealed in this work are and remain my own. For, as Heraclitus would caution us, "[m]uch learning [*polymathiē*] does not teach understanding" (*Fragments*, XVIII).

That being said, my unequivocal heartfelt appreciation belongs to my mentors, or, should I perhaps say, to my scholarly beacons. Some years ago, as a neophyte graduate student, I found myself extremely overwhelmed. While I had some generic intuition on what and how to investigate, I was not quite able to clearly articulate it. But somehow, unrelatedly to present project and, perhaps accidentally even, Prof. Dr. Marina Grishakova anticipated my area of interest. Although in advance wary on the inherent *multi*disciplinary implications introduced, Marina e-mailed me an article by media psychologist David Giles on the "parasocial interaction." Now, five years and a few months later, here we are!

Indeed, both the guidance by Prof. Dr. Grishakova and by Prof. Dr. Ülo Valk was of crucial conceptual significance. Accordingly, the overarching framing device of "creative vernacular" grew out of Ülo's concern on how to outfit the dissertation most appropriately, institutionally-disciplinarily speaking.

It has been a privilege to present my developing ideas at thematically diverse international conferences for rewarding criticism. Looking back, it is complicated to single out the most inspiring questions and/or discussions. In equal measure, the warmth of and the acceptance by organizers, co-panelists, and co-participants in Tampere and Palmse (2011, 2016) as well as in Tartu and Paris (2013, 2014) have proved invaluable to my thinking process.

The apex of criticism received was reached, however, with the insightful pre-reviews by Dr. Marco Caracciolo and Dr. Jonathan Roper. The level of deep engagement presented in a short notice by either scholar makes me truly indebted. Additional appreciation goes to Dr. Roper for his punctual assistance in copyediting the manuscript.

And last but never the least, I am thankful for the support of my loved ones, be they human or a certain late fluffy one. In the end, the completion of the present work was accompanied by a multiplicity of social collisions and, were they in good or ill, an assortment of beginnings and ends. Ultimately, then, the present work might mirror life itself—a convergence of circles, dialogically spiraling in and out of social content, as opposed to a singular, clearly recognizable straight line.

For K.,
light leg on the rainbow

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

i Reflections on narrative research as pluralist enterprise: or, an attempt to rectify the "dialogue of the deaf" (Ryan[1])

"The beginning and the end are shared in the circumference of a circle"
– Heraclitus, XCIX

"Theory should agree with reality"
– G.. Prince, "Classical and/or Postclassical Narratology" (2008), p. 122

In my Master's thesis (Sorokin 2010a), I endeavored, on the one hand,—through the examination of the fieldwork diaries of renowned Estonian folklorist Mall Hiiemäe—to "see" people behind the (descriptive) texts, i.e., to convey meta-level "storyteller constructs" (*ibid.*:5,14; cf., Titon 2003:79). On the other, by adapting Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic-contextualist approach, I focused on archived lore (transcriptions), contending that oral storytellers, in conveying their own "voice," also become *bearers* of other "voices," implicit within situated storytelling acts. My present dissertation extends this approach to digital storytelling, where my now widened theoretical focus is indebted to of the voluminous literature in folkloristics zooming in on the "heteroglotted" concerns on *context*, *thick corpus*, *multiform plot* and the *storytelling event* I found accommodating at the time (*op. cit.*:17–29; Bauman 1986; Ben-Amos 1971, 1993; Young 1985; Duranti 1986; Georges 1969, 1980; Hufford 1995; Honko (Ed., 2000); see also, Schieffelin 1980, 1985).

Moreover, speaking of broadening horizons, Bakhtin's early influence spurred me to observe "individual" disciplines first and foremost as "voices," academic 'timbres' that can be fine-tuned to resonate in (at least approximate) harmony—not without care and considerable (and perhaps, overtly idealistic) effort, of course. Herewith it is unfeasible *not* to echo (nor not to be inspired by) transdisciplinary narratologist David Herman, who—almost two decades ago—sounded one of his many proverbial rallying calls against the salience of "over-compartmentaliz[ation]" in narrative research. Namely, Herman accentuated the necessity for "regrounding[2]" of and "a major rethinking of thinking" in the field of narratology (*ibid.*:303–305; cf., Herman 2006, 2010, 2011, 2013; Fludernik 2005:37, *Cit.* in: Alber and Fludernik 2010:4–5). Herman goes to fuse the legacy of Vygotsky's socio(cultural)-historical approach with compatible currents in contemporary cognitive science, developmental psychology, post-Cartesian (and or anti-representationalist) approaches to mind and narrative (see, e.g., Herman

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[1] See, Ryan, "Story/Worlds/Media" (*Storyworlds Across Media*, 2014), p. 27.
[2] Entailing amongst others "a more extensive integration of concepts and methods from other fields" (Herman 2003a:303).

2011; Hutto 2013)[3], and more. As observed in the introduction to the edited volume *Postclassical Narratology, Approaches and Analyses* by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, Herman—the very pioneer of the postclassical 'turn'—"used the term narratology 'quite broadly, in a way that makes it more or less interchangeable with *narrative studies*'," or even, with "narrative analysis," *per se* (Herman 1999, *Cit.* in: Alber and Fludernik 2010:2; see also, *ibid.*:23; Prince 2008:115ff., esp. 120; Herman 1997). More concisely put: comparative to, whilst also expanding on, the classical narratology,[4]

> postclassical narratology also asks other questions: about the narrative structure and the semiotic form, about their *interaction with knowledge of the real world*, about *the function* and not only the functioning *of narrative* […] about *narrative as a process and production and not simply a product*, about the influence of *context and means of expression on the responses of the receiver* […] It [postclassical narratology—S.S.] is itself plural. (*op. cit.*:116,117; emphases added; cf., Shuman and Hasan-Rokem 2012:59)[5]

Now, Herman's own specific brand of "regrounding" established itself bearing on the "socially situated" practices whereby human cognition—real or "fictionalized" notwithstanding—becomes scrutinized as "supra- or transindividual activity *distributed* across groups functioning in specific context, rather than as a wholly internal process unfolding within the minds of solitary, autonomous, and desituated cognizers" (Herman 2003a:304; emphasis added; see also, Herman 2010 *passim*).[6] Herman's fundamental postulates of 1999 resonate with Alan Palmer's dissertation on *The Presentation of Mind in Narrative Fiction*.[7] Building on Vygotsky, Voloshinov, and others, Palmer anticipated Herman's initiative in what he later referenced as an "externalist perspective on the mind"

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[3]   For further polemics on this (with explicit focus on narrative "character"), see, x *passim*, and esp. **chapter 1**. For closing overview and discussion, see Conclusion.

[4]   As observed by Amy Shuman and Galit Hasan-Rokem (2012:58), latter, in turn, emerging on the "main theoretical basis" laid by Propp's morphology of the Russian folktale.

[5]   Cf., Alber and Fludernik noting "contextual versions of postclassical narratology," e.g., diverse body of non-literary and transmedial narrative resources as distinct focalities, especially backlit by the "narrative turn" in human sciences in general, and in reception-inclined analyses, in particular. Alber and Fludernik ultimately summarize context-sensitivity as being at the pulsating core of "all narratology nowadays" (Alber and Fludernik 2010:3; esp. 5-6,9,22). See also, Prince (2008:121) on the significance of the "'voice' of the receiver" in "contextually situated practices."

[6]   An apt corollary is proposed in the field of futures studies where narrative is viewed outright as something generative and common—a Vygotskyian "zone of proximal development" (see, Jarva 2014:1ff.). Relatedly, in the Preface to *Thought and Language*, Alex Kozulin, explaining Vygotsky's differential of *sense* (dependent on context) and *meaning* (reflecting generalized concept(s), conveys that "[m]eaning is only *one of the zones of sense*, the most stable and precise zone" (Kozulin 1985[1986]:xxxvii; emphasis added).

[7]   http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.286608 (Accessed: 14.03.2017)

(Palmer 2014).[8] Such a turn 'outward,' pursuing the ideas of both narratologist scholars and their followers, comprehensively validates the scientific acknowledgement of "everyday life peoples'" reliance on

> [n]arrative … as a powerful and basic *tool for thinking* [being hence observed as a pervasive] *communicative practice* across so many settings [and] deep-roote[d] in a variety of human practices (Herman 2003a:303–304; emphases added; see further in, x-xi; cf., interactional approach to narrative analysis *vis-à-vis* personal (life) stories wherein narrative's utilized as "cultural resource for negotiating meaning," Shuman 2012:125,126ff.)

Herman set forth some grand claims (although what "revolution," to borrow his own framing device from 2003, wouldn't stand—or fall—on them?), elaborating on them further, a decade later, in his inspiring *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind* (Herman 2013). Similarly, Palmer's work has pursued polemics probably most conclusively displayed by thought-provoking discussions in the special issue of *Style* (Palmer; Herman; Hutto, *et al.* 2011).

However, the discipline of folkloristics, having had its sharp eye on popular practices of *lore* "making" from time immemorial, could be seized here as corresponding to narratology's diverse impulses toward hybridizing and expanding across various fields of expertise, as discussed previously; at least insofar as the creative *narrative* practices in contemporary digital environments signaling the "everyday" are concerned. Hence, from folklorists' side such bidirectional complementarity becomes further qualified by Simon J. Bronner's argument of "cognitive basis" (Bronner 2011:399). Conceiving of the Internet as "social conduit" betokening various "divisions and binaries," e.g., persistent struggle between "the folk" and "the official," Bronner outlines an environment innately attuned to underscore the 'mutability' in and diversity of "living traditions" (Howard and Blank 2013:8ff.; McNeill 2013:80–81). Accordingly, technological innovations insisting on "bottom-up" social platforms, begetting 'open sourced' functionality necessarily pave way to "alternative authority" (Howard 2008b) or "distributed authorship" (Foley 2012; see, xi-xii, for discussion). In effect, the Internet becomes "an expanding folkloric thoroughfare," and, as Simon J. Bronner points out, initial appeal to the Internet's "'folk' character" didn't at all come from folklorists, but Web 2.0 developers. Hence, "folksonomy," a folk-taxonomy hybrid, came to signify "emic, or user-generated, practice" of collaborative creation (Bronner 2011:402,406; cf., Noyes 2012, 2016) (for more on notions such as "collaborative," see below).

Consequently, popular online practices remain anchored in, whilst significantly re-shaping, the classical notion of *folk group* (i.e., "producers" of *lore*) outlined by Alan Dundes: "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor" (Dundes 1965:2, *Cit.* in, McNeill 2013:4; cf., Pilt

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8   For concluding treatment of particular polemics, that is, the engagement with "narrative characters," and how the terminological framework established in present dissertation could contribute, see Conclusion. For the "alternative" approach itself, see, xi *passim*, and **chapter 1.**

2014:22). As folklorist Lynn McNeill explains, a *digital* folk group not only "bridge[s]" participants (regardless of time and space, strictly speaking; cf., Page 2012), but fashions in doing so its own cultural varieties, expectations and tacit rule sets. McNeill points to, say, tone-adjusting "text-based 'gestures'" (i.e., frowny *versus* smiley face), requiring explanation for the "uninitiated" as well as the rising discourse of "memes" (McNeill 2013:82–85; cf., Arpo 2001:26; see also, Pilt 2014: 29–32,42). My own emphasis going forward shall be on "narrative culture," taken broadly, i.e., overlapping discussion environments for *Breaking Bad*, predicated on a kind of "vernacular creativity"—itself necessitating further original terminology which emphasize eschewing the ordinary means of hierarchization and labeling in favor of explicating the *process*[9]—readily inclined for impending expressional cues which may remain of negligible quality lest an observer has crossed narrative-historical knowledge threshold of a particular sort. Expressive ambivalence, compression limited to sentence or mere word, and other creative uses of language may beget an assortment of respondent-dependent attunements. For instance, an analyst unfamiliar with the original material (a serialized televisual narrative) may find herself amidst, to paraphrase literary classics, "tongues signifying nothing." Meanwhile, "acafans" (fan-academics) might observe the formation of subtly wrought narrative-historically sensitive commentary texts that underscore the development and alteration of communal senses *in real time* (see, x, xii, **chapter 3**, 3.4–3.5).

As such, although Dundes' definition remains agreeable for "the digital age," distinct changes in 'base structures' constituting our being as (digi-)social have nonetheless called for outlining an "alternative grammar" (Hafstein 2014; see, xii, for discussion) as well as setting forth

> new challenges … to the assumptions of folklore as face-to-face communication and its social basis. Theories of communication and new philosophies with keywords of convergence, hybridity, and networking followed to account for post-industrial phenomena of mass-mediated culture and the role of mobile individual agency in self-actualization and new forms of social belonging. (Bronner 2017:14–15; cf., Howard 2015)

It is the purpose of later sections (x, xi, *passim*) of present Introduction to enlarge upon such a particular Dundesian "common factor," namely that of a *co-elaborative* "narrative culture," arguably affiliating participants through *distributed* sense-making by way of "vernacular creativity" (see, x-xii). These core ideas, however, scaffolded on longitudinal examination of computer-mediated communication (CMC) conveying digitalized social experience of serialized television watching (*Breaking Bad*) in general, and of "character engagement" in particular, become even further reinforced were we to note that one of the first folkloristic works concerning Internet (and its vernacular) was, in fact,

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[9] For "norms" (esp. academical evaluations of popular practices) are latter's antithesis, its restrainers and mounters.

Nancy Baym's article in the *Journal of Folklore Research* (Baym 1993) on online communities "forming around TV shows" (Howard 2015:247). Moreover, as if anticipating my upcoming nod to the motif of "water cooler talks," Robert Glenn Howard throws into sharp relief the artificiality of the digital/non-digital polarization from the explicit "everyday life" perspective, suggesting that

> our digital networks are not fundamentally separate from our daily lives … The internet is no longer "new media." It is no longer extraordinary. Today, the Internet is mundane. Just like communicating face-to-face*, there is no question that there is "folklore online" because "online" is just another way we communicate* … Now that the Internet is mundane, researching it is even more important. No longer a passing fad or minor sub-cultural phenomenon, in its mundanity, the Internet's power is expansive. (Howard 2015:248; emphasis added; see also, Blank 2009, Ben-Amos 1971)

As previously implied, present dissertation aims to qualify such "power" foremost through *narrative* as a practical *tool* (for thinking and expressing), instigating a kind of "vernacular creativity," predicated on the discussional format of blogs and forums and hence providing a glimpse of a distinct "praxis of the everyday" (Wulff 1996a). That is, I will concentrate on a "power" which, as shall be contended, manifests as a dynamic complex of *correspondences*, as 'folded' agencies within the storytelling eventness (see, xi-xii).

Consequently, I take the previous rough outline of coinciding demurrals and positive anxieties to vindicate my assumption that both narratology and folkloristics are crucial disciplinary 'timbres' channeling what's perhaps most accurately framed as an *multidisciplinary* study. For I aim to seek active 'thought cohesions' between film/television studies, social, media, (post-cognitivist) ecological, and common sense/folk psychology; between aesthetics, phenomenology, enactivist philosophy of mind, and literary theory; between discourse analysis, modal logics, natural language algorithms, "Big Data" mining; and more. Clearly, all three chapters, taken in unison, indeed underline an 'extreme' aspiration toward a potential transdisciplinary *outcome* as highlighted by the development and application of theoretical framework. Ultimately, though, the evaluation whether there were difficulties in "synthesizing results linked to different horizons" (Prince 2008:120) is the readers' task.

As a means of illumination, then, the present sub-section of this Introduction ruminates on the path taken, hoping to sketch the dissertation's "socially meaningful" objective, multi- and transdisciplinarily (but also *inter*disciplinarily) speaking. To that end, I am going to further focus on key "angle[s] of entry" (Young 1986:ix) validating the necessity for an experimental synthesis. Before I can proceed, however, I first have to clarify two issues.

Firstly, speaking in purely empirical terms the present dissertation displays a qualitative shift from the *scholarly-mediated* collections of oral lore into *unmediated* ("natural") 'digi-lore' emerging within and *across* digital environment(s). This variation of "mundane" *lore* fashions a particular cross-sectional archive

par excellence—an objective chronicle conserving the criss-crossing interstices of narrations (cf., see discussion on this, *vis-à-vis* Booth 2009, 2010, below) for which analyst becomes unintrusive, explanatory *editor* (see, xii). Narrowing yet further down, I could say that where once, say, television's significance as a (form of) social experience became expressed by the staple phrase of workplace "water cooler" talks (see, Simons 2015:221)—hence corresponding to heightened interest in diverse real life cultural practices with regard to "mass media" (e.g., Dégh 1994)—CMC has afforded such shared experience a considerable enlargement and prolongation. As I will suggest (x-xi), in digital environments "narrative cultures" unravel freely and or due to top-down constraints, characterized by multifarious means of *sense-making* and storytelling wherein narrative becomes deployed as the central practical *tool* in a creative *co-elaboration* of common sense.

Present dissertation's argument builds upon these aforementioned elementary baselines by proposing a theoretical framework with a distinct emphasis on how it actually *works*; that is, *how* people *perceive*—and, crucially, expressively <u>articulate</u> this perception *of*—(other) people "behind" the televisual serials[10] (with a close sample analysis of *Breaking Bad*'s discussions in multiple simultaneous digital environments). Consequently, insofar as "narrative" is utilized as a *tool* for sense-making, such experience befalls a *co-elaborative* 'eventness' in and *across* digital "sites of engagement."

Secondly, when speaking of televisual narratives grounding "social experience," much of the pioneering, influential and admired work in consolidating television (which, for a long period, was back-seated for its "cultural" and or "artistic" merits, or rather, lack thereof) and narrative research—elaborating here on the cognitivist approach of film theorist David Bordwell—originates from Jason Mittell. While undoubtedly a path breaking enterprise, Mittell's reliance in outlining his persuasive "complex TV" approach, however, runs at least a partial risk of subduing the concordant intricacy subscribable to popular sense-making. Although work on audience activity makes up a solid portion of Mittell's *oeuvre*, the overarching rhetorical strategy deployed, e.g, in his work on wikis, especially *Lostpedia* for *Lost* fandom (see, Mittell 2009, 2013) on the one hand opts for (analytical) generalizations over close readings and the eminence of specific loci (like user-run wikis) over a more *distributed* perspective on the eventness of/across digital environments. On the other, popular sense-making appears as something necessarily observed only in abstract "online anonymous qualitative surveys" (e.g., Gray and Mittell 2007, regarding *Lost*'s spoilers). Consequently, (i) the spotlight seems to be fixated on classical narratologist analyses—"strategies of storytelling" in (Mittell 2014; see also, Allrath and Gymnich (eds) (2005) and—of the *authorial narrative* (or, unambiguously delineated *objects of analysis*, e.g., the wiki framework); (ii) whereas popular sentiment—the common sense-making—remains regulated through desituated

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[10]   Cf., "people behind the texts" Titon (2003:79).

"surveys," indicating (signs of) reluctance to explicitly outline the complexity in such dynamics (cf., Prince 2008:121–122).

In effect, the not-so-simple issue of data transparency is where this dissertation may crucially contribute. The commentary sections of television criticism blogs or the thematical threads on user-run forums, laying the empirical groundwork for current study, consistently "produce" approximately tens of thousands of individual texts per week throughout the airing of some popular serial narrative such as *Breaking Bad.* Presumably, though, the sheer magnitude of such quantity has caused in interested researchers a kind of Schrödinger's cat reflex. In a seemingly conclusive endeavor to only provide compressed and/or perfunctory account of "complex sense-making," however, without actually showing (and untangling) its natural occurrence, these kinds of perspectives hazard describing the woods for the trees, and, at its worst, may even subjugate popular sense-making practices to the heretofore 'order of things,' thus inadvertently enforcing old conventions. Hence, my emphasis on *distributed sense-making* (cf., see xii-xiii, **chapter 2**; the original analytical notion of **text makers' world**) clearly distinguishes inherent tensions, relations and analyst's "editorial" role in conveying them, *as* fundamental ingredients insofar as narrative uptake and subsequent sense-making are not so much *determined*, but conveying 'points of tension'—discourses instigated by ambient flux, one might say. The "open source" process of sense-making, I am going to maintain, betokens a 'leveling' quality of correspondence between the "agents" involved—hence there are contributions into, not *strict* constraints to, the creative activities taking place.

Taken broadly, similar criticisms can also be applied to specifically "localized" areas of academic interest such as, but not limited to, "hypertext fiction" and "fanfiction." As opposed to distributed "sites of engagement" highlighting *co-elaborative* creativity, here the "localization" in the sense of production is either being condensed onto *one* "site" and its technical options, as in case of fanfictions, personal blogs, or wikis; or concentrated on one authored entity, either "collective," "collaborative," or individual (with "end-user," i.e., reader 'continuing'), as in case of digital fiction. Put differently, lesser stock is seemingly put in *how* the above forms come to be, or rather, what are the internal emergent dynamics as-they-happen, as opposed to conventionalization of yet new *forms* (subsumed under the catchy heading of 'New Media').[11] In short, the principle of analytical abstraction subsists on the process of the doers, as it were, whilst simultaneously being dangerously far removed from it. In other words, the poetics of (para)social perception appears lost in the shuffle in favor of highlighting the poetics of the narrative form being perceived. However, the former conceivably ascends to a more prominent position in poetics of folklore as "creative communication," explained by Amy Shuman and Galit Hasan-Rokem as "basically a contingent theory of folklore [where] [p]oetics will be

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[11] Cf., M-L. Ryan's suggestion that, as far as digital fiction is concerned, academic interest overweighs popular one. For further criticism on the notion of "new media," however, see Lunenfeld (1999[2001]:xvi).

understood as the total body of values predicating expressive modes of culture created in various media[12] by individual authors, artists and performers interacting with values and norms collectively accepted and *processually shaped* through *shared forms of* [*communicative practices*]" (Shuman and Hasan-Rokem 2012:55ff.; esp. 61–62,64; emphases added).

Given the layout described above, it becomes especially crucial to expound on the impetus afforded by narratology and folkloristics in shaping my transdisciplinary objective for both disciplines are taken as proverbial 'springboards' scaffolding the 'thought cohesions' attempted throughout. As such, reflective overview and discussion on the study of storytelling and narrative within the paradigms of *digital* folkloristics and narratology, respectively, appears especially crucial. In what follows, my concentration will be lastly limited to a kind of cross-section of junctions and interlocks, a precisely concentrated 'synopsis' necessarily drawing together particular "macro" notions underscoring present dissertation—even if, perhaps, only implicitly so.

In her *Taleworlds and Storyrealms*, phenomenological folklorist and narrative scholar Katherine Galloway Young writes:

> The first question in presenting a body of work is where to cut in … A cut is an angle of entry. Wherever I enter, from there, a universe unfolds itself. In that sense, my angle of entry is my point of view. A universe cut into has an orientation. (Young 1986:ix)

The "orientation" subsequently sketched knowingly embraces (and attempts to explicate) the "Heraclitian flux" (*ibid.*:x) of popular storytelling. Herewith narratology and folkloristics, although perhaps with differing attunements and contrasting aims that might splice apart, should not, I would suggest, cut across. In other words, the foundational role both folkloristics and narratology share in making sense of the sense-makings of the variegated nature of human experience has to be clearly accentuated and embraced.

However, the suggested polemical themes are still cast unjustifiably generically, to be sure. Indeed, they might gain further amplification (and understanding) through interdisciplinary descriptors on the practices of storytelling and sense-making, i.e., through potential "angles of entry," conveying particular 'junctions and interlocks.' On the one hand, the widespread notions delimiting agentic dynamics (*collective*, *collaborative* (or, *co-constructive*), *participatory*, and *narractive*) I have hence cherry-picked to convey a necessary common ground in scaffolding my adapted notion of *co-elaborative* (see, cf., Détienne *et al.* 2012:3512ff.). On the other, my particular treatment of latter notion (and its outgrowth in **narrcept** (see, xiii, and **chapter 1**) serves to validate multidisciplinary approach with a prospective transdisciplinary outcome. Insofar as much of

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[12] Shuman and Hasan-Rokem explicitly distinguish "material, ritual as well as verbal media," but I see of no reason why the popular creative practices conveyed through CMC should't be included at the very least as sub-set of "material media" (*ibid.*:56), insofar as the the distinct kind of experientiality its usage conveys is concerned.

the terminological polemics becomes steadily outlined in later sections and chapters, however, I will currently limit myself to being as concise as possible.

To begin with, the usage of "collective" when speaking of communal activities, especially those availed by digital social media environment and its precursors (*Usenet* news groups, cf., e.g., Lavery 1995b and Jenkins 1995, on *Twin Peaks* fandoms; IRC chat rooms, Google discussion groups, etc.), can be traced back to the widely-held and influential notion "collective intelligence" (Lévy 1997, 2003, 2013). Becoming further popularized by Steven Johnson's *Emergence* (Johnson 2001), it seemingly also hit the right note with fandom studies and more (see, e.g., Jenkins 2002; Duda 2014; Tronstad 2014; for preliminary discussion and criticisms, see below; for more, see, xii).

Building on the previous discussion of Mittell's work on "complex" TV, I will take as my starting point narratologist Ruth Page's and hypertext fiction theorist/author Scott Rettberg's approach to collaborative "authorships" and "fictions" (Page 2012; Rettberg 2011, 2014; see also, Rettberg 2015a, b). Here, the notions of co-construction and collaboration converge into a specific collective action producing plethora of loosely interconnected or single narrative texts (Page 2012:117ff.). Moreover, such specificity is underpinned by a predetermined constrained interactive environment and or known creative agents (e.g., a restricted number of authorial figures, like with hypertext novel *The Unknown* (Rettberg 2014:78); or top-down "[launched] experiment in collaborative writing" with its pre-given 'start-up' sentence (*op. cit.*:119), like Page's case study of *A Million Penguins* "wikinovel"). *Protagonize*, Page's subsequent examination, a "creative writing community [for] amateur writers," only furthers the seeming reliance on the conditioned settings (and agents) (*ibid.*: 120–122).

Meanwhile, in contradistinction to the above, Page's earlier differential of "dialogic co-tellership" is characterized by diffusion which—insofar as Page's mention of "separate forum posts, blog posts, and comments" (*ibid.*:117) lets on—could be conceived more as a popular, albeit "messier" practice. As explained later, however, comments on, say, the multiform plots of the "wikinovel" have an ancillary function for the narratives insofar as "detached artefacts" *become* through comments being "retrospective evaluations" and "prospective suggestions" useful for the *authors'* (see, *ibid.*:122–124). Although a promising clarification, introducing a division between "authors" and "contributors" seemingly neutralizes "natural" *distributed* storytelling; that is, evaluative "normalizations" run the risk of being enforced from without. As such, both scholars, in their own ways, echo Mittell in opting to expound on the top-down, guided process, viewing a "communit[y] of tellers [=authors]" (*ibid.*:118), either on- or offline, through the conventional lens of (i) a central delineated *object* (be it in substance or loci), whilst (ii) enforcing, ironically, a (re-)distribution of *roles*.

Promptly put, the above signals an attempt to 'format' the living storytelling, subordinate it to the relations, externally validated; of setting up, or more perhaps more to the point, of distributing *hierarchy* (furthered by explicit labeling

of "narrative identities" (see, *ibid.*:125–134) where it might not even be necessarily, lest we really are to speak of *collaborative* storytelling. In other words, tailored choices for analyses, such as previously outlined, hazard to present controlled creative procedures, even if nominally highlighting the "distributed process of storytelling" (*ibid.*), as symbolic for and hence eclipsing the potential analytical value of analogous popular practices which might, on an opposing note, be characteristically *antiauthorial* (Hafstein 2014) whilst also, importantly, not foregoing but highlighting internalized and intertwined points of tensions, to boot (see, xii). However, such examples unfortunately appear excluded wholesale from Rettberg's entry on "collaborative narrative" in *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media* (eds., M.-L. Ryan, *et al.*, 2014).

In associating above discussion on "collaborative" practices—particularly the enticing conceptualizing power underscoring the user-made "archives"—and fan fiction studies, new media theorist Paul Booth's trendsetting *Digital Fandom* and earlier work can be instructive (Booth 2009, 2010). Approaching user-created wikis (*Heroespedia*, *Lostpedia*) as a Derridean "architonic texts," Booth develops the notion of "narractivity," a "communal interactive action" whereby knowledgeable "fan-scholars" (recalling Mittell's usage) "create knowledge about a [narrative] text" (*ibid.*:104–105). In etching out a kind of archive(d) historiography, in Derridaian sense, such wikis—Booth maintains—become more than a sum of their parts, "not just a thing but a process, [where archive is] not just a device for reproduced information but for production itself" (*ibid.*:108). To a specific extent, Booth's theorizing can be viewed as looming on my own for we are both concerned with a narrative creation process with historicist underpinnings. *However*, though massively elaborating on, say, Mittell's (and Gray's) preceding work and anticipating Page's in significant ways, Booth, too, remains inevitably stuck on two significant reductionist strategies I aim to overcome. Firstly and most importantly, Booth's is fixated on a singular environment of "knowledge creation" (or, at best, on a comparative analysis of two), whereas my purpose is to find the ways of conceptualization that would match the storytelling processes in their simultaneous multiplicity (developments *across* separate blog and forum environments *at the same time*). Secondly, and I think no less importantly, while I am sympathetic to the observation of "scholarly fans," I nevertheless feel it undercutting the particularity of popular practices by enforcing, however gently, the perusal through the binary lenses of the old.

Now, in comparison, fan fiction—as elaborated on by Hellekson (2014), Hellekson and Busse (2006), with pioneering work laid by e.g., Hills (2002) and Jenkins (1992)—has always been wary on such (external) binary impulses, whereas in favor of emphasizing, in principle, the bottom-up "amateur[13] text creation," challenging the 'official' (Hellekson 2014:188,190). Nonetheless, the extent and relevance of the notion of "collective" in fan fiction studies is

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[13] Here, "amateur" should be taken to mean practices emerging from the everyday online, *pace* pre-developed "communities" for the express purpose of "creative writing."

disconcerting. For, later in this Introduction, I intend to examine a potential position my dissertation might take within the context of fan studies—whilst also explaining how my conceptualization of *co-elaboration* principally diverges from the bias on "collective" in this particular field of research—I feel it suffice to note for now that within the area of fandom studies, the foothold of the "collective" has not gone completely unchallenged either, however. For instance, the idea of "participatory *process*," or "processurality" may accord well with tendencies accentuated in my work (Thomas 2011:208–209,214–216; emphasis added; cf., Ensslin 2007:37; see also, Thomas 2010:145–146[14]). Here, "the participatory" can be seen as diminishing the perceived value of the "collective intelligence," whilst promoting socio-individual agencies at work (however, see, xii, for further discussion). As it stands, the popular approach underpinning folkloristics may permit a versatile balance with regards to narratology's indisputably necessary reliance and persistence on authority and form, even if its "postclassical" phase makes significant headway in counterpoising, to recall Prince's phrasing, "narrative as a process and production and not simply a product" (Prince 2008:116).

x Additional navigational notes: narrative as a *tool* for/in "narrative cultures"

In her article published in *Narrative Culture*, Cristina Bacchilega writes: "[W]e live by stories and in stories […] stories matter" (Bacchilega 2015:28–29).[15] Indeed, ours is an era of increased "storyfication" and narrativization (cf., though, Mäkelä *et al*. 2017–2018[16]). Internet is an excellent case in point. From a web page providing built-in design to "storify[17]" one's tweets or "twitterfiction as an emerging narrative form" (Thomas 2014), to Internet memes considered "meaningful [multiparticipant] discourse" (Nowak 2016; cf., Bronner

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[14] It should be noted here that under the auspieces of my approach, any usages of "participatory" have to be distinguished from "participatory *responses*," *viz.* "mental products of readers' participation in the narrative" (e.g., Polichak and Gerrig 2002; Green and Strange and Brock (eds) (2002). I will keep this particular polemics as a 'tie-in' between Introduction and Conclusion, revisiting given issues in the latter, whereas especially **chapter 1** is set to establish the core of my (counter-)arguments on the matter.

[15] See also, Grishakova and Sorokin (2016:544ff.), "ubiquitousness of narrative" thesis; also, narratives as "ubiquitous elements of communication," Longo (2016, esp. 8-11). For the criticism on the "ubiquity of narrative," see Skalin (2008b:9,12). See also, however, Grishakova (2008) and Rossholm (2008) in the same edited volume.

[16] https://www.academia.edu/31590000/Dangers_of_Narrative_Contemporary_Story-Critical_Narratology_2017-2018. The dangers inherent in uncritically 'idealizing' narratives and various forms of (socio-cultural) narrations is a timely topic, indeed. Although my work touches upon these perils only in passing and, at best, *very* tangentially, there are certainly issues raised which could, if developed and scrutinized further, conceivably contribute to the project of "story-critical narratology" (*ibid.*). Some potentialities are suggested in the Conclusion.

[17] See, https://storify.com/

2017, McNeill 2013) on the backdrop of hashtag culture and "like economy"[18]; from proliferating political idioms such as "control the narrative"[19] or top-down classificators such as "conspiracy theories[20]," to Facebook self-building by intentionally creating a parochial "village" space thereof (Smith 2015)—the varied strategies of narrative- and sense-making appear omnidirectional.

For instance, "digital enclaves" (cf., Howard 2011) can be highlighted as resonating in as well as becoming piecemeal "legitimized" by the "mainstream" discourse(-making). This, in turn, undercuts the conventional circumventions running the risk of positioning some of the peoples' voices as belonging into "marginal" or "alternative spaces" (see, Husting and Orr 2007). Wherein do above tendencies position *narrative*, though? Although its "formal" borders and conventional "authority" may be fluctuating, open to disputes, and increasingly sublimated to "popular" control, narrative itself—as a cultural *tool* for acting, utilized to make sense of one's immediate surroundings in whatever form—appears as something inescapable.

In "perceiv[ing] what is in the world as it relates to us" (E.J.Gibson and Pick 2003:24), narrative can be bestowed a *practical function* (effort for an objecto-historical "reason explanation" through "intentional," "relationalist" (usage of) language (Hutto 2013:590–591,598–601,602n5; Turvey and Carello 1981:313–314, esp. 317–318; see also, Locatelli and Wilson (forthcoming[21]). In our exploratory "information pickup" we actively "seek" information from the "furnished surfaces" afforded by the adjoining ambient 'flux' (Anderson 1996: 130,136; E.J.Gibson and Pick 2003:15,18–21,24–25). Scrutinizing and elaborating on information received—including person perception—yields development of increasingly complex construals, predictions, organizing principles *et cetera* (i.e., we are perceptually immersed in *active learning*).[22]

In "[p]erceiving [as] an event" (*ibid.*), then—although perhaps sporadically and or dictated by necessity—narrative undergirds our "graspings," our perceptual, intentional "doings.[23]" Promptly, narrative proclivity may (tacitly) assume *environmental* characteristics, taken broadly (see, xi *passim*, and **chapter 1**, for discussion on my original notion of **realitization**). In applying Vygotsky's phrasing, narrative engenders "social attitude" and, being predicated on

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[18] Cf., Gerlitz and Helmond (2013); Carter (2013[2014]).

[19] https://www.google.ee/search?q=%22control+the+narrative%22&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=NpSNV-T9IcbVsAGnoafIBw (Accessed: 19.07.2016). Social media can also introduce dangerous pitfalls, esp. with regard to online political "spaces," see, e.g., Fenton and Barassi (2011).

[20] E.g., Campion-Vincent (2005).

[21] https://www.academia.edu/29758410/Introduction_Perception_Without_Representation (Accessed: 12.02.2017).

[22] Cf., "cognitive niche construction," (e.g., Bardone 2011; Bertolotti and Magnani 2016; Bardone and Magnani 2007)

[23] As philosophers of mind Shaun Gallagher and Micah Allen acutely write, "perception is not just for recognition or identification [nor] just for action [but] also reward-oriented, hedonic, aesthetic, and affective in the broadest sense—and in ways that suggest that we may enjoy (and seek) perceptual surprise" (Gallagher and Allen 2016:11).

"socially meaningful actions" and "social character of meaning," conveys a co-elaboratively communicated common interest (Vygotsky 1930[1978]:25–30,37, 86,90[24]). In the present dissertation, such tendency becomes highlighted by and through the original notions of **narrcept** (narrative+percept) and **beacon** (see, xii, **chapter 1–2**). Anthropologist Cathrine Hasse, in her recent *An Anthropology of Learning: On Nested Frictions in Cultural Ecologies* (Hasse 2015) puts the outline conveyed above perhaps in most acute terms:

> If Vygotsky underlines how thinking is completed in words, we may enhance the perspective to all kinds of materials in our surroundings that *anchor* and communicate meaning in constant flux. Our collective consciousness[25] makes use of these thinking tools and their anchors in both the material *stick* and the word stick. The sign thus plays a double function in internal mediation: It is used for communication and it is a generalization, and the two aspects are connected as communication built on generalization. (*ibid.*:86; emphasis in original; underlining added)

In other words, narrative insists on evolving into a "fact of the environment and a fact of behavior" (cf., Gibson 1986[2015]:121; Good 2007:280). It at once provides resources for as well as develops, challenges, alters, and 'channels' our surroundings[26], even though our sensibilities may object to such usage of "fact" due to its exorbitant "definitiveness." Nevertheless, we've entered an age, after all, have we not, where diverse postmodernist relativism has vindicated objectivism; where indeed utterances and "material of the word" (Voloshinov 1930[1973]:19,24; Hasse 2015:85) (which might have hitherto had agreed upon "meanings") emerge as constantly (re)negotiated, "made." Indeed, weren't we once forewarned that both facts and reality could be *invented*, to boot (see, Schmidt 1989; cf., Parenti 1986)?[27] Consequently, to contest the overwhelming-

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[24] Vygotsky [1934]1986, 1987[1999]; cf. Vygotsky 1925[1979]; Herman 2003d, 2006:358ff., 2009, 2013; Bakhtin 1981, 1984; Bruner 1991; Voloshinov 1930[1973]:25-28; Wertsch 1991[1993]:18ff., 1998:73ff.; Lloyd and Fernyhough (eds) (1999); cf., Voloshinov 1927[1976a], 1927[1976b]); Gibson 1986[2015]. For the development of Gibsonian perspective for the "non-mentalistic conception" of perception and cognition of the social world, signaling "shift of focus" from the individual to the distributed as the "unit of analysis," see also, e.g., Good (2007, esp. 269-274 and 284-286) for an extended overview discussion underpinning various points considered in **chapter 1**.

[25] Note here that, following Vygotsky, Hasse importantly calls for a distinction: "The *social is always present*, whereas the collective is a special case" (*ibid.*; emphasis added). See also, *ibid.*:97, where "virtual space" among the varieties of human social organizing is acknowledged.

[26] Becoming a *tool* enabling to "verbalize perception" (see, Vygotsky 1930[1978]:32-33) and develop our "verbal thinking" (see, Haase 2015:85). Cf., "inner sign" can become "outer sign," for "[i]ntrospection itself, then, has an expressive character"; "social situation" is inextricably tied to, and *orients*, the inner sign(s); there's an "*evaluative (emotive) correspondence*" (Voloshinov 1930[1973]:36-38; emphasis in original).

[27] Cf., Grishakova and Sorokin (2016:554).

ness of narrative in such times and under such terms seems bizarre, if not altogether absurd.

Hence, whereas the quintessence of the present dissertation indisputably *is* (about) people, it is perhaps more to the point to emphasize that the guiding objective herewith lies in *how* it is about them, how it explicates their 'narrative toolings'; and how, therefore, it cautiously advocates for potentially revisionist theoretical models, specifically fine-tuned to arbitrate the popular *senses*. At this point we can turn to critically-renowned serialized television narrative (such as *Breaking Bad*) and its discussive reverberations on the Internet.

xi Why *Breaking Bad*: synopsis and the shaping of the arguments "underneath"

As the "litmus test" in explicating the precise narrative workings of said "popular," I have chosen the popular and critical favorite American television serial[28] *Breaking Bad* (2008–2013, *AMC* network)[29] which was hailed through-out its persistence primarily as a complex character study. Such complexity ultimately afforded the show a spot amongst a number of signature narratives of the "golden age" that "televised the revolution" (Sepinwall 2012) such as *The Sopranos*, *The Wire*, *Deadwood, Mad Men, Lost*, or *Rectify*. More importantly, however, *Breaking Bad* adjoined a particular register that had long started to change how *intensively* these kinds of narratives, and the characters thereof especially, were talked of and *about*, respectively, with the pioneering effort—laying the foundation for the format later adapted and developed by weekly critics/reviewers such as Alan Sepinwall, Maureen Ryan, and others—made by the user-run recap blog *Television Without Pity* with accompanying bulletin board forum for further discussions.[30] Renowned television writers anticipated such necessity and demand in advance, however. In Alan Sepinwall's *The Re-volution Was Televised. The Cops, Crooks, Slingers and Slayers Who Changed TV Drama Forever* (Sepinwall 2012[31]), David Chase, the creator of epochal *The Sopranos*, recounts: "I was never surprised watching hour-long TV. And I never saw anyone on there *who behaved like real human beings*" (*ibid.*:34; emphasis added). As he explained later on, changing the conversation, as it were, was his signature objective for Chase endeavored to "get into more detail," to *really*

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[28]   With "serial," I am following the distinction between *continual* (i.e., characterized by serial storytelling) and *episodic* televisual narrative. Whereas the latter may have consecutive sub-plots, they are secondary to the formulaic content reinvented for every new episode (i.e., compare *Breaking Bad* and *CSI*). For one of the earliest definitions, see, e.g., Geraghty (1981); Also see, Mittell (2011: http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/serial; Accessed: 17.12.2016); Jones (2005[2010]:682-683).

[29]   For a variety of recent theoretical perspectives on *Breaking Bad*, see, e.g., edited volumes by Koepsell and Arp (2012), Pierson (2014), Blevins and Wood (2015).

[30]   For some research on the subject, see e.g., Gray (2005), Andrejevic (2008), and Stilwell (2003).

[31]   Complemented print published in 2015.

zoom in on the "very little small things about people" viewers encounter on screen (*ibid.*:313).

Breaking Bad adds to the above with gusto, telling a realistic and exceptionally engaging tale about human pride, of how the achievement of criminal power doesn't "merely" corrupt, but also amplifies one's "inner demons," unveiling and reverting personal repressions and failures. Serial's protagonist is an initially law-abiding though submissive and humble family man Walter White, a local high school chemistry teacher who earns extra income working in a car wash. During a casual doctor's visit, however, he's given a warning of his impending death—a late stage cancer, perhaps a year left. Consequently, this kind of tragic upheaval forces him to utilize extreme measures to assure his family's monetary security. Being a brilliant chemist, he starts up a methamphetamine ("crystal meth") lab by partnering up with his former student Jesse. At first, Walter had even calculated a precise sum of money which should be sufficient. Indeed, everything might have started relatively innocently, for Walter was first captivated by the science accompanying the "production process" (he aimed to produce the scientifically purest meth possible.) He didn't really second guess the consequences, though. However, with time, Walter predictably developed an increasing taste for the power he wielded. After all, he becomes the widely known Heisenberg, revered and feared in equal measure. However, all this ensued in increasingly violent clashes with competing drug traffickers and kingpins, culminating, later on, with major bosses such as local mafia figure Gus Fring for whom Walt and Jesse ended up working. Ultimately, the aforementioned factored into a complex web of interrelations that stimulated a variety of monstrous events throughout. Indeed, *Breaking Bad* stayed true to its creator Vince Gillian's initial pitch to *AMC*: "[t]his is a story about a man who transforms himself from Mr. Chips into Scarface."[32]

In a memorable scene from one of serial's key episodes, protagonist Walter White channels Heisenberg and, being in utter disbelief of having ever run for his life, tells patronizingly to his wife, Skyler: "*I am* the one who knocks!" Now, inspired by this scene as well as taking into account previous bird's eye view summary, one could inquire: who "knocks" and, who 'does' the "knocking"? Such question can harbor two meanings. *On the surface*, it operates as a reminder of and homage to that pivotal scene, producing a line of dialogue which shortly made it to *Urban Dictionary*.[33] To wit, a literal reading (i.e., keeping in mind the ultimately grim resolution of *Breaking Bad*'s narrative) suggests Walter of having been anything but a "knocker," as explicitly spelled out by serial's penultimate episode's title, "Ozymandias."[34] This dissertation, however, doesn't venture into the "poetics" of "complex TV" for it has been done very

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[32]   https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2012/may/19/vince-gilligan-breaking-bad (Accessed: 19.09.2016)

[33]   http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=i%20am%20the%20one%20who%20knocks (Accessed: 10.07.2016)

[34]   http://www.poetryfoundation.org/resources/learning/core-poems/detail/46565 (Accessed: 9.07.2016)

effectively, distinctively and intensively elsewhere (see, Mittell 2015,2012/ 2013; Vaage 2016; cf., Kroener 2013), and even in other languages (cf., Urbano and Meimaridis 2014). Therefore, the "knocking" scene may serve—*under-neath*—as an allegory of the parasocial relation that viewers develop with characters: in both cases, the attribution of agency remains ambiguous. In accentuating intentional and *sovereign* agencies (both real and "fictional"), this dissertation proceeds to maintain that characters as "reasoning agents" undoubtedly *do* "knock." It is more difficult to define who "does" the "knocking," however. Consequently, **my argument is** that the discussive vernacular characteristic to TV discussion blogs and forums as "sites of engagement" (Norris and Jones 2005) is contingent on the (para)*social bond* viewers develop with what I am terming **narrative persons** (NPs). Moreover, such contention betokens an underpinned "secondary," indirect 'materiality' consolidating "real" social interaction and the engagement with "fictive characters"; a particular form of (interactive) engagement conceivable as an *interaction-in-development*. Ecological film theorist Joseph D. Anderson's explanation might be useful here:

> The perceptual and cognitive activity involved in film viewing is the same activity we human beings engage in when interacting with the world at large. As such, that activity must be viewed from the perspective of our ecological relationship with that world, our active search for meaningful patterns in an overdetermined environment[35], and our simultaneous perception of possibilities for action (i.e., affordances) in that world […] We must perceive meanings *in relation to someone*, to a character in the movie who inhabits the fictional world of the movie, who is subject to its constraints and affordances. (Anderson 1996:136–137; emphasis added; cf., Cutting 2005)

What I am trying to get at then, and will touch upon below, whilst going to further expand on it in the Conclusion is that viewers' making sense of NPs does not fundamentally differ in its *articulative process*. Drawing on Peter Naváez's observation, of central importance here is "the *expressive* use of communication media, mass produced goods, and mass-mediated texts in small group contexts" (Naváez 1992:20; *Cit* in: Koven 2003:187; emphasis added; cf., Naváez 1987:38). Conceivably, such phrasing carries correspondence between folklore "proper" and popular culture. Hence, I would like to supplement this contention by maintaining its persistence on (residual) "real life" legacy, with (tacit) continuance afforded by "ordinary," "commonsense"—what could be called the "materiality" of language underwriting such expressive continuum.[36] As indicated by academic literature drawing on participatory media (e.g., Plantinga 2011; Giles 2010), such set of characteristics could be ascribed to widely used explanatory-expressive terms such as "tangibility," "familiarity," "proximity," or "secret friends" (**chapter 1**, 1.1 *passim*; Fernyhough, *Cit* in: Lea

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[35] For the strict explication for the Gibsonian understanding of the "inexaustible information" thesis, cf., Mace (1986:150); cf., **chapter 1**, 1.1.

[36] See, cf., McDonald, H., "Wittgenstein, Narrative Theory, and Cultural Studies" (*Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary*, 2001(121). pp. 19,21-22,26-28,30-31.

2017). Ultimately, such rendition of "secondary" materiality can correspond to Ong's plea for "secondary orality," for the material social relationships and interaction proper, especially, become cast through the prism of the "para-social," whereby the social bond (the "relation"/"interaction"/"intersubjective") becomes moulded by and within narrative as the *tool* for "doing," underscored by "distributed creativity[37]" (Glăvenau 2014).

Now, if to claim that participants' comprehensive articulation of tangibility, as it were (developed through the core principle of **realitization**), exerts fundamental *narrativity*, then how does it occur? I would assert that the aforementioned actively material socialization inherent to language underpins a *vernacular* (of creative *third person-inclined* imagination) predisposed for potential "insider" shorthands and other features unbeknownst and negligible, lest observer's narrative-historical knowledge threshold suffices (see, xii; cf., the Reidian approach to direct realism and ordinary language philosophy; cf., McDonald 2001:29).

As digital folklorist Robert Glenn Howard further elucidates and present Introduction builds on later, "the definitive trait of [such a] vernacular is its *distinction* from the institutional … [it] emerges in specific network locations as a *communal invocation* of alternate authority" (Howard 2008b:192; emphases added).[38] Such a *becoming* discourse world, as I will reference its "macro-level" (see, xiii; the notion of **beacon**, **chapter 2**), accentuates "the vast interconnected web of everyday communication we enact together to create our *shared sense of the world*" (in, Owens 2013[39]; emphasis added). Such "vast" quality splinters into "different vernacular webs we each engage" (*ibid.*). Importantly, the *creative* capacity of such a vernacular becomes hereby—by my argument—"tooled" after and through narrative, predicated on its socio-practical function; in a particular kind of manifestations of cultural "nesting" (cf., Hasse 2015:91) or "sites of engagement," accentuating our "ordinary language descriptions of experience" (Turvey 1997[2003]:433ff.)

Consequently, my intention going forward is to lay theoretical scaffolding for the kind of *interaction-in-development* 'moulded' on the real noted above, as pertaining to the "screen characters," as evidenced by, but not limited to, *Breaking Bad*'s long-term Internet discussions (Sorokin 2013a, b, 2016a, b; 2017a, b; and see esp., **chapter 1**, 1.3; cf., 1.2.1). In addition to aforementioned, intro-

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[37] The concept recently coined in the noteworthy work of Romanian cultural psychologist Vlad Petre Glăveanu (Glăveanu 2014), who writes of a "new way of thinking that [does not] attribute creativity to person or culture, but distributes it in the relational space between them [...] creativity as an [interactive, self-producing] action in and on the world," excluding individualism, but not the individual(s) (*ibid.*:2,9).

[38] Note that Howard's usage of "authority" correlates with my empirical observations and suggested underlying terminology for interrogating the inherent dialectical tension shaping the poles of "popular" and "expert" (see, xiii; Howard 2008a:492; cf., Howard 2013; see also. "folklore as a culture of contestation," Lombardi-Satriani 1974).

[39] http://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2013/02/born-digital-folklore-and-the-vernacular-web-an-interview-with-robert-glenn-howard/ (Accessed: 9.02.2017).

ducing the concept of "vernacular creativity"[40] enables to discern a particular kind of communicative conduit for prosaic[41], communal "narrative culture." In fact, both the latter notion as well as "vernacular creativity," when taken in unison, can be seen as circumscribing a more contemporary dimension for folklorist Sylvia Grider's invigorating concept of "narraform" (Grinder 1981). As per Grider's suggestion, media "narraform" is a novel transitory "hybrid" in storytelling practice, rising at the creative intersections of experience (of mass media narrative on, say, supernatural) and traditional (oral) means of sense making, respectively. Asserts Grinder: "the media provide the content, and oral tradition provides the situations and format for the performance" (see, Grider 1981:125–126,131; for examples, cf., *ibid.*:128–129; Also, cf., Grider 1973; Koven 2003). Further maintained in qualifying the notion is that "narraforms are part of a thematic continuum with the stories that have gone before and that follow during the communal performance" (Grider 1981:130). Presumably, the aforementioned arguments can only be strengthened once the empirical focus shifts specifically to the contemporary *digital* vernacular.

Consequently, it can be maintained that typifying such developmental, "loose," or "open-ended" narratives within a digital "narrative culture" of a particular sort is a strictly bottom-up "knowledge co-elaboration," or "emerging co-creation[al] relations" of "user-creators," if to use the phrasing suggested by new media technology and market theorists John Banks and Sal Humphreys in "The Labor of User Co-Creators" (Banks and Humphreys 2008:407,409ff.).[42] Clearly, within the framework of the increasingly habitual digitally mediated communication space the previously discussed ideas are thrown into particularly sharp relief (Détienne *et al.* 2012:3512ff.; cf., Morzolph and Bendix 2014:2,4–5,8; Bacchilega 2015:27–28).

In her *Beyond the Box: television and internet*, media scholar Ross terms the kind of television viewers I am focusing on as "tele-participants," invited to "engage further … beyond the boundaries of the original story" with their

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[40] I am indebted to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Ülo Valk for drawing my attention to the potential applicability of "vernacular creativity" for the present dissertation. Henry Jenkins' notion of "convergence culture" also resonates here though with distinct reservations with regard to latter's emphasis on "collective intelligence" (see, i, but esp., xii). Nevertheless, Jenkins' convergence culture also emphasizes the "[intersection of] grassroots and corporate media ... where the power of media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways [...] convergence describe[s] ... cultural [and] social changes depending on *who's speaking and what they think they are talking about*" (Jenkins 2006:2-3; emphasis added). From the angle of refreshing literary thought, cf., "prosaics of process" (Morson 2013:50ff.; cf., Morson and Emerson 1990); Also, in tracing the historical genesis of similar ideas, see, speech "performances" or "interchanges," Voloshinov 1930[1973]:19-20).
[41] Cf., "the 'eventness' of life" (Stetsenko 2007:753); the "immediate social event of communication," Voloshinov 1930[1973]:47). Also, cf., Stetsenko (2017).
[42] Cf., "situated interpretative labor" (Fish 1989[1995]:8).

voices, too, "becom[ing] a part of the narrative mix" (Ross 2008:173–174).[43] As I am arguing, the viewers of *Breaking Bad* participate co-elaboratively in perceiving at and in conversing about NPs *as* Others[44], *by* whose lives they become (gradually) absorbed (*contra* "in") (Sorokin 2016b, 2017a, b). Drawing on Maureen Ryan—a TV critic for *Chicago Tribune* at the time—Ross observes that "online [criticism] venues" (e.g., blogs, online columns) have essentially become the focused mantle pieces conveying "expectations of an immersive television experience" (*op. cit.*:177,212). In other words, discussion *makes* the (televisual) experience—grants it a "multisocial" (cf., Hills 2016:463ff.) value dimension—or at the very least, supplements it in very significant ways.

Consequently, however, the conventionalized and quite firm-footed *mentalistic-representational* conceptions such as "simulation" (e.g., Goldman),

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[43]   It has to be noted for the sake of clarity that although Ross' notion of "beyond the boundaries"—whilst tackling the reception of *Lost*—appears to explicitly (though not univocally) focus on the extradiegetic designs (novels and video games produced) in considering the ways this kind of participatory surplus prolongs the so-called immersive effect, Ross also writes at length of the effects the original television airing begets on the audience (esp. see, *ibid.*: 204ff.). Hence, I am construing the idea of "beyond the boundaries" to also include post-watch sense-making, expressed in the format of blog/forum commentaries.

[44]   Herewith, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the root qualification underlying my usage of "Other." At this time of horrific socio-cultural reaction sweeping across the "enlightened culture" of "the first world," I feel it only proper to do so. Consequently, my usage sympathizes with the critique of reductionist "Othering," as conveyed by notion of "subaltern" and the dichotomy of "us-and-them," respectively (see, Said 1978[2003]; Gramsci 1985). Hence, my treatment of the notion inspires, although under auspieces of "fiction," to emphasize inclusion over exclusion, communal interrelation over ostracizion and marginalization, sovereignity over assimilation into a homogenous whole (for in-depth discussion on the interconnections between creativity, authority rights and the "subaltern," however, see, Hafstein 2014:11ff., esp. 23–25; Howard 2008a:493-494). Specifically, I am subscribing to the view that "simulation[ist] [accounts of human experience] involv[e] an ineliminably ego-centered element that is atypical of our experience of fiction" (Meskin and Weinberg 2003:18). Hence, my reading bears on "third-personal prediction and explanation" about the *historically* conditioned "Others" (and their minds; cf., see, Hutto 2013:598-600), i.e., here, the authorial narrative is re-conceived to 'stream' the "peoples' narratives" (Goldie 2004). Ultimately, aforementioned necessitates "alternative" theorizing in an attempt to do justice to the "prosaic everyday." My usages of "Other," then, whereever you will spot them—even though concerning narrative persons—are impelled by the tacit participatory process of **realitization** that naturalizes and hence, is set to undermine "mimesis"—an artifically induced first-person imperative and implied superiority—as a *de facto* primary (and or academically ordained) "mode" of character-reception (cf., Hafstein 2014:35-36). Likewise, what Hafstein references throughout his timely and necessary article as "creative agency," I will take up in the due time (see, xii), by attempting to correlate two significantly intertwined intersections that the utilization of realitization establishes: (i) (academic) analyst and commentators/participants (the "popular") *vis-a-vis* the question of mediation; and (ii) "critical audience" (something akin to overtly critical "fans") and "authorial" origin narrative *vis-a-vis* the dialectical tension coloring the 'pitch' of former's sense-making process. (Cf., Bacchilega 2015:41-42n13.; Cf., Hafstein 2004)

"transportation" (e.g., Gerrig), and "immersion" (Ryan)[45]—frequently utilized to outline "fictional" experiential engagements—may prove to be insufficient experience markers (cf., Conclusion). For the noted concepts—much indebted to the presumptive dichotomies of fiction/non-fiction (and author/narrator)—hazard to "etherealize language[,]conjur[ing] a picture of fictional reading practices such that when one picks up a novel, one performs a phenomenological reduction or *epoché*, in which the 'real world' is bracketed to enable one to plunge into an other, fictional world" (McDonald 2001:40–41; emphasis in original). However, approaching "fictional" experience comparably to a "controlled experiment [in] 'the laboratory' of imagination" may itself prove illusory and detached from the reality of praxis. Perhaps at issue here, then, is not at all what Sarah Worth has called the "false dichotomy" (Worth 2004:455), i.e., "the truth or falsity of fiction"; but rather, a kind of "'reality'" (McDonald 2001: 41,44), facilitating the perception of "fictional Others" who become acknowledged as *sovereign* (narrative) persons (cf., see in-depth discussion in, **chapter 1**, 1.6).

However, arguably, the focal significance of "human interest" comes structured into the narrative content. This can suggest, in effect, that the top-down polarization, based as it is on presumptive "truth" conditions, may itself be an obfuscating artifice. Put differently, directly paralleling the good and the ill of real life socalizing, relationships develop *vis-à-vis* 'fiction,' too; specifically because, "[t]o an important extent the flickering images are apprehended as *people*" (Caughey 1984:36,40; emphasis in original; cf., *ibid.*:70; cf., also see, Batty 2014). "[O]ne simply begins reading [or watching—S.S.] and the 'pretense' which one adopts of taking seriously what one reads requires no effort at all. It is precisely <u>because</u> one takes it seriously that one continues reading" (*op. cit.*:40,42; emphasis in original, underlining added).

Comparatively, yet other notions pertaining to the contemporary discourse on character engagement, such as "identification" and "empathy," can be hereby introduced from the calibrated position sympathetic to the ecological, non-mentalistic conceptualization of perception—eschewing "intermediary concepts and representations" (E.J.Gibson and Pick 2003:18)—with their validity re-integrated (see, **chapter 1,** 1.5–1.5.3). "[T]o say 'the mind has a conception (or a thought, or an *idea*) of an object (or a quality of an object)' is a mere pleonasm, a redundant expression ultimately equivalent to saying that 'the mind conceives of an object (or quality of an object)'"[46]

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[45] Each, to a different degree, indepted to the "*the I*," i.e., the first-person superiority in thinking and, crucially, articulating the thought about, "the Other," taken broadly; as opposed to building a stance on taking the latter as a perceived *sovereign* (something acknowledged by the third-person perspective). In fact, in contemporary philosophy of film, "realist" stances, even if only outwardly such, still get labeled "controversal." See, e.g., Wilson (2016:57ff.) and the "imagined seeing" thesis, following Murray Smith's arguments, corroborated by reference to Richard Wollheim (for my critique and enlarged discussion on Smith's work, see, **chapter 1**, 1.6).

[46] Parts confined between apostrophes come from Reid. T. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind*, as Quoted in: Grandi, G. B. "Introduction" (*Thomas Reid. Selected Philosophical Writings*, 2012). p. 13, emphasis added. See also, *ibid.*:8ff., esp. 14-15. Cf., Reid (1819:306–307).

Building on these previous ideas, it can be maintained that as a counterpoint to the classical computational approach on cognition (*viz.* mental representations corresponding to *ideations* of objects or states of affairs[47]), a variety of non-mentalistic approaches (e.g., enactivism, process philosophy, embodied cognition) foreground the perceptual system-environment "coupling" wherein narrative could arguably operate as an exploratory, interpretative-orientational tool, teasing out sociocultural 'fits' (see, Grishakova and Sorokin 2016:545, 547–550).

As I'll further elaborate in **chapter 1**, such implications for theorizing engagement with fiction in general and with character in particular derive from the working hypothesis that popular interpretative designs on "fictional" Others stem from the perceived autonomy (sovereignty) afforded to them. Third-person stance, henceforth established, stands in contradistinction to the proposition of reacting on *representations* "in the laboratory of imagination" (McDonald), i.e., the first-person stance. However, the former stance does not argue for the altogether elimination of representational *strategies*. At times, their use value (say, in cases of "self-implication" (Kuiken *et al.* 2004) could well be invaluable. In similar vein, the argument presented does not imply the wholesale non-existence of representational construals. First and foremost, the fundamental question of causality becomes asserted. For commonsensical (and or direct perception) stance inherently disputes skepticism about the existence of the "outside world"—it skips "intermediary concepts and representations" (E.J.Gibson and Pick). Yet, such stance does not preclude nor exactly deny the necessity of "construals" or "scenarios," taken broadly. Only the *order* (or hierarchy, if you will) of relevance becomes disputed. Following this, the presumption that explication is strictly, exclusively and always dependent on representationalist formulations can appear premature. Rather, it could be insisted that "natural" sensation preceds, whilst "constant[ly] conjunct[t]" with, conception[s] and belief[s], i.e., the acts of perception (the *direct* conceivings-of) (Grandi 2012:16).

Drawing from this, we could argue that if "human interest" presented in various narrative content is indisputable and that if humans are inherently 'keyed' to other humans[48]; it stands to reason that not *all* potential formats of popular narrative engagement optimally leverage from the internalist presuppositions on the "theory of the mind." Therefore, specifically for present purposes, on the level of Internet *discussion*—impelled by shared commonsensical strategies for context-sensitive, predictive and anticipative everyday reasoning for plausibility (cf., Smorti 2008:225ff., esp. 231–232)—the inquiry of, say, "what would I do were I Walter" could be seen to lose some of its conventionally valued theoretical heft *vis-a-vis* the backbone of the "creative vernacular," as outlined at the start of the current sub-section. Namely, in online communal space, the former statement could arguably lead to low degree of

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[47] Cf., e.g., from the perspective of discourse psychology, see, Kintsch (1998), Graesser and Olde and Klettke (2002).

[48] Although not exclusively so. As Heider and Simmel's study established, the reasoning in "human" terms can, if enabled, expand quite widely indeed (see, Heider and Simmel 1944).

interest and intensity, specifically in Internet *co-elaborative* sense-making situations (for close sample analyses, see, **chapter 3**, 3.4–3.5; for brief descriptive introductory analysis, see, however, xiii). Indeed, as Andrea Smorti observes, "[human beings,] in building world[s,] actually buil[d] a new version of worlds *previously built by others*" (*ibid.*:226; emphasis added; cf., Grider 1981).[49]

Consequently, in **chapter 2,** an *interpretation framework* of theorizing inclined to cultivate specifically *analytical-methodological* elaboration on "world-building" is proposed (see, **chapter 3**, 3.4–3.5, for its practical advancement). Given choice builds on implications noted above with regard to seeming assumption that present work might advocate for the wholesale nonexistence of representational construals. For, explicitly *on the level of analysis*, in "making sense of" sense-makers' expressive commonsensical stance on character, representational construals (e.g., "worlds") contrariwise become useful practical tools for elucidating such popular praxis. Indeed, how else would the development of *analytical* groupings off of popular articulation be even possible?

Therefore, in order to propose an "alternative" account, *viz.* viewers' "everyday commonsensical" *interaction-in-development* 'with' narrative persons—based on real time natural situatedness mediated by specific conversational Internet resources (blogs, forums)—I introduce the concept of **realitization**. The given concept is suggested to highlight the *narrative* 'tooling' of language, 'shaping' latter's creative impulses, as a popular (bottom-up) initial phase of recognition (i.e., narrative persons (NPs) *acknowledged* as commonsensically real and sovereign). Anchoring the "Carry-Over Model" (COM) framework developed in **chapter 1**, realitization is operative when participants utilize their creative vernacular and:

1. scrutinize the "intentional fields" of the NPs (*intentionale Feld*) (Wulff 2006)—*viz.* their "life histories" and relational surroundings—driven by intention of getting their stories "just right" by, therefore, invariably 'sieving' the dominant authorial storytelling (i.e., the *text makers' worlds*; see, **chapter II**, 2.3.1) for any potential transgressions,

1a. aspire to spot and "fix" ostensible inconsistencies and perceived disruptions, attempting to maximize context-sensitive "explanatory coherence" (Thagard 2000) by attending to, construing, complementing, and modifying "thick descriptions" (Geertz 1973) of NPs' larger narratives, as it were,

2. participant's own real life context and NP's may, respectively, become *entwined* in communal storytelling situation (*twistory*; see, **chapter I**, 1.2.2, esp. 1.4; cf., 66fn.) *contra* participant simply seeing oneself in former's "shoes," or being "lost" in their 'world'—approaches which effectively undermine the (perceived) sovereignty of the NPs and thus conflict with (1) to boot,

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[49] Developing her point on time-conditioned "interpretive communities," Smorti writes, "[a]mong others, using possible world theory and locating reasoning in every day contexts has ... important consequences [such as] the reasoning appear[ing] to be less linear and more [as] [a *circular* interpretive procedure] [...] [whereby] interpreting is theoretically *infinite*" (*ibid.*:230; emphases added; cf., Fish 1982).

2a. stay contingent on the discursive realm (*viz.* interconnected space across a number of blogs and forums; cf., Howard, in: Owens 2013) and it can be suggested that NPs obtain agency to "operate" alongside, and central to it (as Wulff's "Klatsch-Objekte"), without, crucially, becoming 'dissolved' *with* the "onlookers" (Zillmann), or *vice versa.*[50]

xii Distributed sense-making: Culture as a republic of editors (Hafstein)

The previously introduced ideas proceed from the overarching factor of the *experiential situatedness* inherent to "narrative cultures" such the one inspired by *Breaking Bad*. Specifically, this means that the "doing the knocking" becomes distributed (<u>non-hierarchically</u>) across the board. In common with an oral storyteller, concurrently the "giver" and "bearer" of the "voices" narrated (Sorokin 2010a), no one narrative person, commentary or script writer are here afforded the singular, monosemantic act of "doing," strictly speaking. Rather, "doing" is observable as emerging bottom-up from, across, and—crucially—*as* "sites of engagement" (Norris and Jones 2005; cf., Shotter 2001:344–345).[51]

Accordingly, the focus is on the discourse world writ large as a *becoming*. Such processual 'happening' is "collective" only insofar as it bears exterior attributes commonly ascribed to "communal spirit" (Hellekson and Busse 2006:4; cf., Hellekson 2014), such as in fanfiction, as discussed in the beginning of present Introduction. Were we to take this becoming discourse world itself as a "fantext" (*op. cit.*:3), however, it would be a qualitative mismatch. Why? Because the *becoming* presently outlined accentuates *co-elaborative activity* insofar as the shared objective (*viz.* getting NPs' life-reasonings "just right") is always already *non-reducible* to a collectively created "product." Hence, the onus of analysis—and theoretical underpinnings preceding it—should always seek out, and be scaffolded on, the flowings and burnings, rather than rivers and fires. It is by the very virtue of the permanent absence of reduction that co-elaboration markedly diverges from the "collective 'hive mind'" or "collective entity," professed as core metaphors pertaining to the creation of fanfiction (*ibid.*:2,4; see also, Duda 2014), on the one hand[52]; but also from the

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[51] Cf., "events as meaningful yet unfinalised emergences" (Grishakova and Sorokin 2016:552). "[A]ctive inference is more action than inference; it is a *doing*, an enactive adjustment, a wordly engagement [, physical, <u>but also social and cultural</u>]" (Gallagher and Allen 2016:8; emphasis in original, underlining added).

[52] Cf., e.g., Jenkins (2006:134ff.); Also, cf., "swarm intelligence," in computational intelligence and data mining research (e.g., Abraham *et al.* 2006; Kaiser *et al.* 2010); and, e.g., Lévy (2013) on "collective intelligence."

likes of "distributed authorship," as some areas in leading folklore scholarship have suggested, on the other (see, Foley 2012:74ff.[53]).

Hence, the dialogue with the aforementioned authors lends itself to further refinements in order to position the notion of co-elaboration more rewardingly within the key literature on participatory media. For this, a concise genealogy of thinking which would intertwine seemingly dissimilar disciplines has to be crafted. Fandom scholar Matt Hills, in his *Fan Cultures* (Hills 2002), juxtaposed "creative space of fans" with their belonging to "interpretive communities," thus challenging the want for stress with regard to "*emergence* of fan cultures" (*ibid.*:xiii-xiv; emphasis in original), for the latter were ordinarily type-set by predestined (academic, "highbrow") "norms." Specifically, Hills decried—not unimportantly—the "sever[e] curtail[ment]" of the *subject* (*ibid.*:xiii). A few years later, however, media theorist Cornel Sandvoss, for his part, rekindles "the death of the author" with "the Death of the Reader [*sic*]," maintaining that "if we cannot locate aesthetic value in the author, text, or reader alone …[it is in] *interaction between these* that aesthetic value manifest[s]" (Sandvoss 2007:45; emphasis added). Although Sandvoss draws specifically on the Iserian conception of reading (*viz.* active "dialogue" of the text-reader dyad), his words—even if inadvertently—unlock potential resonances with *co-elaborative activity*, as circumscribed thus far. Both Hills' and Sandvoss' work—if examined in unison—*hint* at bringing the explanation for the notion of co-elaboration to a full circle, yet succumb into sectarianism, if separated.

It would be advisable here, then, would be to recall how Hellekson and Busse (2006) termed fanfiction, but revert it—that is, to argue that it is the "authorial" narrative such as *Breaking Bad* that becomes an "open-sourced text," this 'mantle piece' instigating the emergence of a distinctive "narrative culture." In other words, the weekly and yearly narrative experience becomes *folklorized*, communalized.[54] It begins to aspire common sense[55] reasoning and construals, resulting in *common* sense, *viz.* popular insight, "vernacular creativity"—a precise variety of emergent "peer production" in a "creative knowledge economy" (Banks and Humphreys 2008:405–406,416; cf., Benkler 2006:32; Lanham 2006) and being expressed in as well as developing the public sphere *per se*. That is, the activity of these narrative reasoners crafts a discussive site of engagement wherein consistent dialectical *tension* voids "dominant" takes. "Master narratives" and "authorial creators," lest we forget, are such only through mainstream (dominant) accredication. Shift to "open-source," however,

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[53] Cf., Foley (2010): https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/229725

[54] Perhaps so echoing—in its own way—the idea of "third wave" fandom theorizing which emphasizes "[participatory] activities … *as fundamental aspect of everyday life*" (Thomas 2011b:2; emphasis added; see also, Thomas 2011a; cf., Baym 1993, 2000, 2010).

[55] As previously implied and for future reference, it may be advisable to take "common sense" in Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid's (Reid 1819) usage of *sensus communis*, i.e., our belief that there's an external world. Logically following that the stance toward another—latter's specific reality/fiction binary 'packaging' notwithstanding—is necessarily third-personal (cf., discussion in, xi).

at the very least *aims* to undermine this tacit assumption. Internet discussion space allows the "dominant" narratives and storytellers to be greatly scrutinized up to and including the point where original "authority" is overthrown, sublimated for *popular* control constantly negotiating the mainstream "narratives." Therefore, it is in these spaces where "antiauthorial" (Hafstein 2014:18,22) storytelling and narratives (conventionally put) thrive. Here, "authors" become/are made equals for their creative intentions are thrown into doubt (co-elaboratively "re-reasoned"; see, **chapter 2**, my concept of **text makers' world**). As a "site of engagement," this kind of space accommodates peoples' voice, makes it acute and amplified.[56]

Crucially, here I do not mean to suggest as if internet interaction environments are something like the much-referenced "echo chambers" (e.g., Wallsten 2005, if to borrow a phrase from political blogs research), but, at least in the present case, the exact opposite of such connotations—that "sites of engagements" emerging on Internet can serve as proverbial halls of potential insight, accommodating the critical voices of the people, of becoming instances *par excellence* to Steven Johnson's well-known thesis of how "popular culture make[s] us smarter" (Johnson 2005; see also, Herman 2003b, 2003d; Cf., Thompson 2013).

Through such co-elaborative activity, then, "the canon," such as *Breaking Bad*'s "official" narrative, (be)comes to belong, piecemeal, "to the history of a community" (Smorti 2008:231).[57] Moreover, once the "authorial" narrative material becomes "open-sourced" for *common reasoning*, latter 'levels' the proverbial playing field. Every actor within the 'interaction circle,' either mediated-direct (commenter-commenter), or "parasocial" (commenters *vis-à-vis* NPs/script writers) becomes construed with a quality of *correspondence*, of impartiality, in the precise sense of any and all "actors" always evoking cautious, intentive reasoning processes.

All the sense-makings—or perhaps more accurately indeed, *sense reasonings*—are obviously idiosyncratic (close readings in **chapter 3** attest to that), but, were one to *navigate*[58] their interrelations, the inherent *co-elaboration* each evokes; were one to observe the particular interstices where multiplicity of intersecting voices become "caught" in time (as the archivist underpinnings of blogs and forums enable; cf., Hayles 2007)—one would find a story of be-

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[56] Cf., the case of commentaries in *Uproxx/Hitfix' "What Is Alan Watching?"* blog on *Masters of Sex* where the author of the biography the serial is based on joined the discussion early on in order to gauge, and converse about, the reactions the televisual adaptation of his work had spawned.

[57] Hence throwing some doubt whether explicit differentiation between "canons" and "fanons" (Thomas 2007) is altogether necessary. Also, cf., Banks and Humphreys (2008:412ff.), on the consistently negotiated nature of knowledge production along the "expert"/„non-expert" axis, especially while keeping in mind how, in the present case, commentary sections largely maintain the ad-revenue for the entertainment web pages that mediate the "professional criticism" reviews in the first place.

[58] See more on this, in xiii, where I will provide an analysis extract in order to illustrate my original conceptualization of **beacon**.

coming—a 'living description,' an "antiauthorial" (Hafstein 2014) "work in progress" (Hellekson and Busse 2006).

Herewith, Valdimar Tr. Hafstein's arguments adjust and develop aforementioned tensions especially acutely and deserve to be quoted at length:

> [F]olklore[59] is peer to peer, it is collaborative, and it is collective. But the choice between these two options is not satisfactory; we should not accept it uncritically. [...] [C]reative processes that are collaborative, incremental, and distributed in space and time [are] in fact all around us. They are the norm, not the exception. [...] The language of folklore often captures creative processes and products more accurately than the language of authorship. Neither is accurate, however. Each is based on the exclusion of the other. To construct a new language, we need first to understand the discursive grid we are revising so we do not wind up reproducing the same old discursive antagonisms with merely a new vocabulary. We need an alternative grammar of creativity and a renewed understanding of how cultural expressions circulate. (Hafstein 2014:36)

Clearly, herein the scholar's role, or rather, the extent of her/his influence, gains crucial significance. The stance of present dissertation holds that scholar's position is not to "talk over" the voices present in the material, but to talk *with* them. Therefore, scholar acquires *editorial agency* by complementing and explicating the background where necessary (for the reader), but never interpolating or equivocating, thus falling prey to the fallacy of reductionism. Theirs is the agency of an intermediary, proposing narrative "thick descriptions" *contra* "reads," "registers," and or pre-set categorizations. It is in this particular point, indeed, where co-elaborative activity becomes established across the board—as the *correspondence* of voices that resounds over (and, perhaps, transforms) notions of "authorial," "master narrative," or "storyteller," even. As Marzolph and Bendix keenly observe, "scholarship in the end is a manifestation of narrative culture as well" (Marzolph and Bendix 2014:6; also see, Mello 2002, in xiii).

Consequently, it can be argued that in co-elaboration the relational process of "collectivization" eschews collectivity and individualism, locus and subject, whilst preserving (communal) co-elaboration and individual's creative production (what I am terming **narrcepts**, expressed by singular commentary texts). The *becoming* of such multi-agent eventness highlights processes of internal distribution, complementation, interrelation, and challenging of and within the creativities of individuals, whilst shifting the emphasis from the "competitive" aspects inspiring the detection of 'domineering narratives.' Accordingly, where a particular "work in progress" fanfiction—or, for that matter, a fan page modeled on the wiki framework (*Lostpedia*, *Heroespedia*) (Booth 2010)—is

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[59] Although explicated in (i), the potential question of how the present dissertation deals with "folklore" is worth re-iterating. Perhaps, again, Robert Glenn Howard (in: Owens 2013) gives the most illuminating, and apt, response: "As far as the Internet goes—its [*sic*] not really an option; if you want to study the folklore we have right now, you have to study it where it is practiced—and, for better or worse, network communication is [the] major place to find people sharing folklore now."

necessarily locus-fixed (cf., see, i), narrative co-elaboration in commentary sections, by contrast, acknowledges *locus/subject-transcendency*, orienting 'story matter' beyond "the box of the creative individual" (Glăveanu 2014). On the top of all the above, the analyst traces the evolving patterns of meaning 'criss-crossing' multifarious concurrent discussive environments, "pool[s] [the] assumptions" (Grishakova and Sorokin 2016:556); and, through such kind of "decomposing" and "composing" methodology, elucidates the becoming of the discourse world or, the "relational space" (*op. cit.*:2; cf., **chapter 2**, the original concept of **beacon**). As noted, however, the analyzing scholar embraces thereby a narrativistic agency which is not of an interventionalist (and "Othering," "high/low") kind, but one with marked editorial quality.

In short, when recalling the analogy of 'knocking and knockers' from subsection xi, "doing the knocking" denotes the kind that enmeshes (develops a *correspondence* of/with) a variety of intentionally acting persons (real or "fictional"). Thereafter, these kinds of correspondences become *analytically* "decomposed" and "composed"—as "worlds" of distinct kind (denoting the 'navigational' properties of the original notion of **beacon**, as exemplified below; for more, see, **chapter 2**). Consequently, I am going to follow the contention that—broadly speaking—the scholarly interest towards folk-psychological "realist" stance with regard to "fictional beings" has remained severely understated, at best, and *theoretically* understudied, at worst. I will take as my point of origin the variegated nature of New Media[60] narrative experience with the intention to articulate a potential vocabulary ("alternative grammar") and a method (applied through the concept of **beacon**) for comprehending such a context-sensitive everyday commonsensical storytelling discourse—a *narratione tempore* of intending "actors," if you will.

xiii Overview of subsequent chapters and their contents (with introductory, <u>descriptive</u> analyses)

The empirical data that I am building on consists of commentary texts collected from the entertainment web pages, television criticism blogs (*Hitfix*[61], *The A. V. Club*, *Hollywood Reporter*), and *Breaking Bad*-centered weekly, user-run forum threads (in the *Reddit* environment), respectively. First, topical tendencies channeled by specific topics-channeling **narrative motifs** were discerned. The notion of motif designates hereby specific diegetic constituents that, although picked up from the narrative, gain significant amplification ('afterlife') in

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[60]   See criticism on this notion in, Lunenfeld (1999[2001]:xvi), however.

[61]   It has recently come to my attention that the *Hitfix* brand and, specifically, television critic's Alan Sepinwall's blog *What's Alan Watching?* have been integrated to a larger entertainment web page uproxx.com, with old archives intact, however. See: http://uproxx.com/sepinwall/whats-alan-watching-uproxx/ (Accessed: 22.11.2016).

commentary discussion.[62] These motifs enabled to define a further, illustrative sample spanning two consecutive weeks of key episodes of *Breaking Bad* (in turn building on prior four years of "histories," intertwining narrative persons and events.) In-depth close sample analysis was preceded by the preliminary pilot study of complete data.[63] Both forms of examination were aided by IBM's natural language processing and data mining software *Text Analysis for Surveys*[64], whilst remaining cognizant of its underlying dangers, ethical and otherwise (see, e.g., Bolukbasi *et al.* 2016; O'Neil 2016; Gitelman (Ed.) 2013). In a largely automated fashion, the software enabled detailed categorization of data. While minimal manual tailoring is briefly explained in **chapter 3**, the dissertation's objective in applying technical utilities was to decrease analyst's work load *vis-à-vis* data quantity confronted, whilst eschewing any claims on quantitative generalizations (for these, though pertaining to the medium of literature, see discussion in Conclusion).

Nonetheless, I do prospect this merger of the channel of mass communication (television) and digital communication technologies (blogs, forums)—streamlined by the software choice—to produce practical value for cutting-edge research in digital humanities and narrative, however (e.g., see fascinating work on *Game of Thrones*, in, Gjelsvik and Schubart 2016). Previous statement notwithstanding, present dissertation rests its case as a *qualitative*, *theoretical study*, although strategically corresponding to and drawing from the simultaneous data investigation. Hence, perhaps the most elementary endeavor this dissertation gesticulates at is the elaboration on a variation of cultural approach, as recently set under the aegis of "media-conscious," "media-centered" narratology (Ryan 2014:30; Grishakova and Ryan 2010a:3). Put differently, although I do consider the Analysis (see, **chapter 3**, 3.4–3.5)[65] significant on its own right, former may seemingly decrease *in proportion* if compared to preceding theoretical discussion. While conceivably such choice could be risky, I would contend that the developed theory, informed by and emerged *out of*—not enforcing itself on—practical observations (cf., xii), overturns it to a calculated risk, hold-

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[62]   I am lifting the definition of *motif* from the Russian formalist literary scholar Boris Tomashevski, who defined it as "[an] elementary, atom-like unit of meaning" (in: "Thematics," Lemon and Reis 1965:62). Crucial here is to differentiate that these narrative motifs should not be conceived of as appropriated narrative information (in Jenkinsian sense), but as *acknowledgements*, conveying, in one way or another, the intendings-of of narrative persons (*viz.* their **intend-worlds** (see, **chapter 2**). Put differently, these narrative motifs become intricately *tied* to the NPs. Latter are made sense of insofar as these motifs are being perceived as significant to *them.*

[63]   Amassing in its entirety 1009 commentary texts across three episodes over two years, complemented with commentaries accompanying the 4th season's "post-mortem" interview with *Breaking Bad*'s creator, Vince Gilligan.

[64]   See: http://www-03.ibm.com/software/products/en/spss-text-analytics-surveys (Version 4.0.1 [4.0.1.97] (c) 2010)

[65]   In addition, see Appendixes I–II covering analyzed texts and illustrations exemplifying software use, respectively. For a summarizing Schema, visualizing the established terminological framework, see Conclusion.

ing that there can be no theoretical knowledge standing apart from parallel empirical scrutiny.

An introductory overview of the chapters is as follows. In **chapter 1** I establish and advance my conception of **narrative persons** (NPs). Building on preliminary observations based on empirical data, NPs are posited to emerge through the individual yet *co-elaborative* sense-making efforts of people providing weekly "running commentary" on *Breaking Bad*, ordinarily with carefully crafted nuance. Specifically, in developing theoretical foundation for the NPs, **chapter 1** suggests the "complex" co-elaborative sense-making activity as concordant with that of the "complex TV." In an attempt to do justice to "popular" sentiments enveloped in the collected data, I have found it most reliable to dwell and rely on a multidisciplinary *heteroglossia* (Bakhtin 1981). As follows, the primary objective of **chapter 1** is to develop an abstract framework of "alternative grammar," entitled the "Carry-Over Model" (COM) which introduces original notions of **realitization**, **narrcept** (narrative+percept), and **twistory**[66], so laying necessary groundwork for further elaborations of analytical categories in chapter 2.

Chapter 2 develops an analytical-methodological <u>interpretation framework</u>, put to practice in the sample close analysis in **Chapter 3** (3.4–3.5). Herewith, critical elaborations of the well-known concepts ("possible worlds," "storyworld," "discourse world") are integrated with my original notions of narrcept, realitization and twistory as introduced in chapter 1. This interrelation of terms becomes necessary in emphasizing more distinctly the key undercurrents my dissertation addresses: the *constructional-developmental* (the 'realm' of the participants making sense) and the *navigational* (the analytical 'realm,' endeavoring to circumscribe the "machinery" behind the latter). Accordingly, **chapter 2** introduces the original and adapted notions such as **beacon**, on the one hand; and **intend-world** and **text makers' world** (subsumed by the "storyworld," adapted based on David Herman's reading of the concept), on the other. Being an applied method, beacon can be conceived of as (metaphorically) **gliding** in between the "worlds," "shining its light" by enabling (a) 'decomposition' of the noted world-variants from individual storytelling (narrcept as singular storyworld-in-making); to (b) 'composing' them into a potential discourse world (a communal 'sum' of constantly intersecting storyworlds-in-making) (see below for more; cf., **chapter II**, 2.0 (Extended Hypothesis).

However, for the sake of clarity, the present Introduction has to first interrogate as to what specifically **narrcept** is, on the one hand; and *how* **beacon** as an analytical 'tool,' on the other. To the former end, I am presenting an essentially descriptive-only (i.e., devoid as of yet of any analytical terminology) analysis based on two sample texts (as narrcepts). To the latter, an extraction from the full-blown analysis (see, **chapter 3**, 3.4–3.5) is presented primarily in order to illustrate the generic outline that my conceptualization of **beacon** *as an*

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[66] *Viz.*, entwined "stories" of the participant and the NP, i.e., *twi+story*, where "twist" (the state of being entwined) signifies the narratively scaffolded "interaction-in-development," moulded on the perceived real.

applied analytical method is supposed to entail (note the clearly determined "worlds" being 'decomposed' and then 'composed' on the spot through beacon's **gliding** activity).

> Whole episode seemed convoluted. Poisoning the kid just doesn't make sense as a smart play for Gus. Walt has no motive to go after that kid; why would Gus automatically assume Jesse would blame Walt? Plus, Jesse is the linchpin of his operation; you don't take a 50/50 chance of permanently alienating the only guy who can keep your business running. Walt is a pain for Gus, but he is a pain that can gradually be dealt with while Jesse keeps delivering the batches. Poisoning the kid just to force the action makes a lot more sense for Gilligan and co. to force drama than it does for Gus. Really felt that was a cheap narrative device (think of the children!) Gus has consolidated power and is in good shape with the cartel taken down a few pegs. Why is he going all in on a risky play poisoning a kid? (JH, Uproxx/Hitfix, 02.10.11)

As JH explains, *for* Gus, poisoning the kid is far from a "smart play." After all, so far JH had observed Gus as an exceptionally refined and cautious individual. As is well-known, not long ago, Gus had jeopardized practically everything in his rather sheltered life as a mob-boss-in-the-shadows fast-food restaurant owner and went ahead, murdering the entire Mexican mafia cartel, all in order to escape their clutches and become a "free agent," as it were. In fact, as Jesse accompanied him throughout the whole venture, he now has first-hand knowledge of the effects of ricin-poisoning. Hence, JH queries what would impel Gus as though advisedly to endanger the delicate balance he has achieved so far due to positive outcomes of his power-plays. After all, the plan anticipating Jesse starting immediately to blame Walt depended—as many other commenters also note—on a multitude of variables, all of which had to "align" just right. Thus JH asks: why Gus should not sate himself with his "consolidated power" and keep up his successful double-life as a stainless operator of a fast-food joint, on the one hand, and as a ruthless mafia boss, on the other hand? Following from this, JH concedes, one should not lightly infer as though Gus would have to "automatically assume" that Jesse indeed does not have any other choice than to immediately blame Walt. After all, Gus is first and foremost a cold and perpetually calculating pragmatist. Why, is JH adamant, would such a guy "take a 50/50 chance of alienating the only guy" who—now that relations with Walt remain quite explosive—is of utmost relevance to one's business? In other words, what would Gus have to even gain from an intricate plan which would result in (of course, only if all the pieces align accordingly) Jesse having been sent to permanently silence Walt?

Now, skip forward a week when *Breaking Bad*'s 4th season finale reveals that it was actually Walt who—one way or another—was the architect of the (luckily designed as non-fatal) poisoning, on the top of outwitting and disposing of Gus as originally intended. Commenter JP writes:

Walt couldn't simply kill Gus. He needed Jesse on his side. Once he killed Gus, Jesse would know he was behind it, and Walt had to assume he'd retaliate. Before Walt could even attempt to go after Gus, he needed Jesse's loyalty. And while you may find it implausible, I can't think of any other way for Walt to get Jesse to come to his side. He had seen Brock, Saul definitely knew about the kid (remember, he gave them money on Jesse's behalf, and could've told Walt everything about him and his relationship with Jesse), and he [Walt] likely remembered that the last time Jesse wanted Gus dead it was because of a death of a child. Walt had to take the chance that Jesse wouldn't kill him (and let's face it, Walt knows Jesse well enough to know he's not a killer and is still deeply loyal). It makes perfect sense to me. (JP, *ibid.*, 09.10.11)

JP infers, then, that what essentially undergirds the variety of transpired events is Walt's belief ("implausible" for quite a few other commenters) that—by any means necessary—he has to first secure Jesse's unreserved loyalty before he'd even consider an "attempt to go after Gus." But how to fully guarantee it? Here, the intentionally non-fatal attempt on Brock's life becomes the key instigator (one has to recall here, as JP does, that as a precursor to all these events, Walt was observed sitting in his back-yard, symbolically spinning his revolver on a garden table; revolver which ultimately points away from him to a poisonous plant, Lily of the Valley—coincidentally captured into last frame of "Face Off," wholly solidifying Walt's guilt, however indirect). After all, as JP attentively notes, Walt does know about Jesse living with the kid (if he didn't know before, he's most assuredly complicit once he had visited Jesse's house—in fact, right before he was kidnapped, taken to desert and almost killed by Gus' goons; a chain of events that only added insult to injury given how his ultimate plan unraveled). What's more, Saul's—Walt's "sleazy" criminally criminal lawyer—knowledge of the kid is definite as he was consistently visiting Adriana and Brock, delivering them money on Jesse's behalf, and hence, could've filled Walt in where necessary. Furthermore, JP maintains that Walt "likely remembered" how deeply affected Jesse was the last time he'd found out that Gus might have murdered an innocent child (Adriana's kid brother, in fact) and how that presumption can easily enough recur to fuel his decision to be "on board" with disposing of Gus. Meanwhile, JP acknowledges that in taking all of these "chances," Walt's biggest gamble is ascertaining that "Jesse wouldn't kill him," though—on the face of it—he should not be overly worried, knowing "well enough" that Jesse is not a "killer." It is argued throughout, then, that the original notion of **narrcept** (narrative+percept) underscores and integrates the inherent "narrativism" characteristic of participants' "direct," parasocial perception of NPs, and becomes expressed in the format of a commentary text. Participants *cannot but to* intend for (something/-one) and it can be maintained that—considering participants' palpable inclination towards the lives of narrative "Others" as "reasoning agents"—narrative proclivity is wielded as by the default *tool* for thinking. In this deep-seated dialogical interrelationship, participants context-sensitively narrativize, i.e., relay Geertzian "thick explanations" for NPs' assumed/concealed/contested intentions (hence "producing" fluid **in-**

tend-worlds; see, **chapter 2**). Moreover, as implicated previously, participants frequently entrust their own accumulated "history" of/with given narrative persons' over "authorial" choices and outcomes which are considered seemingly imprecise and unsound in making (or reasoning) sense of key narrative events NPs were central in or which they might have directly facilitated. Consequently, in a distinct way, serial's "authors" themselves, too, become 'intelligent agents' with 'authorial intentions'—hence contributing to the building 'matter' for the narrcepts (**text makers' world**, see, **chapter 2**).

The necessity for the analytical "world" decomposition/composition' on the one hand, and the **gliding** tendency of the **beacon** responsible for it, on the other, becomes most pronounced the more "messy" the data gets. Following extract from the analysis (see, **chapter III**, 3.4, for the complete analysis) suffices (the meaning of abbreviations given in brackets).

> Meanwhile, Freddo's response to Spent—wherein explicit addressing instigates what I would term 'narrceptive dialogue'—worked up more specifically from his preceding short narrcept —(1) returns to Brian's narrcept , building on latter's focus on Huell (or, rather, on Walt through Huell), but, pace Brian, Freddo strongly enforces Huell's IW; and (2), elaborates in a more minute detail what his 'dialogue interlocutor' left unsaid—namely, the exact placement and name of the plant supposedly applied by Walt in producing a poison capable to induce ricin-like symptoms. Now, for (1), Freddo glides into TMWa [**text makers' world**] (subscript "a" denoting 'extra-narrative' reflexion wherein experience's "artificiality" is acknowledged insofar as the latter being re-producible via technical aids.) Subsequently drawing on the possibility of re-"watch," then, Freddo implores (and indeed, many a participant do) to closely observe the "frisking [scene]," for—in organizing his SW [**storyworld**] now through TMWa gliding into Huell's IW [**intend-world**]—"the big dude definitely" pockets something. The (2) observation, however, Freddo considers the "most important[t]," and indeed it can be, were we to, for a moment, think in terms of the overarching, becoming DW [**discourse world**]. Where Spent narrceptivized of non-descript plants, Freddo, contrariwise, doesn't withhold. He directly connects Walt "spin[ing] the gun" with the latter on its "third try" pointing to somewhere very specific. Namely, "to a flowering potted plant." And either through his own above average knowledge of botany (cf., twistory), or due to this precise information having been mentioned previously by others, Freddo doesn't shy away from being as exact as possible—"[i]t is Lilly of the Valley, a poisonous plant! Case closed!"
>
> Indeed, such unperturbed conclusion at the time might have satisfied Freddo—and confirmed his suspicions the week later, to boot—but for his co-participants, gaps and contradictions in actions and events weren't depleted and were, indeed, revisited post-"Face-Off." Hence, Eric from Hitfix, whilst fully acknowledging Huell's involvement, remains wary in other areas. Although embracing the "swa[p] out" of Jesse's cigarette back as "the easy part," and thus tying his observation of Huell having frisked "so roughly and ostentatiously" with Freddo's clarification of Huell having "put something in his pocket with his left hand," both participants ultimately corroborate on the 'out-branched' sub of the 1st gist—i.e., cigarette as "ruse"—on the one hand; whereas, on the other, for

Eric—even after "official" reveal—the "poisoning" itself persists as "bigger question mark." Now, even after the plant widely speculated about being explicitly disclosed as poison's source, participants nevertheless reverted to this key "scene" of "swapping," for they couldn't comprehend how someone like Huell (ordinarily observable as a slow, sleepy, big-boned guy) could've managed it; or, for that matter, how could've Walt had done it—for, as we recall—already phailcakez emphasized the house arrest imposed on him. Hence, in both of his narrcepts (9/10, 10/10), straight after "Face-Off" had aired, Eric soothes (or, rather, aims to convince?) any "doubters" by arguing—at length in his second narrcept the next day—, having now "re-watch[ed] the scene," for Huell's "clear" complicity. What is of special interest here is how Eric organizes his SW by gliding in between TMWa (and perhaps even TMW proper) and Huell's IW. On the one hand, it is Huell who "appears to reach," with his "left hand" whilst "right hand was clearly empty"; Huell who "palm[ed] something" and thereafter "clearly pu[t] that same left hand in his pocket." On the other, however, it is "the actor [who was] instructed" (glide into TMW proper as consisting of "makers" enforcing their "intentions") to "leave options open, at the very least,"; actor who "makes a semi-lunge." Similarly, there are also notations on editing and filming, observed to evince deliberate 'rhythms of deception,' as it were, not in the sense of narrative's "artifice," to be sure, but rather in putting implicit accents on the intentional trickery of the "textmakers." Nevertheless, ultimately the conclusion recalls Eric's prior (then still hypothetical) "[C]ase closed!" We are back to Huell's IW, him having "picked Jesse's pocket" and in the process, "swapped out the pack." Indeed, it organizes as a rather coherent SW and across these two successive narrcepts, it might have cohered for Eric.

Now, the analysis extract above should signal that **chapters 1** and **2—**taken as a uniform item—lay important *theoretical* groundwork to the more in-depth analysis by insisting upon suggesting potential alternatives for the mentalistic-representationalist tropes persistent in character engagement and narrative reception research, taken broadly (e.g., Gerrig 1993; Walton 1990; Auerbach 1954[2003]). According to my arguments, the notion of **narrcept—**as previously illustrated by JH, JP, and others—conveys a *historically* poignant expression of *processual* perception of the NP as a potential "real Other." Such proclivity can be considered—crucially—as being scaffolded on narrative's *practical function* (in tandem with the "running" experience I am terming **realitization**, see **chapter 1**). In a singular commentary text taken as a *formation* of narrceptive thinking—that is, as a narrcept—the perception of the NPs becomes expressed in "approximation to" the commenter(s). Such local structuring of narrcept operates through the seamless navigation (*viz.* **gliding**) between and into entwined "worlds," but remains an *unacknowledged* although commonsensical practice among the participants. In fact, such "worldying" (Herman) facilitates to make sense of how communal storytellers make senses made of these NPs (see, **chapter 2** for my critical read and elaboration, on the Possible Worlds Theory). That is, it enables the analyst to observe more than meets the eye, as it were. Consequently, although ordinarily utilized for framing everyday experientiality, my approach expounds on the social being/mind ap-

proach and suggests modifying it to necessarily include our "fictive" experience.

Put differently, the 'red line' threading throughout this dissertation is the objective to reveal and highlight character engagement where sense-maker's (or, sense-reasoner's) real life experiences and the "intentional fields" (i.e., "thick" life narratives) inhabited by NPs may ultimately converge (producing cases of **twistory**, see **chapter 1** for more). (Here, the latter notion can be expanded—in future investigations—beyond a "fictive" individual to also include 'virtual' expressions of contestable "slices" of/in "social realities."[67])

Cashing in on previously outlined ideas elaborated further in subsequent chapters, it can hence be maintained that present dissertation aims to accentuate and elucidate a contextualist *process* of narrativizing. To that end, expounding on a single commentary text *as* narrcept and one's sense-making as a *narrceptive* proclivity appears inadequate, however. But the question of the *organizing* processes in the background of narrceptive thinking writ large, even if taking place "behind the scenes," might perhaps still remain somewhat ambiguous. Hence, it would be important to summarize at this point.

As **chapter 2** goes to hypothesize, the idea of gliding—as illustrated above—connotes the "processual force" inherent in the reciprocal dimension of the **beacon**, i. e., a metaphorically mobile signal fire. With regard to distinguishable "worlds" *latent* (although explicitly unacknowledged) in narrceptive thinking—the "worldying" of *storyworld* and further constituents thereof—beacon *decomposes* (differentiates into fluid "pockets," or "drafts"[68] of experiential communal sense-making) and *composes* (into *storyworld*, manifested "in process" as an individual narrceptivized commentary text). This is how the concept of beacon is designed to handle the "micro" tendencies of popular storytelling. Consequently, the recent and earlier elaborations in sense-making research such as "narractivity" (Booth 2010), "narbs" (Mitra 2010), "liminal plotting" (Dannenberg 2004, 2008), and others correspond to the *operative variances* inherent *in* beacon's reciprocal dimension.

However, beacon as presently envisioned insists on being a dialectical mechanism with multiple stress points. For it enables to highlight a 'pulsating' tension in engaging with processes of and within "popular" (i.e., reciprocal layer) and "academic" interpretations. Accordingly, beacon's gliding concurrently connotes "navigational force" by way of beacon's analytical-methodological dimension. For the latter expounds on the "macro" tendency of the storytelling process. As outlined previously (see, xii), scholar's analytical methodology also preserves a contextualizing and interpretative impulse because the discourse world is *becoming* from the moment beacon is considered

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[67] Such as social pain spots like misogyny and sexism, e.g., Gunn (2013), where online environment becomes a "'leakage spac[e]' [for] perpetuating [oppressive] societal stereotypes" (Grishakova and Sorokin 2016:555). See also, Vaage (2016:150ff.). For more on this, see Conclusion.

[68] Indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Marina Grishakova, for the treatment of this notion (see, Grishakova and Sorokin 2016:552).

practically—as the dialectical "structurer" of (for) the macro-level.[69] Thus, the objective of beacon's analytical-methodological dimension, as maintained in **chapter 2**, is to distinguish these latent "pockets" as "worlds" (NPs' and NP's-participants' **intend-worlds** and **twistories**, respectively; the **text makers' world**—all subsumed into general *storyworld* expressed as a singular **narrcept**), on the one hand; and to propose a potential construal of a discourse world—as a *becoming* of storyworlds at large through the analyst's narrativist *editorial agency*, on the other. As such, beacon both originates from and outlines the consistent multi-world dynamics. "[I]f there are many worlds, the collection of them all is one" (Goodman). Accordingly, this reveals analyst's capacity for being one of a "bridge-builder" (Mello 2002:241). As qualitative analyst Robin A. Mello explains, "since narrative is a way of knowing, a tool for exploration, and a key component in the construction of knowledge, it is seminal to the work of the researcher" (*ibid.*:240). However, she goes to advise, its utilization "must carefully place the narratives and perspectives of others alongside our [the scholars—S.S.] own" (*ibid.*:241; cf., Scott 1991). Consequently, in disappearing down the proverbial rabbit hole I *intend to* narrate, in an intermediary fashion, peoples' narrations about narrative (persons), employing thereby **beacon** not only as a conceptualizing tool, but also—crucially—**as an applied method**.

Last, but not least, the overarching processual nature of the project as outlined in the present Introduction also seeps into latter's very core. The preliminary, introductory entries on commentary analysis, for instance, as provided above, do not reflect the later analysis proper. Similarly, while analysis examples proposed in 1.5.4 do highlight some preceeding theoretical vocabulary and insight, analysis remains nevertheless incomplete. Reason for both cases is straight-forward for they suggest analyses of narrcepts that anticipate *as well as* instigate what social constructivist John Shotter terms "*relationally-responsive*," "inter-involve[d]" dialogical understanding (as opposed to "representational-referential"), marking *analyst*'s "attempt to work out [theory] *from within* [participants'] ordinary, everyday, spontaneous talk entwined activities, [trying] to be *responsive* to whatever they are responsive to" (Shotter 2001:345–346; emphases in original; see also: Shotter 2000, 2003, esp. 362–365, 2010[70]; Lock and Strong 2010:324–342). Hence, it is only the analysis proper—as presented in **chapter 3**, 3.4–3.5—that can readily draw on the compact theory, weighed throughout chapters 1 and 2 and established hand-in-hand with implicit, broad empirical investigations.

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[69] *Viz.* Greek *dialektike*: "process of resolving or merging contradictions in character," http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=dialectic (Accessed: 15.10.2016).

[70] See, In: Hernes and Maitlis (eds) (2010). *Process, Sensemaking and Organizing.*

CHAPTER I

Narrative Intentionality, or:
Character *is* "the one who knocks"

1.0 Overview of Chapter's structure and objectives

The present chapter is structured by broaching the general points of issue put forth above in several interrelated sub-chapters. Introductory sub-section (1.1) is followed by **1.2**, where I will lay the principal "traveling theories"-style groundwork for a potential conceptual model. This model, the CO-Model (COM) of character engagement, is intended to further orient present chapter. It moves to introduce the original notions such as *realitizing*, *twistory,* the *with/in scale* and *narrcept*. The preliminary sketch of the model shall be then refined throughout. In **1.3** ("*Viewers as Keyboard Psychologists*"), I will provide initial explication of what could be called the perception-psychological understanding of narrative persons. Thus, in tying the latter with my conception of *twistory,* I will deal in detail with and elaborate accordingly notions such as "interaction" and "relationship." The concept of twistory is further concretized in **1.4** ("*Elaboration of twistory*"). Subsequently, **1.5** ("*The Girl on the Beach*") elaborates on the narrative person's "actional system" (Wulff) and in doing so, proposes a distinctive, re-tooled account for the notion of empathy, as it is ordinarily understood in relevant literature. Herewith, diverse theoretical insight is consulted, ranging from communication theory to phenomenological approaches on film and social cognition, respectively. Given sub-chapter culminates with the further close-reading of empirical data, in addition to what was presented in the Introduction. This provides preliminary *analytical* insight into how the CO-Model—as proposed—might be put to use. Thereafter, in **1.6**, I will continue with short review and subsequent criticism and discussion of the key theoretical arguments disvaluing the realist stance—in its distinct sense of the inherent necessity of an Other being *intended at* as deployed in this work. The present chapter concludes by contemplating and adapting digital media theorist Paul Booth's recent notion of "television social network," meant as a theoretical "bridging" of sorts, setting the stage for chapter II's focus on "world-building," in turn meant to solidify current chapter's conceptual approach with an appropriate top-down (analytical-methodological) interpretational framework for subsequent analysis (chapter III).

1.1 Introductory notes: Sense-making (of) Narrative Persons, or, the Case of Queer Dumbledore

> [O]nly a dialogic and participatory orientation takes another person's discourse seriously, and is capable of approaching it both as a semantic position and as another point of view. Only through such an inner dialogic orientation can my discourse find itself in intimate contact with someone else's discourse, and yet at the same time *not fuse with it, not swallow it up, not dissolve in itself the other's power to mean*; that is, only thus can it retain fully its independence as a discourse.
> – M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984:64; emphasis added; cf., Holquist 1990[2002]:13ff.)

> [T]he work of verisimilitude in the spectator can never cause him – *unless he is an imbecile* – to mistake the thing representing for the thing represented.
> – F. Buonamici (quoted In: Smith 1995b:114; emphasis added)

As per film scholar Carl Plantinga's recent acute observation, critical and everyday discussions of visual media (film, television) alike haven't, from time immemorial, exactly concealed their utmost fascination with fictional characters as persons, perceptually conceived (a label that, in fact, is not limited to *humans*). "For most spectators ... *interaction* with characters "as persons" is one of chief sources of pleasure in narrative fiction" (Plantinga 2011:40; emphasis added; Wulff 1996a:11n5).

Yet, the theoretical implications of such well-known activities have received minimal scholarly attention. To my mind it is alarming because, as media psychologist Christoph Klimmt and his colleagues note in the edited volume *Psychology of Entertainment* (2006[2011]): "[t]he majority of entertainment media is about *people*" (*ibid.*:291; emphasis added). Quite simply, why refrain from developing a theoretical framework with precisely this kind of focus? Of similar relevance here is the consistent penetration of manifold relationships, which, to some degree and through diverse channels of discourse, "mediate"—(in)directly confer upon us information about, and for—our everyday life-experience (cf., Van Den Bulck 1999; Berger and Luckmann 1966[1991]). Some of these interrelations include "real" persons (i.e., family, friends, colleagues); some, however, "fictional" (i.e., televisual characters) persons (or groups of persons). Keeping the latter distinction in mind, arguably the similar kind of satisfaction in "talking about" *someone* continues into longitudinal fictional narratives, in general, and the characters highlighted therein, in particular. As online data—such as the narrcepts of JH and JP described in the Introduction—attest to, *relations* of the latter sort presage a contingent equivalency in *meaningfulness* vis-à-vis regular social relationships. Such sheer attentiveness and concern—rendered into a storied form of commentary—is reciprocal on the level of *experience*, enlisting, indeed, even cases where the perceived Other's morality is not only ambivalent and/or found wanting, but where the Other

might not even be regarded as nominally "real" (cf., e.g., Krakowiack and Oliver 2012). Put differently, the interpersonal experience acquired through the "mediated" (tele-)offerings becomes integral to the "praxis of everyday"—scaffolding thus a kind of "ecological television theory" (Wulff 1996a:3,10).

Previous seemingly stray observations lead us to two key questions, however:

- can such *meaningfulness* be explicated?
- and if so, does it display some distinctive operative propensies that in-depth theoretical-analytical interrogation could possibly unpack?

One possible answer is intimated by media psychologist David C. Giles (2010) when he recalls the utmost vocal vexation of *Harry Potter* fandom once the acclaimed novelist J. K. Rowling suddenly announced that Dumbledore, the famed bearded headmaster of the Hogwarts School of Magic and Wizardly, might, in fact, be gay. As Giles goes on to aptly observe, Rowling's extra-textual "outing" concurrently underscored Dumbledore's humanly authenticity, as the real life discourse suddenly ascribed him with "life beyond the text," hence "reinforc[ing] Potter' readers impression that the characters ... *exist as real, tangible people who play a meaningful part in their day-to-day experience*" (*ibid*.:442; emphasis added).

The expansive universe of Rowling's novels and the subsequent feature film series had lain the groundwork which enabled the attentive recipients to develop an *intersubjective interaction*[71] with their heroes and heroines, whom they had observed for more than a decade (film series closed in an heartfelt moment of Harry and Hermione being parents themselves, indicating a full circle). These beloved characters became "tangible" insofar as they persistently complemented their fans' day-to-day experience. Consequently, such experientiality became deeply entwined with *characters'* experiential specificities ('Others' discourse') writ large due to lengthy observational "exposure" (onlooking) participants had on their unfolding lives.

As Plantinga goes to show throughout his thoughtful analyses of critical texts concerning *Psycho,* such a far-advanced intersubjective tendency frequently includes even behavioral assessments of characters who express—like Norman—"abnormal psychological condition[s]" in direct opposition to the

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[71] It is crucial to henceforth understand *interaction* ("with characters 'as persons,'" Plantinga 2011:40) as a "relation" differing in *kind*, but not necessarily in experiential content (for in-depth discussion, see, 1.3.2); as a *becoming* within the "creative vernacular" etching out the CO-Model (see, 1.2), and underwritten by marked affinity with interaction "proper," hence providing continuance to the dialectical tension inherent to our social being as an ensemble of social relations. To convey such tendencies I have chosen the phrase *interaction-in-development* (see also, Introduction). The given reading, as we shall see, is further reinforced by parasocial approach in communication studies. Neuman (2008:2319–2320) maintains that broadcast television can "produce an experience of *interacting* with *other humans* on-screen … audience members may derive comfort and pleasure from the sense of having familiarity … relationships with fictional characters …" (emphases added).

recipient's (Plantinga 2011:33–34). In my opinion this observation keenly reveals that there's a palpable reciprocal proclivity intrinsic to our narrative experience. We actively construct what philosopher of aesthetics the late Peter Goldie called "peoples' narratives" (Goldie 2004), sanctioned thereby by the 'relation structures' of **narrative persons** (as I will refer to them throughout), as explicitly facilitated by the narrative; or, likewise, implicitly drawn from its informational structures. As Goldie observes of our everyday life, "[a] large part of [it] is concerned with *thicker explanations* ... interwoven in a complex network of narrative [explication]" (Goldie 2004:7, emphasis added; Geertz 1973; Gallagher 2012a:369–370). Indeed, as evolutionary psychologists Dunbar and O'Neill have observed, about two-third of our *conversational* time is dominated by the "whys," "ifs," and "what fors" of other peoples' doings. Wondering how one would proceed in the face of his or her situation appears, then, to be a mainstay of our everyday vernacular. In fact, it is notably a prevalent tendency for children of 4 years of age—77% of their conversations have said to involve other people (Andrews 2008:21–22).

From here follows the underlying claim of the present chapter, supported by a later analysis (see, chp. III, 3.4–3.5): the aspiration to thoroughly scrutinize "other peoples' doings." For, as what I have outlined above holds when *narratively* situated existences are encountered and the continuous digital space of storytelling provided by commentary sections and forums affords a suitable expressive domain. Thus, characters as narrative persons, in their inescapable fragmentation and impenetrability, become "real" in *kind* to actual persons, as it were—that is, they are **realitizable** (even if, for some culture and media critics, deceptively, naïvely and/or pathologically so).

Through becoming the focus of viewers' attention, narrative persons grow to be part and parcel of one's everyday experience. Narrative proper (i.e., the authorial televisual narrative) operates hereby as a kind of paradoxically continuous "snapshot," if you will, grounding exposure to the Other's experience with the kind of variegated accessibility it is impossible to maintain in "real life" relations. In turn, this accessibility rests on the accentuation of characters' "realities," i.e., the "intentional fields" they inhabitate.[72]

1.2 The CO-Model (COM)

1.2.1 Introductory Notes

Recalling JP's narrcept from the Introduction, whilst "fleshing out" Walt's narrative *in situ*, one doesn't deploy the whole of Walt's "story," i.e., the accumulative shared "history" (Blanchett and Vaage 2012) the viewer is uniquely *keyed* to (see, 1.3 for discussion). Only "enough" of it is utilized (e.g., Walt's specific knowledge of Adriana's kid brother's demise and Jesse's mental unraveling after committing a murder), with contextually relevant dots—for the

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[72] See, chp. II for the explanation of why I have opted for "inhabitate" over "inhabit."

scrutinized situation on hand—thereafter linked accordingly (Hutto 2012:67). What occurs here then is that situational and intentionality-specific **narrcepts** of such "targets of gossip" (*Klatsch-Objekte*) (Wulff 2006:56)—i.e., capitalizing on how, say, *Walt* might make sense of events—emerge interactively within and out of the online setting of user-generated content. As cognitive philosopher Shaun Gallagher explains, such narrative "scaffolding" focuses on "some particular person or group, in some particular situation, acting and interacting in particular ways, across some segment of time" (Gallagher 2012b:369).

Although 'narrcept' is explicated in detail later, suffice it to say that the notion is consistent with our understanding of others ("non-physical" encounters included) as being an intrinsically social and interactive affair (Gallagher 2012b:6). Our conscious acts (e.g., perceptions, imaginings, thoughts, etc.) possess an intentional structure. Our consciousness is always a consciousness-of-something (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008:7,11,107ff.), whereby the manner of our experiencing always elicits directedness, a kind of "of-ness" with the world at large (*ibid.*:109; see, 1.5.3).

Here I believe it becomes affordable, in correlation with Gallagher and Zahavi's (2008) and others' implication of expanding the understanding of the "world" beyond its physical connotations to include social and cultural dimensions, to broach the link tying the viewer and the character as being indicative of (1) *interaction* and (2) *relationship* (see, 1.3). When narrative persons are taken as autonomous beings-in-their-world, nourishing viewers' imagination without—and I would argue it being crucial—spawning *from it*, they are perceived by viewers with a kind of immediacy whereby the sense-making *of them* is deemed situated on an elementary level. Given such kind of (narrative) proclivity (cf., Ochs and Capps 2001), viewers make sense of characters' *perceived* (i.e., not always acted-upon) intentional action. Hence, the **narrcepts** developed by viewers are gradual and fluid; they remain "open." Viewers keep building upon the hindsight and the foresight amidst the consistently changeable "contextual background" ascribed to particular NPs.

The claim of directedness makes it clear one cannot fully speak of intending consciousness without "look[ing] at [the] objective correlate, i.e., the perceived" (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008:113). Subsequent discussion, then, subscribes to the "realist" view of taking "screen characters" to be *as persons*, opposed to "trait bundles" aided by the "needle" of viewers' subjective experience, or mediating "nodes," facilitating the uptake of virtual experiences (and emotions), while effectively voiding the constant dialectics of experientialities (*viz.* the experience of viewers *versus* the experience of the narrative person as the former might perceive *of* the latter's). Such insistence, then, becomes predicated on a "commonsensical," everyday-sophisticated perspective which could potentially be considered as qualifiably different from its "naïve realist" counterpart. Previous ideas become especially fore grounded through the conceptualization of the underlying principle of **realitization**, designed to preserve the key maxim underscoring the ongoing communal discussions on the Internet: solipsistic ("first personal") approaches on "other people" would effectively cancel out any

distributed discussions pertaining to "other people." Obviously, this is not to say, however, that viewers' "subjective experiences" are not significant. Contrariwise, they may turn out to be exceedingly prominent—just not by themselves alone, and assuredly not by taking "character" to be just another screw in the Great Machinery of Narrative who can be built up solely on one's experiential resources (i.e., as argued, NP are taken as sovereign, *with* the story, as opposed to "in" it). Put differently, the co-elaborative creative vernacular of the discussion environments under consideration necessitates that the unit of analysis investigated herewith is not—and should not be—the individual cognizer, but "the [interactive] system as it unfolds in time" (de Jaegher 2009: 535; Gallagher 2009:548), including all the "participants, their dynamic inter-actions, and the context[s] in which these interactions take place" (de Bruin and de Saan 2013:229).

In sum then, the implication here is that viewerly attentive engagement can easily be *objective* in the sense of giving the benefit of the doubt to the character actually *existing*, coupled as the latter is with *their own* diverse world-relations. In doing so, viewers are a far cry from naïve as they both acknowledge and integrate sophisticated knowledge of story's "storiness" (i.e., "What are those writers *thinking,* making that dumb twist?!," cf. see, text makers' world, in chp. II). *Real* viewers *deliberately do* undertake these kinds of intertwined and complex intentional stances (cf., Dennett 1987[1998]; for criticism, see, Hutto 2013:591–601) and thus, it becomes exceedingly evident that the benchmark of narrative pleasure entails in-depth considerations about *what* these "Others" (as persons) would *do,* as opposed to constructing and reacting to "first person"-filtered homunculistic mind's eye imagery, merely *re*-representing what one would do *were one* that "Other."

With all the above in mind, my approach going forward is predominantly of a "travelling theories," or a "theoretical sampler," variety. The inspiration is drawn from the recent narrativist tradition of enactivist philosophy, eschewing the necessity for the ST/TT models[73] and arguing, instead, for the develop-

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[73] Where "theory theory" (TT) diverges into two kinds of modular views: (a) innate "theory," active since birth, encompassing prototypical sets of concepts and employed when comprehending others' intentional functioning; (b) and "scientific" TT (STT) with "less substantial innate component," proposing that "theory" is developmentally acquired, making children "little scientists" who constantly "tes[t] and revis[e] their hypotheses about intersubjectivity." Simulation Theory (ST), meanwhile, strongly opposes such "over-intellectualized" approach, thus accentuating that understanding other minds is internalized, i.e., we put ourselves "in the other's shoes" (de Bruin and de Saan 2013:225-226). Also, see Hutto, in *Style*'s Special Issue (2011:278ff.) for an oppositional account to ToM. Also, Hutto (2009:12-13), Hutto (2007b). For further criticism, see, e.g., Gallagher 2006, 2007, 2011:22ff.; cf. Hutto 2004; Caracciolo 2014; Deonna and Naney 2014; Leudar and Costall (eds) 2009; Slors and MacDonald 2008. For proponents, however, see foremost Walton (1990) and Goldman (2006); but also, Zunshine (2006); Nichols and Stich (eds) (2003); Abbott (2010).

mental capacity to distinguish, decipher and *predict*[74] the third-person knowledge, obtained through narrative exposure[75] and context-sensitive competence. In transposing this assumption for my present area of interest, then, it stands to reason that such narrative competency in "fram[ing] the other person's experience" (Gallagher 2012a:370–371) becomes actively re-cycled for longitudinal narrative experiences. It can be referenced as rendering characters—even non-protagonists—"familiar." Consequently, previous arguments reveal a prevalent phenomenon which, however, has seemingly received undeservedly scarce scholarly attention, while, at the same time and across diverse disciplinary fields voluminous literature detailing the relevance and functionality of representationalist "engagement models" has been amassed, resting predominantly on the elucidation of rules for viewers' "sympathy" of and "identification" with characters.

Consequently then, inspired by the aforementioned ideas and conceptualizations, and in further fleshing out my line of thought, I intend to acknowledge character engagement which capitalizes on "commonsensical" assumptions and can be seen as building on the core tenets of enactivist paradigm (Varela *et al.* 1991[1993]; Thompson 2007[76]; Bruin and de Saan 2013:227). My contribution to these ongoing discussions hinges on central inquiries of how Internet users engage with narrative characters in discursive, narrative contexts (blogs, forums), and, specifically, how do the latter "carry over"—and become of key importance—in these discursive world(s) being developed. Toward these particular aims, present chapter introduces the bottom-up concepts such as **narrative person**, **narrcept** and **twistory**. I will highlight viewers as involved in "narrative practice" which conceives of interpretation as *direct* (as opposed to pre-learned qualities of TT, ST or even the "pure" form of folk psychology itself (cf., Persson 2003; Hutto 2004), converging context-sensitively on the minutia of situation (de Bruin and de Saan 2013:235), whereby the "fictional Other" is taken as a distinctive "intelligent agent" (i.e., a NP) of their own accord. In so

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[74] Esp., see, Gallagher and Allen (2016), where they oppose "classic computationalis[t] and methodological individualis[t]" representationalism over "brain-body-environment [which] *does not entail that the brain represents mental states of others* ... but [participates] in a more holistic and embodied process" (*ibid.*:2; cf., 40n., above; emphasis added) Hence, interactivist and narrativist "active inference and embodiment," *viz.*, "ongoing predictive engagement" is accentuated as being brain's central function (*ibid.*:8ff.). See also, Gallagher (2017).

[75] My adapted usage of Hutto's NPH and its heuristic of "normalization" (see, 1.5.2 for its use in empirical analysis) should not be taken as going against the grain of Hutto's and his proponents' core claims whose field of research ordinarily does not entail narrative fiction. Hutto's discussion of "mind-guessing," in light of two literary extracts, implies some openness to my arguments, however; see the special issue of *Style*, Hutto (2011:281-282); Cf., Velleman (2000).

[76] Similarly, I find it fruitful to note here that the notion of "interaction" that I am herewith taking also connotes implications similar to how recent cognitive reception theories have adapted enactivist frameworks (e.g., Caracciolo 2014). As such, it is rather the *perceived* quality of interaction, in large part due to successive shared knowledge.

doing, participants' activity aspires towards maximizing "explanatory coherence" (cf., Thagard 2000:104–105[77]; Givon 2005) and attends to narrative person's larger narrative (Hutto 2011a:282; cf., Hutto and Gallagher 2008; Goldie 2004; de Bruin 2010; Hutto and Myin 2014**).** Hence, viewers' bonds of familiarity as "time-structured occurrences" (Wilson 2009:59) become emphasized, *as* they try to make sense—through *narrceptivizing*—of NPs and their ways of "storying the world" (Herman 2013:23–24[78]). Such "Others," once recognized and acknowledged as cognizers, meanwhile, supply viewers—via bi-directional (or, autopoietic) interaction (see, 1.3)—with experiential 'building-blocks.' These 'blocks' may not necessarily be evident on the diegetic surface, but nonetheless perceivable as intentionally *possible,* given NPs' context-specific world-relations as well as—if need be—the ambivalent facial expressions, intonations in speech and lines of dialogue. In sum, then, experiential interaction may pertain to largely everything which might not directly "drive"[79] the *plot*, but which may afford necessary first-hand knowledge for the viewerly exploration of a complex "character."[80]

Hence, I would suggest my present contribution to hint at a new kind of "with," one that wouldn't recoil from acknowledging the sovereignty of the *Other* as a dialogical "intentional system," facilitating interaction due to long-term interest evoked. When interacting with other humans on-screen (Neuman 2008/2009:2319), it is inchoate to claim that—on the basis of distinctive experience aroused—only one's own first-person experience pertaining to some (fictive) situation at hand is sufficient. After all, we are not "reiterating ourselves" when interpreting other's reasons (Gallagher 2012a:363–364). In that connection, narrative ('re-sensed' as local, subjective *storyworlds*; see, chapter II) becomes to contain—by, at the same time, giving exclusive access to—narrative person's environmental circumstances and contingencies (Livingstone 1992:9). Contingent on the entirety of the discursive realm observed (i.e., simultaneous co-elaborative conversations across a number of blogs/forums), narrative persons—from viewerly perspective and as per the latter's (tacit) aspiration--obtain agency to operate *alongside* both the discursive realm as well as the "first person" imperative, without being "dissolved" within neither. This

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[77]   In adapting Paul Thagard's dialectics of "target" and "source," viewers, whilst being deeply invested in character's experientiality in the present, draw on past knowledge of character in the process of their sense-making (*ibid.*:107).

[78]   See my critical adaptation of Herman (2013) in chp. II.

[79]   In that sense, I would argue present treatment also to expand on Alan Palmer's influential notion of "continuing-consciousness frame" (Palmer 2002, 2004), by complementing it is purview with meticulous details concerning "character"'s (inter)mental functioning not explicitly indicated by the narrative.

[80]   With reservations, de Bruin and de Saan's (2013:246–247) ideas conceivably echo my present claims within their five-point explication of enactivism, esp. those of "level of presence" (participants' environment may differ, but situation is nonetheless shared, e.g., video chat), and "level of reciprocity" (e.g., one-way and two-way directed social cognition, as well as "active participation within an interaction").

recognition of 'alongsideness' is, in essence, what drives my fine-tuned "alternative" consideration of interaction, *per se*.

In other words, narrative person's agency pertains to being, in employing Shaun Gallagher's phrasing, "situated in an *environment which also tells us something about what* [he] *is doing and thinking*" (Gallagher 2012b:15,17; emphasis added). Like in everyday interpersonal context, recipients' knowledge of NP is not ready-made, but constantly shifting on the basis on longitudinal bonds of familiarity and "shared history" (cf., Livingstone 1992:10ff.; 1990:100). Consequently, a correlative distinction can be conceivably made as empowering viewers' activity, too. In their narrcepts, formulated as and expressed through commentary texts (cf., preliminary examples from Introduction), viewers act upon a duplex capacity of immersion *and* distance (*qua* stance of *objectivity*; cf., text makers' world, see: chp. II). Immersive quality of the *story* (as something generally undisputable, esp. for fan(s)(doms)) may, in fact, even be *strengthened* by an objective perspective on observed NPs—of being absorbed *by* them, not *in* them (Sorokin 2016b, 2017a, b)—due to viewer-NP interaction which bases itself on "emotional intelligence" of the former (Bordwell 2008:51–52). Meanwhile, viewers' real-life cognitive schemata (Fludernik 1996[2005]:32–34) feeds into the envisaged objective stance, casting sense-making as a joint phenomenon. That is, in making sense of narrative persons making sense, viewers frequently "blend" their world outlook with those of the NPs' (see 1.2.2, **twistory**; cf., **intend-worlds**, in chp. II).

Now, prior accentuations do not suggest that the emotional aspect of narrative experience, i.e., the "empathy" (*Einfühlung*), can be excluded wholesale. Thus, in sub-chapter 1.5 I will propose an alternative reading by drawing, amongst others, on the pragma-semiotical approach to filmic experience (Wulff) which distinctly underscores the intrinsic relevance of NPs' "actional context," i.e., their complex interpersonal relationships. Moreover, especially in the light of the two examples given (1.0), I would maintain that such Interactional Paradigm (IP)—as explored in 1.3 below—owes more to the narrativist approach to empathy (see Gallagher 2012a, 2012b; cf., Coplan 2011), on the one hand; and on the "emotional intelligence," i.e., viewers' *commitment* of watching "lives in real-time" (Bordwell 2008:51–52; 2010), on the other. Viewers witness people they might not necessarily endorse (Hutto 2012:67), but *on-looking* them nonetheless evokes their "solidarity" in the sense of the actional and emotional backdrop being of sovereign *Other's* experiences (Gallagher 2012a:375–376). Hence, participants like JH and JP on online "sites of engagement" (Norris and Jones 2005; see, chp. II for discussion) can be observed to achieve satisfaction from scrutinizing what precisely makes those narrative persons "tick," what drives their intentionalities. In all, then, how could these NPs be perceived of as making sense of as well as fashioning their own volatile life-environment (and concurrently, how their compatriots could be perceived as making sense of and affecting theirs).

Such a discursive penchant for focusing on fictional characters and their narratives (Plantinga 2011:46) rests on (filmic) comprehension; "[the] grasp of

the concrete significance of the perceptual material as *patterns of social action*"
which, in particular, emphasize our inherent interest for the interrelatedness
with other persons as well as complements such intersubjective knowledge re-
sources (Bordwell 2008:43ff.; emphasis added). Hence, NP's experience be-
comes an effective "social glue" (Giles 2010), drawing together communities of
what Bordwell calls "innate talent" espousing a "creative vernacular" that opts
for acknowledging the ambiguity of the lives borne witness and thus aspires to
continuously construct their *contextual coherence*, in ways similar to how sense
of real fellow-beings is consistently (re)made. All in all, then, my approach is
committed to recognizing subjective knowledge(s) as bound by and drawn upon
(narrative) interaction.

Admittedly, however, whilst this project may be empirically justified, theore-
tically it might seem as an irresolvable uphill battle of sorts, even though there
have been substantial appeals for widening (or indeed, shifting altogether) the
academic paradigms concerned (e.g., Giles 2002, 2010; Newman 2006a, 2006b;
Plantinga 2009, 2011). I think the primary reason lies in recognizing how
various contemporary doctrines of *character* perception—"filmic," but not
necessarily limited to—have been consistently constrained by a simulationist
mind-set, hence decreasing their insightfulness insofar as analyzing natural
reciprocal situation towards NPs.

As Giles' quote embarking present chapter tellingly indicates, however, it
has proven increasingly difficult to overlook intrinsically intersubjective inter-
actional conceptualizing (as per his example: "*I don't think* Snape *has* ever said
anything untrue" (emphases added). Yet, following Giles and others, it may be
contended that majority of theoretical thought on the matter, especially crucially
with regard to narratology and narrative research, appear to have pleaded
foremost to solipsistic constructs that operate as mediators for unnatural and
illusional "drama of *cognition* [in the mind of its beholder]" (Abbott 2010:224;
emphasis added). Nevertheless, as Michael Z. Newman thoughtfully observes,
"[c]haracters are not *real* people, granted, but this does not mean that they are
not people ... their traits are not them; they are descriptions of them" (2006b:53,
underlining added; cf., Grabes 2004, 2008). More to the point, such ap-
proaches—to use literary theorist Richard Walsh's phrasing—tend to "devalue
involvement in proportion as they devalue fictional being" (Walsh 2007:154).

An apt corollary extending the precise reproach of the prevailing Cartesian
preference in the "continental" tradition of thought (for contemporary criticism
on the Cartesianist incidence, see, e.g., Shotter 2001, 2003) was indeed fore-
shadowed by Paul Ricœur (1979) when he decried the implacable dialectics of
denotation and connotation; that is, of reducing fiction into illusion, whilst
impeding its ontology—of making it a poetic discourse that "merely evok[es]
feelings, emotions and passions devoid of any ontological weight" (Ricœur
1979:140; cf., Ricœur 1994:124). In concert with Ricœur, I thus submit that "to
form an image is not to have an image, in the sense of having a mental repre-
sentation; instead it is to read, through the icon of a relation, *the relation* [to]

['*bound*' images, i.e., images engendered by poetic diction itself]" (*ibid.*:133; emphases added),

Ricœur persists that one cannot *reproduce* poetic image because of its non-referentiality, of it having no "original" in one's experiential world. Thus, he considers reproductive imagination—the "mental alchemy" it engenders—as parasitizing on the image *per se*. As a converse corrective, Ricœur opts to examine non-referentiality as the very feature which enables augmentation of our world-vision and wherein the image's reality oscillates between the twin senses of work's context (i.e., as poet's "mythos") and the accompanying context of recipient's *thought at work* (what Ricœur terms one's *redescription* of reality), respectively (*ibid.*:123ff.,139–140[81]).

In his later writings, Ricœur celebrates these ideas as fiction's *heuristic force* (Ricœur 1994:123–124), linking it hereby to the vocabulary of the second law of thermodynamics, maintaining that such heuristics "scal[es] the entropic slope of ordinary perception" (*ibid.*). Indeed, what can be detected as inherently contextualist assumptions—or as he phrases it, the "creative *mimesis* of reality proceeding from the poetic *mythos*" (*ibid.*:141, emphases in original)—may reveal the vigorous cognitive exigency behind comprehending fictional narra-tive (and its "characters") necessarily as a *cohesive whole*, and may offer expla-nation as to why, above all, the creative and evaluative nature of language—in present case utilized to *talk of, or more specifically, in writing about* narrative experiences—becomes expressed more directly and naturally than leading strands of theoretical traditions make it out to be (cf., *ibid.*:125–126).

To some extent, some of the above has persevered in contemporary academic literature, perhaps most influentially in narratologist Monika Fludernik's (1996[2005]) inspiring account of "natural narratology" which conceives of readers as—by her phrasing—realistically motivated. By "narrativizing" the unfamiliar, the encountered fictional reality—and experiencing agents therein—become *re-cognized* by recipients' (real-life) embodied practices; latter which operate *through and towards* the experientiality manifested in the text. In short: fictional enterprise necessitates a kind of self-reflexive loop, as indicated also by Daniel D. Hutto's Narrative Practice Hypothesis (Hutto 2007a). Hence, the "homologization of the fictional and real worlds" can be seen as effectively obfuscating the supposed frontier separating "fiction" and "reality" (Fludernik 1996[2005]:26–30,98,235). Where Ricœur's ideas underscored narrative's phenomenal-paradoxical quality of "augmenting" one's conception of 'the real' as well as preserving fiction's ontological "weight," Fludernik's meticulous study exploits the other side of the same proverbial coin—namely, how the *rea-lism* itself is inherently "man-made," opposing thus "imitational meanings [and being instead an] interpretational strategy of mimeticism in accordance to which textual encounters are reinterpreted as relating to a fictive reality that shares a number of qualities with the 'real' world" (Fludernik 1996[2005]:238).

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[81] See also, Ricœur (1984:80) and Milly Buonanno's eloquent elaboration to the social sphere wherein she refers to televisual drama as a powerful "widener" of viewers' "personal capital of social relationships" (2008:79-81).

Drawing on the previous insights what I will attempt to advance throughout this chapter can be subsumed—implicating hereby the necessity of German-Dutch "interaktionistische Fernsehtheorie" school—under the generic title of Interaction Paradigm (IP) (for in-depth consideration, see, 1.3 *en passim*). It is characterized by the CO-Model (COM) and latter's operational heuristics of **realitizing**, **twistory** and more (see below). On the one hand, these pit-stops pave the way for further elaborations presented in chp II, and, on the other, suggest theoretical elucidations for the analysis of *Breaking Bad*'s online discussions over two key episodes in consecutive weeks (see, chapter III, 3.4–3.5). Crucially, the present investigation builds on the preliminary analyses of the online data (Sorokin 2013a, b, 2015, 2016a, b, 2017a, b) and is, as such, explicitly "inform[ed] and guide[d]" by the phenomenal experiences as stored in the online realm (cf., Gallagher and Zahavi 2008:10).

1.2.2 The 'Carry-Over' Model (CO-Model) of Television Experience

As initiated by reception studies on daily soap operas since early 1990s it has become a go-to truism that longitudinal "exposure" to televisual characters results in them being perceived by viewers as "family members" or "neighbor-figures" (Vaage 2014; Blanchet and Vaage 2012; Baym 2000; Keppler 1995, 1996). Pursuant to this perspective, television becomes a *Beziehungskiste* (Vorderer 1996 (Ed.)—i.e., a "tube" facilitating protracted effects which accumulate into deepening bonds of familiarity with plentiful characters positioned amidst networked paradigmatic strands (cf., Allen 1985:70). Accordingly, it has been detected that such propensity also casts a wider net by obfuscating the very confines of "real" and "fiction." Recent experiment pitting the real-life figure *depictions* (heads of states like G. W. Bush, etc.) against those of fictional characters found that both sets were *perceived* "equally realistic[ally] and un-realistic[ally]" (Konijn and Bushman 2007:169,174–175).

Throughout, I am drawing on the online reception of weekly "prime-time" serials, i.e., *Breaking Bad*. The conjecture subsequently pursued, under the rubric of Interaction Paradigm (IP), builds on the core argument that serial's characters as narrative persons (NPs) "carry over" (CO-Model, i.e., COM) (on)to recipients' experiential plane for the discursive act "levels" the onto-logical disparity. On the one hand, NPs become thus imbued with idiomatic sovereignty and individuality within the confines of the co-elaborative space of creative vernacular, whilst—on the other—preserving similar tendencies *vis-a-vis* the storyworld (see the *with*-principle below). Here, the assumption of "tangibility" mentioned on the outset of present chapter becomes facilitated by the informational amplitude availed by the narrative—and complemented by the *narratively expressed perception*---*about* the observable person. Whereas real life might afford us limited scope *on* "other people" *viz.* in the specific sense of lacking sufficient resources for elaborating on their intentional proclivity, the superior accessibility (either explicit or latent) to the NP benefits the partici-pants in, perhaps, evoking a more enriching interactional experience (whilst

also being instrumental in contributing to one's real life outlook, to boot). Consequently, such dissimilarity highlights claims of experiential immediacy and presence-ness wherein recipients' own accumulative knowledge carries approximative weight (Wilson 2009; Hartmann 2008; Wulff 2002).

During their serialized encounters, viewers naturally 'key to' the doings and the presumed inner reflections of these "screen persons." Accordingly, this kind of base-level operative principle of COM—what I am terming **realitizing**—can be regarded as either an implicit, largely automatic capacity which keeps "running" liminally, or as a tacitly 'launched' "reality pact" (cf., Grishakova 2017). Consequently, realitizing is meant to scaffold the follow-up cognitive processing and the creative discussive vernacular involved (i.e., complex online *talk* of characters 'as persons'). The notion of realitizing is inspired by an English neologism[82] explained as an act of bringing someone to the 'state' of "reality." This vocabulary gestures towards the intention to build upon diverse, yet interconnected theories, such as the ecological and "commonsensical" models of filmic communication (e.g., Carroll 2003; Anderson and Anderson 2007a).

In his *Engaging the Moving Image*, film philosopher Nöel Carroll (2003) challenges the classical conception of film as language (semiotic deciphering of "codes"), proposing instead convincing evidence revealing pictorial recognition—at the level of the "single-shot image"— as a natural, if not altogether innate, capability. Referentiality of language is negotiable. Conventionally we say "dog," but—if necessary—language can be arranged to say "cat," instead.[83] Images, conversely, directly link into our intrinsic knowledge resources, effectively "activat[ing] everyday cognitive and perceptual skills and capacities" (*ibid.*:54–55). Called by Carroll the "international mode of communication," it is something shared cross-culturally and, even by interspecific means (see, *ibid.*:18–21 for an array of fascinating examples). Similarly, it is something we might have on hand since a very young age. In developmental science, Slater and Quinn (2001) and others have observed that the newborn infants may possess an evolutionary "prototype face" which allows them to both recognize human faces post-birth as well as to continually build upon that initial (possibly prenatal) experience (*ibid.*:22–23; cf., Nelson 2003).

In fact, when expanding on the perception of "face," interest in and recognition of distinctly human face and body, as ecological film theorist Joseph D. Anderson puts it, doesn't persist with infancy. Citing an experiment by Cutting and Proffitt, Anderson argues that the recognition of the other is facilitated by a "universal schema" (which also naturally extends to "characters encountered on a movie screen"). As shown by Cutting and Proffitt, (1) people recognized their friends' gaits through the "dance" of fluorescent "spots" which were attached to their joints beforehand; (2) again other people, though un-

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[82] http://nws.merriam-webster.com/opendictionary/newword_display_alpha.php?letter=Re&last=20 (Accessed: 3.11.2014). Observe that my usage diverges from the original, though still adhering to its spirit.
[83] Cf., Voloshinov (1930[1973]:28).

familiar with the walkers, were capable to "distinguish between male and female walkers"; and (3) yet a third group, upon being shown "*computer simulations* based upon the algorithm [based on the] experimental [human] subjects," were in agreement as to the gender of the walkers represented by the dots on the video screen (Anderson 1996[1998]:131–132, emphasis added).[84] From here it is seemingly only a relatively small step to Heider and Simmel's (1944) classic study where respondents attributed human-like intentionalities to the moving and intersecting geometrical *figures* on the screen (cf., Heider 1958[1964]:24). However, it can nevertheless be justifiably asked where to might such fascinating observations lead?

One possibility is to suggest a 'weak-to-stronger' kind of narrativity (i.e., a sliding scale) inherent to the very act(ivity) of perceiving *of* something. Latter assumption pertains especially to cases of engagements that are either: (i) self-centered and goal-directed (see the rock-throwing example below), or (ii) self- and *other*-directed, intention-driven, e.g., what I have previously termed "para-social perception." Beyond one's exposure to narrative content, though, this assumption—in its strictest sense—conforms to the principle of 'weak narrativity,' because it adheres to nothing other than the pair of constituents of the generic narrative toolbox—namely the cause and the effect (i.e., of how *intending* something is set towards some accomplishable aim). Hence, although prominent ecological psychologists, such as James and Eleanor Gibson, never evoked the idea of direct <u>narrative</u> perceiving *per se*, I submit that latter's echo can nonetheless be observed in the notions of "affordances" and "information pickup" that rely heavily on environmental causation. In his seminal *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Gibson 1986[2015]), Gibson argued for the context-specificity of affordances (cf., Heider 1958[1964]:24; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008:7–8; also, cf., Bruner 1957:126–127,130). Hence, Gibson's conception of "direct perception" meant "observers perceiv[ing] themselves in the environment, surrounded by it, and in relation to it" (Mace 1986:152). "The possibility of perceiving a property of the environment directly, without supplementation [i.e., intermediary concepts and representations], exists when there is sufficient information to specify it *and* a perceiver who is attuned to that information—again emphasizing the perceiver-environment fit. Information is not punctuate, instantaneous, or fleeting. It is spread over space and over time" (E.J.Gibson and Pick 2003:18; emphasis in the original).

To give a Gibsonian example, a stone can be either thrown for protection (its affordance as "throw-able"); or, conversely, deployed as hammer to fix something (Gibson 1986[2015]:126). Now, if some other stone, aside from its spherical or square form, appears in addition rather large in diameter, an observer in urgent need of sitting perceives *of* it possibly as affording her necessary composition as something "sit-on-able" (*op. cit.*:120). Yet, if the observer in need of a short rest happens to be, say, a child, the *same* stone might not be "sit-

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[84] See also, Gallagher and Allen (2016:15) on the interactionalist approach on "face perception."

on-able," as it may be lofty and require climbing for which she's too exhausted, hence necessitating further looking (cf., Gibson and Pick 2000[2003]:16).[85] In other words, of central significance here is the issue of *fit*. In the hypothetical scenarios described, *same* stone (as an environmental "invariant") is perceived as an *affordance* for one party, yet inadequate for another. This, then, is determined by the "theory of perception," *viz.* "information pickup," which James Gibson and his followers conceived as a *direct* and unmediated process where—most importantly—"meaningfulness" *was* insofar as being predicated on the causal necessity. William H. Mace has perhaps put it most eloquently: "One does not detect something meaningless first and then interpret it meaningfully. There is only one step. That is the one Gibson referred to as information pickup. This does *not* say that the supporting processes for the act of pickup are not complex. There are many degrees of freedoms to be coordinated" (Mace 1986:144; emphasis in original; for extensive early criticisms on ecological (-psychological) approach, see, e.g., Ullman (1980), Schmitt (1987), esp. 275–276; Richardson *et al*. (2010); Jenkins (2008); Jones (2003); Chemero (2003).

My underlining point here in what may seem an odd swerve is to note the perception-of by means of "environmental niches" as being explicitly filtered through the intentional exigency and predicament at hand—we are actively not only "seeking," but *shaping* information (*op. cit.*:20; cf., Anderson 1996[1998], 2005). This necessity of stretching one's legs (=cause) leads to acknowledging the "ofness" with the world, of going "in search of" amidst the many "surfaces" latter provides until the best contextual fit is established, e.g., a sizable stone to sit upon (effect). Consequently, the intending perception begets an emergent formation of sorts—a motivated, directed motion that leads from point A to point B.

From this follows that in some situated case of problem-solving, an immediate *narrcept* is developed (here the notion is taken in its broadest possible sense shedding any sort of exclusivity), which, in embracing the intentional directedness, sets up an interrelated sequentiality of crucial steps, facilitating thus an "affordable" best possible solution. As such a broad example of narrcept reveals, such intentional stance ("world-of-ness")—i.e., an "interactive system" (Gibson and Pick 2000[2003]:14)—is readily narrativistic even in the subject-world, i.e., the private sphere, well before the intentions possibilities of *other* perceivers become the issue of interest.

Meanwhile, Carroll's answer, were we to return to filmic image, is to inquire after the "comprehen[sion] [of] what a picture is a picture *of*" (Carroll 2003:18–19, emphasis in original). He asserts that on the base level of the single-shot image (i.e., "pictorial" frame on the film reel), we are, in effect, *re-cognizing* the depiction as something (or "type[s] of something," (*ibid.*:21) correlative to our preceding experiences. Emphasis is on the hyphen here, for our identifying

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[85] Cf., Karl Marx, in his famous *Estranged Labor* (1844), approaching not exactly oppositional issues from the labor theory of value, in fact argued for "all nature [being man's] *inorganic* body" (emphasis in original) (Marx 1844/1988:75-76; cf. Marx and Engels 1846/1998:49).

something afresh and *re*-experiencing the initial situatedness of becoming-familiar run in parallel. Thus, in Carroll's (radical) constructivist conclusion, looking suffices. In comprehension, he argues, we "trigger recognitional capacities that are hardwired [in us]" (*ibid.*:23).

However, one shot does not make a motion picture and latter's engagement with our natural cognitive and perceptual capacities extends well beyond a singular frame, to be sure. As one generic example, we could recall Bordwell's (2008) discussion of how in watching a non-subtitled Hong-Kong action movie and being faced with insurmountable language barrier, it was nonetheless possible to not only follow the action, but *comprehend* it relatively well. Bordwell put it down to the foreknowledge of the genre tropes, of attentively observing characters' body language, of hypothesizing the significance of their internal relationships, and so forth (see also, Carroll 2003:25ff.).

Accordingly, we can induce from Carroll's assumptions that when an intelligent agent is depicted—say, a (human) *person*—his *presence* is incontestable because based on the articulation of such presence—bestowing it agency through affectionate, tangible (material) usage of language—*correlates* with how real world persons, intimate familiars even, who surround us, are discussed about. We cannot very well say that what we see is a figment of our imagination and that we are, instead, only entertaining the *thought* of seeing a (depicted) person (*contra* Smith 1997, 1998). Having developed recognition of our conspecifics**,** it naturally extends to the comprehension of screen content, but as opposed to written media, mental *re*-representation here is gratuitous—*re-cognition* suffices (see also, Anderson 1996[1998]:19–22). Hence, the "fictionality," the non-being (*versus* "reality") of such "screen persons" should not be cast as a pretence on the face of the infamous paradox of fiction, but as necessarily empowering this person's—narrative person's—beingness, on account of the perceptually correlative feedback with/to *de réel* (see, Choi (2006) for criticism on Carroll's account[86]).

The previous arguments further elaborate on the internal dynamics of the proposed CO-model (COM). **Realitizing**, its base-line operative principle, lays the foundation for and allows to split the "substance" of (joint) sense construction along the axis of narrative person's intersubjective functioning (i.e., him making sense of his "actional context") and commenters' own (real-life and genre-specific) cognitive parameters, respectively. Such "fluid" dialectics which cannot be pinned down with definite rules, I am terming **twistory**. This notion is intended to convey the distribution and processual convergence of the experiential knowledges of the involved (and "pseudo-involved")

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[86] Carroll acknowledges that whilst emphasizing "pictoral" film images he's effectively excluding abstractness of avant-garde and experimental cinema. Though it may be seen as the "hot spot" of his theory, my issue is more "mainstream." What about highly futuristic sci-fi films which may introduce rather acute cognitive dissonance? Is Carroll's prior argument of "types of something" supposed to extend here as a cover-all? If so, to what degree?

participants, the viewer-commenter and the NP(s)—an interlaced "well of history"[87] (Sorokin 2015, 2016a, 2017a, b; cf., Blanchett and Vaage 2012).

As previously implied, twistory is utilized in highly context-sensitive and creative[88] fashion when the attempts to meaningfully comprehend the *possibilities* for NP's acting for reasons are drawn upon intertwined (life-)contexts (cf., Linell 2009:26). Accordingly, viewers become *objectively*—idiosyncratically as well as **co-elaboratively,** as *opposed* to "collaboratively"—engaged in discursively *reciprocating*[89] narrative persons' experiential range, their intentional field (Wulff 2006:48). Significantly for the present project, however, such "storying" (Herman 2013) of possibilities for narrative person's mental as well as explicitly traceable behavioral minutia **cannot** entirely rely on what narrative has readily divulged. In fact, "complex" televisual narratives such as *Breaking Bad* rarely make such explications explicit in their operational aesthetics (cf., Mittell 2012–2013/2015). Instead, narrative reveals 'white spaces' of the unsaid[90] that might not even be significant to the narrative's plot. All this is dispersed as intricately "stranded" amidst and between diverse information scaffolding characters' ingenious emotional backdrop (cf., Gorton 2009:118–120) (see *with/in – interaction* scale below).

The previously introduced vocabulary accentuates what could be seen as the ground-rule of character-specific narrative pleasure. It is cognitively stimulating to weigh the particulars of *what the other would do (or be thinking of doing)—* that is, to discursively 'key to' such narrative person and to enact on, to *narr-perceive* (*viz.* construe a commentary text expressing a narrcept) through the affordances of *twistory* and NP's specific knowledge, or lack thereof—instead of developing mental representations as though "simulating" or "mirroring" the

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[87] Whilst "twi-" is (a) taken from the *idea* of being intertwined, "twist" is also a striking synonym for "intertwine"; hence twi(st) + stories, wherein the overlap of "st" signifies intrinsically autopoietic qualities of *both* "stories" (*viz.* commentator's "real life," and narrative person's "actional context") utilized in the processual sense-making. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/intertwine (Accessed: 1.11.2014).

[88] As opposed to being steeped in full-on imagination. Here, then, I am addressing the core difference between being "creative" and "imaginative," respectively. Whilst the former underlines the inventive act of creation (e.g., something new from old (cf., e.g., Turner 2014)—i.e., utilizing story-context in multiple perspectives in developing narrcept)—the latter focuses on the formulation of mind-imagery. In constructing such co-elaborative, distributed idea of *creative problem-solving*, I followed Glăveanu's concept of *distributed creativity* (see, Intro). Present contention is that such creavity corroborates the "micro" layer of (subjective) narrcept, which thereafter emerges into "macro" layers. Thereby, neither 'level' cannot be considered as strictly exclusive, but severely interleaved (see, chp. II and chp. III, 3.4-3.5 for close analyses).

[89] My usage of "reciprocity" attempts to convey that even though what occurs is not reciprocity "proper" (i.e., corrrespondence between 'actual' people on both ends) one cannot exclude the social constructivist aspect of such relation as a kind of one-sidedness that 'carves out' its own bidirectionality if and when necessary. Such assumption also stays true to the spirit of the original conception of "parasocial interaction" (see, 1.3, *passim*).

[90] Cf., "spare character miscellanea" (Booth 2012:315; cf., "off screen spaces," Wulff (2012:1).

other (Gallagher 2012:372b; cf., Gorton 2009:124). This argument is explained with sublime accuracy by aesthetics philosopher Robert Stecker in his reading of *Anna Karenina*:

> [We] imagin[e] all those things she actually ponders *not* in the sense that [we imagine] pondering those things [ourselves] but imaging *that* she does, *that* she reacts to these in certain ways, and *that* this puts her in a certain state of mind. Because it is descriptively richer, this is a more vivid imagining of how she sees her situation. (Stecker 2011:299–300; emphases in original)

In other words, people encountered via entertainment media "breed enjoyment" (Klimmt *et al.* 2006[2011]:291). Hence, the operative principles of **twistory**—as I envisage the notion—are not singularly conflatable with "perceived realism," in latter's sense of "story" irregularities that undermine its overarching coherence and result in the charge of "unrealism" (Busselle and Bilandzic 2008; Bilandzic and Busselle 2011; cf., Giles 2010:453–454). However, nor intends this kind of "imagine-that" perspective to exclude "plot logic," as it were. Rather, the latter is conceived of as informing COM's unabridged outline by incorporating in unison the notions of "narrativization" and "normalization" (Fludernik 1996[2005]; Hutto 2007a). Whilst the latter deploys previously described contextual duality to develop narrcepts on NPs' intentional possibilities, the former thereafter attempts to position them within—while significantly re-structuring where necessary—the fluid *storyworld* as narrceptivized in a commentary text. Naturally, previous assumptions taken together can be interrogated as to whether what I have distinguished as NP's "knowledge," too, essentially appertains to the recipient. This allegation—summed up in Alain Resnais' pregnant phrase "only character is the spectator"[91]—I will take to spell out the "rule of superimposition" and venture to emphatically challenge throughout.

Nonetheless, hereby I do not intend to suggest viewers wholly foregoing their *de facto* sophistication which dictates that they indeed *are not* scrutinizing the lives of their familiars. Contrary to popular belief viewers are adequately sophisticated to express such intertwined knowledges in an all-encompassing fashion (Walsh 2007:148–153, esp. 156–157). In fact, if the narrative introduces some nagging inconsistency which perceivably runs counter to, say, depiction of particular NP thus far[92], it may distract the effect of *realitizing* in compelling recipients to somehow reconcile various conflicting experiential knowledges on hand. I carefully chose to say "distract," however, because realitizing is not hereby withheld or ruptured, it is just—for lack of a better term—"rerouted" to take into account the discrepancy made explicit (by the narrative). The rerouting itself, though, whilst seemingly introducing a novel avenue, yet finds its way

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[91] Quoted in, Berger (1978).
[92] E.g., did *Breaking Bad*'s mafiosi Gus Fring suddenly acquire superhuman capabilities and "sensed" the bomb beneath his car? Or, did Huell truly have necessary agility required to swap Jesse's cigarette packs unnoticed?

back on to the proverbial high road in that the solution to the problem posed is nonetheless anchored in (as well as "recuperated" with) the NP↔recipient *twistory*[93], whilst also markedly drawing on the text(makers)world (see. chp. II; and chp. III, 3.4–3.5).

Further illumination is added if we would cast the arguments thus far in terms of a relational scale *with(in) - interaction*. On the one hand, continuing the thread of thought initiated by Ricœur, Fludernik and especially Wulff (see, 1.5 for extended discussion), we would have NPs' 'actual world' (*cum* character's "actional context") in regards to which COM brackets the "in," whilst firmly underscoring the context-sensitive relevance of "with." That is, diverse information (actions, events, etc.) entails and effectuates NPs' embodied cognition (their experiential information) which then becomes viewerly acknowledged as epistemologically distinctive—as a modifiable *narrative* on its own right, subsumed into the construction of *storyworld* enacted through the narrcept (see, chp. II for specifics). In fact, NP's 'actual world' content reveals experiential minutia which recipients can *uncover*—something *with* the narrative proper, but not necessarily dissolved (with)*in* it (cf., see also, "taking in", "collecting," Casebier 1991:9ff.; also, cf., Rimmon-Kenan's "interdependency" (1983[2002]:37)). Often, however, such information remains inchoate on its own and thus cannot be employed wholesale to understand narrative person's experiential workings. Here's where the heuristics of context-sensitive direct interpretation, i.e., "normalization" (Hutto 2008a), is employed in developing the narrcepts (see, 1.5.2). In such instances, narrative functions as a "guide"—a "resource," or "tool" for thinking (Herman, Vygotsky)—conferring viewer to enactively *uncover* what may be intentionally *possible* for the NP(s).

Hence, although the dynamics introduced by notions of **realitizing** and **twistory** under the rubic of COM may hint at similarities with Jenkinsian and Bordwellian term "appropriation" of de Certeauan inheritance (i.e., displacing "character" from his/her natural 'habitat,' that is, a specific narrative, *into* some, perhaps, wholly different one, like in cases of fanfiction), this thorough emphasis on narrative's relevance functions as a balancing factor to fend off complete reductionism. Dialogist scholar Per Linell suggests a helpful corollary here: "A referent – an object or event referred to – is never a referent in abstract; it is referred to by somebody in a specific situation ... as part of a *cognitive-communicative construction*" (Linell 2009:24,26, emphasis added; also see, *ibid*.:28, esp. 19n., 20n.).

Accordingly, this is where *interaction* comes in as we are able to distinguish two autonomous units of embodied cognition—that of viewer and narrative person (NP)—participating in their own kinds of situated *sense-reasonings* whereby former's is the 'real' embodied cognition, whilst latter's is *perceived*, becoming so through the realitization and "carry-over" (the CO-Model),

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[93]   E.g., Gus' utter caution is explained away by viewers as they draw upon the prior shared knowledge of him having lived in Chile during Pinochet's regime; whilst limited knowledge of Huell's life is supplemented by viewer's own unfortunate contact with real-life "expert thief."

highlighting latter's experientiality as being-in-their-own-lifeworld. Within such "relational whole" (Linell 2009:15), viewers' experiential resources (e.g., pre-learned everyday schemata, a 'formal' toolbox incl. genre-specific expectations, etc.) are intersubjectively linked with—*contra* conflating—those of NPs (i.e., their _presumptive_ experiential sense-making discourse). Interaction, then, as I envisage it, is multi-directional, oscillating *in situ* between viewers↔NPs.[94] As such, the previously proposed 'scaling' essentially characterizes the core dynamics of COM by fascinatingly expanding—I believe—on the manner in which recipient-narrative *communication* has ordinarily been understood.

Given the variety of previous observations, it becomes reasonable to assume that the viewerly narrcepts under the COM-permitted intersubjective nexus both capitalize on as well as "hone" viewers' cognitive skill-set, whereby conceiving their engagement as an embodied narrative practice (Gallagher 2001:90–91,103; Hutto 2004:459, 2011b:1). Such a cognitive work-out can be seen as culturally modifying the brain (Johnson 2005; Doidge 2007; Boyd 2008:33–34) and complementing our adaptability as beings-in-the-world, whilst underscoring the ingrained narrativity thereof (Plantinga 2011:39–40, 47; Boyd 2009:15; cf., Gottschall and Wilson (eds) 2005; Gottschall 2012). To that end, a work of art in general and fictional narrative in particular functions as a "merry-go-round of social pattern[s]," enabling the recipients "to think – emotionally, imaginatively, reflectively – about human behavior writ large" (Boyd 2009:209; Plantinga 2011:39).

In sum, COM, that is, the "Carry-Over Model" insists on acknowledging the theoretical implications of the significance inherent to allegedly "naïve-realist" stance that viewers' become, through time, the first-hand witnesses to—or having, as Italian media theorist Milly Buonanno put it in her illuminating *The Age of Television: Experiences and Theories*: "a seat in the front row" (Buonanno 2008:79) for—characters' real-time changes. This implication enables to discontinue the conventional first person, ego-centric perspective in favor of a more commonsensical, and no less sophisticated, *third-person* approach, i.e., viewers talking (and thinking)—i.e., *narrceptively* and *co-elaboratively*—of characters as their familiars (if not as friends), as *persons*, albeit of the "narrative" kind.

With all that in mind, next sub-chapter is dedicated on further elaborations on aligning the notions of interaction, relationship, and interactivity with COM, by construing necessarily insights from the twin concepts: parasocial interaction and relationship (PSI and PSR).

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[94] Plus—crucially—, along the axis of viewer↔viewers, as co-elaborative activity immersed in the communication, and 'shaping,' of knowledge.

1.3 Viewers as Keyboard Psychologists: Interaction, Relationship and Narrcepts

1.3.1 Some introductory notes

Earliest indications for a theoretical approach in addressing the intrinsic complexity in regards to viewer's relationship with a televisual "persona" date back five decades. In their trailblazing and prophetic article, American psychiatrists Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl, under their rubric of "para-social interaction" (henceforth PSI), explored a variety of intertwined notions such as the continuous relationship, familiarity, and shared history "media persona" may evoke (Horton and Wohl 1956[2006][95]; cf., Horton and Strauss 1957). Clearly ahead of their time (television was still getting "in vogue" in the 1950s), their text keenly anticipates struggles that grew but more byzantine over time with regards to mass media reception. It is not unexpected, then, that their thoughts still reverberate influentially amidst contemporary television audience research. Accordingly, it is my contention that a closer exploration of H&W's original concept is necessary, juxtaposed hereby with confluent contemporary developments. Of special, overarching interest here is the subtle yet significant divergence inscribed to PSI and its associate term parasocial *relationship* (PSR), a divisive pair yet used interchangeably by H&W.

Present demarcation permits an important dual emphasis, however. Namely, it encourages an 'elastic' re-conception for the notion of empathy which would seek fruitful alternatives to the problematic pair of identification with/of. Hence, the dialogic, context-sensitive and processual undercurrent inherent to these notions is paramount, whilst allowing to substantially build into the tri-directional social accentuation – viewer/NP ("relation-schema," see 1.4; cf., twistory), NP/other NPs ("relational field," see 1.5) and viewers/viewers/NPs ("television social network"; see, 1.7; for even more elaborations, see text makers' world, in chp. II). All these layers inherently conform into what I envisage as the natural system of NP-centric narrative experience. In sum, then, my intention is to scrutinize the applicability of the PSI/PSR framework for a more qualitatively-inclined practical theory noted to be insufficient (Giles 2012:164–165; 2010:445–446; for quantitativists, see, e.g., Chory-Assad and Ciccirillo 2005; Tian and Hoffner 2010), whilst concurrently aiming to circum-scribe the operative specificities of social, interpersonal aspect involved.

Hence, the interplay of PSI/PSR is examined exclusively through the prism of serialized narrative reception as availed by "big data" depositories (Mitra 2013, 2014[96]) across Internet discussions, taken as co-elaborative environments. Hereby, the primary accent of present exploration rests on teasing out the

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[95] Originally published in Psychiatry, re-published in online journal *Particip@tions* (vol. 3(1), 2006). http://www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%201/3_01_hortonwohl.htm (Accessed: 3.11.2014), henceforth H&W.

[96] Nevertheless, scholarship especially should emphasize extreme caution with regards to "big data" usage.

intrinsic foundations afforded by this symbiosis, especially for recipients' *narrative practice* (Hutto)*, that is, their *narrceptivizing*—constructing *narrcepts*—focusing on characters as self-reflexive, intending "social entities." As such, my present approach diverges from the current strands of PSI research into online "celebrity worship" and informational and reality programming, respectively (e.g., Sanderson and Emmons 2014; Kassing and Sanderson 2009; Tian and Yoo 2015; Chung and Cho 2014).

1.3.2 Interaction/Relationship: Setting the Stage

Let us commence with H&W's inspiring observation that

> [i]n television, especially, the [human] image which is presented makes available nuances of appearance and gesture to which ordinary social perception is attentive and to which interaction is cued [...] audience ... observes and participates in the show by turns. (H&W *ibid.*; cf., Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:26)

This banner of "image" as conceived by them comprises predominantly television "personas" like announcers, quizmasters and news anchors whose existences are functionally concatenated to the media, on the one hand, and being derived from the PSI, on the other. Importantly, however, H&W do allow for a congruently equivalent relationship with fictional characters and even with "puppets anthropomorphically transformed into 'personalities'." As they explain, the resulting "persona," her origin notwithstanding, is indigenous to her social "scene," insofar as *becoming* so through the (one-sided) interaction (the "intimacy at a distance"). The kind of interaction, as Horton and Wohl espouse, commences in many ways as resembling ("cueing") (real) social interaction, even though the base-line for such dialogical coupling remains experiential. This, in turn, underlines the multi-foldedness and protean quality of viewerly experience and its intrinsically intentional structure, for it comes to indicate perceiving of *and* constructing interaction, as well as elaborating on the observed Other's experience within latter's informational flow.

These specific tenets from H&W's original theory have recently found enriching theorizing by German and Dutch scholars under the aegis of *interaktionistische Fernsehtheorie* (interactional TV-theory, IF) as well as under Anglo-American media psychologist David Giles' more qualitative research agenda. Exhilaratingly opposing the majority of traditional research largely building on H&W's psychopathological leanings (see also, Hagen 2011), German and Dutch schools argue for a normality stance, maintaining that parasocial relationships become constructed through the particular structures of media (i.e., long-term televisual narrative) and hence, should be taken at once complementing and drawing on the (real) social interaction (*orthosozialen*) as well as perspicuously opposing the accounts of "identifying-with" and "taking-over" in regards to one's engagement with narrative persons (Hippel 1993:130,139; Giles 2010:451; Mikos 1996; Zillmann 1991 *passim*). Moreover,

under the paradigm of IF, such relations are anything but "pathological uses" of media.[97] Nevertheless, as Giles acutely observes, even the contemporary research is not yet vacant of the tendency to take parasociality as something "potentially 'pathologizing'" (Giles 2012:167; 2010:454), something H&W's original text admittedly implies.

As such, the effects of PSI are conceived of as something *faux*, "preying" on the lonely, anti-social and otherwise "off-norm." In one of such cases of stigmatization, psychologists Gardner and Knowles (2008) consider what they call "anthropomorphic thinking" as gratifying the "need" for social connections (*ibid.*:158). PSI thus becomes the handy stand-in for the "real" found lacking (Giles 2003: 189; Buonanno 2008:80–81; cf., e.g., Stever 2013; Derrick *et al.* 2008; Schiappa *et al.* 2005). The latter charge might even be paramount, Giles believes, for it paints attentiveness and involvement ostensible in, say, fandoms, as a psychological deficiency; as something with a negative connotation (Giles 2012:167–168; for strong opposition to this bias, esp. in regards to fandoms, see the landmark volumes of Jenkins 1992; Hills 2002). In other words, the qualitative lead in H&W's theory which envisioned PSI as an extension of normal social activity has been unceremoniously sidelined and any kind of "commonsensical" approach effectively scrapped together with it (Giles 2003:189–192, 2002:293; Keppler 1995, 1996). The calcification of said research is implied by Giles' frank concession in his 2012 volume, noting how the PSI-scale type interaction "measuring"—together with questionnaires with "preformulated interpretations" (Cohen 2002)—have secured itself a yardstick status, whereas alternatives are/remain discouraged (Giles 2012:165; see, Levy (1979), for the origins of psychometric scale[98]).

Yet, Giles himself, too, is eventually unable to escape the proverbial clutches of measuring. His proposition for "open-ended items" for respondents' discursive script, whilst assuredly promising, nonetheless garners echos of a guiding "man-made" environment (see, Giles 2012:169ff.). Put differently, Giles' general criticism is justified and his call for qualitative approach well-prepared, but it is all the more peculiar that he himself overlooks a possible golden mean—the social dimension outlined by voluminous information storages on the Internet. As current section initially revealed, online sources—especially forums—are not alien for Giles, yet he merely gesticulates towards their academic potential (Giles 2010:450–451; also see, Giles 2003:264). Question remains thus: why not investigate parasocial tendencies *as they occur*, emerging narrceptively and co-elaboratively in online environments (or *have* once occurred and have now become depositories, as it were, within social media's "big data") (Mitra 2013, Mitra and Mamani 2014)?

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[97] See Klemens Hippel's magnificent critique on these tendencies in, Hippel (1992:137-141). For an alternative perspective of parasocial interaction as *play*, see, however, Hippel (1993).

[98] Also, for "PSI-Process Scale," a more qualitatively advanced methodological tool, see, e.g., Hartmann and Klimmt (2005); Schramm and Hartmann (2008); also, Hartmann and Goldhoorn (2011).

Giles' methodological leanings notwithstanding his theoretical insistence in separating PSR and PSI as cognitively distinct merits further investigation, however. Giles (2002) initially develops PSI as successive encounters, setting up a "continuum [of] extended social activity" (*ibid.*:293; 2010:451–454) with televisual encounters (i.e., a narrative person in a serial). Through such "continued monitoring and evaluation of [particular] other[s'] behaviour[s]," PSI builds *towards* PSR, extending thereby over episodic and private media use into persistent, serialized and ultimately co-elaborative postexposure/viewing discussions (Giles 2012:165–166,168; 2010:448–449; 2002:296; Klimmt *et al.* 2006[2011]:292–293). Narrative persons thus, to reference Giles' clever phrase, become something of a "social glue." In the social spaces of group activity, e.g in specialized blogs or forums, they come to facilitate joint cultural ground as "discussion material[s]" (Giles 2010:443,449; 2003:191–192; cf., Plantinga 2011). In short: NPs develop into "meaningful Others" who are not forlorn once the "watching," Zillmannian onlooking, ceases (Giles 2012:163; 2010:448).

This can be considered the core argument of Giles' three-level model of PSI.[99] On the cognitive level (private contemplations expanding into large-scale co-elaborations), the operative tendencies inherent to social and parasocial relationships largely coincide and latter's technical indirectness and non-reciprocity is sidestepped by sheer meaningfulness it provides. Consequently, it is also indicated that the relationship with (the) NP(s) may—thus corroborating the "vernacular creativity" argument—*develop* from within the "[real] social interaction, [the] discuss[ion] about the figure[s] with other [co-viewers]" (Giles 2003:195, 2002:296), whilst

> [PSI/PSR itself] is about encountering a figure through a medium and then *treating that figure as if it were a real human being.* We don't need to "behave" overtly in any particular way, but we need to respond, albeit in a purely cognitive fashion, to the figure as we might respond to a human in an ordinary social encounter. (Giles 2010:454, emphasis in original, underlining added; Giles 2003:1; cf., Grabes 2004, 2008)

This fertile re-conceptualization of PSI as a continuance of virtual back and fro, i.e., an "online response" (Cohen 2014:144), and PSR as its protean formation—a *realitized* narrative person with whom a *twistory* is formed, leading towards *narrcepts* drawing from such co-cognitive "event"—found further refinements under the theoretical auspices of German/Dutch communication science (Hartmann *et al.* 2004a, b; Hartmann 2008; Hartmann and Goldhoorn 2011; Klimmt *et al.* 2006[2011]; Schramm *et al.* 2002; also see, Konijn and Hoorn 2005). Approach implied above and subsequently discussed is adapted from Dutch media scholar Tilo Hartmann and colleagues. Although their ideas are rooted in how viewers' may complexly construct their experiences of narrative persons, I would argue their work also complementing as well as ultimately flowing into theories of other scholars, including H. J. Wulff's text-theoretical

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[99] See, Giles (2003:192ff.).

(semio-pragmatical) approach which aims to unpack what H&W once called media persona's "social scene" (see, 1.5).

1.4 Elaboration of twistory: Processuality of PSI, Emergence of PSR's "relation-schema"

Acknowledging NPs as perceptually sovereign socially cognizing entities (beings-of-their world)

Right from the outset, Tilo Hartmann and colleagues' (Hartmann *et al.* 2004a, b) processual, multi-dimensional PSI-model punctuates the exigency to ponder media personae as "natural social entities" (*natürliche soziale Entitäten*), i.e., realistically and/or anthropomorphically plausible media depictions who facilitate reciprocal "interpersonal involvement" (*op. cit.*:22–23, 36–37; Wulff 1996a:2). The initial phase of recognition—a "running" capacity, i.e., **realitization** (recall 1.2)—Hartmann *et al* explain, establishes an agency-endowed *Other*. Such narrative person could potentially motivate cognitive interest having become perceptually *present* via asymmetrical interaction. Asymmetricality, meanwhile, wanes to a "technical" deficiency which is readily complementary by observing these personae amidst their own "interlinking communications" (Hartmann 2004b:27–29; Hartmann *et al.* 2004a:33; Hartmann 2008:182). As Hartmann aptly put in another connection (MMORPGs, chat bots), viewer as "[a]n observer feels drawn into a communicational situation if the perceived behavioral expression of the other social entity is taken as symbolic/meaningful and rather intentionally performed action" (Hartmann 2008:181,189; Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:26; see, 1.5.3 and 1.5.4 for specific discussion on intentionality). Furthermore, previously considered proclivities can be taken to predicate on "perceived" or "light" (*ibid.*:34) distance *vis-a-vis* the subject in question (Hartmann 2008:184), i.e., the *acknowledgement* of the narrative person as a social entity *par excellence*—aware of one's environment and prone to develop construals about it[100], on the one hand; and being more accessible—through consistent mediation—than perhaps someone in "real" social relations even, on the other (cf., Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:34). This emphasis on the social extension is significant, as, like Giles (2010) observed, it widens the *scope* of PSI/PSR out from under the propensity to "measure" interactions only with one "chosen figure" (e.g., favorite soap character) (*ibid.*:447). These particular themes are revisited in the next next sub-chapter.

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[100] While Hartmann (2008) seemingly links "distance" explicitly to spatial concerns (e.g., cf., Meyrowitz' (1986) "paraproxemics"), my adapted usage is primarily intended to further underscore narrative person's *sovereignty* (cf., scale of with/in, *twistory*) as perceived by the recipient. Hence, viewers do not "mindread" (e.g., cf., Hartmann and Goldhoorn 2011:1106), but are actively involved in context-sensitive *direct interpretation* (e.g., Hutto 2007, 2008 *passim*).

Historicing co-elaboration of narrative(-personal) potentialities

Herewith, Hartmann *et al*, building on Giles' outline, explicitly differentiate between what they call two levels of intensity in one's involvement with the narrative person: PSI and PSR. By such phrasing, both "levels" subtly integrate the reciprocal unit (i.e., viewer) into the work-flow of the respective modes. Although PSI rules out reciprocity proper, consecutive involvement with and exposure to (i.e., "re-recognition"; 1.1–1.2, 1.5.3) the media "figure" [sic] facilitates a sequential string of data, as it were, leading to the self-modifying interactive "dyad [consisting of] the recipient and the media figur [narrative person—S.S.]" (Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:30ff.) As such, "dyad" is generically consistent with my term *twistory* which I took to consist of two interrelated and sovereign (co-)cognizing units (see, 1.2):

> From the sum total of the interaction sequences arises an interaction history of the Dyad. Further interactions of the Dyad are always implemented as well as influenced by the background of previous interaction histories, whilst the interactional pattern [*Interaktionsmuster*] representative of the Dyad crystallizes and consolidates. On the dyadic level[, then] we can observe an interactional pattern with media figures that is self-stabilizing and cyclically recurrent and which manifests as [a] parasocial *relationship with* [a] media figur. (Hartmann *et al* 2004a:10, my translation–S. S.; emphasis added)

Consequently, both notions thus allow to confer upon a kind of localized dimension of historicity, wherein experiential data (the narrative) becomes split across the interactive duality. Hence, *twistory* as I envisage it indicates the consecutive sum-total of narrative experience the viewer has ascertained so far (in concert with his own experiential real life resources), whilst contemplating narrative person(s) *possible* weighing in on analogous (or, comparatively, often impoverished) information as *inferred* by viewers' inclination to observe them as "natural social entities" (cf., Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:37).

*'Shared' histories (*twistory*)*

Incidentally, recent work by media scholars Blanchett and Vaage (2012) has termed such joint attention or co-cognition the "shared history account" (*ibid.*:27–30). Also falling in with the notion of "re-recognition," Blanchett and Vaage stress the pleasurably constructive influence of exposure through which the familiarity of individual characters in television serials becomes enhanced (as opposed to feature films[101]) (*ibid.*:24). Presumably it is not wholly accidental that the authors herewith chose a term with a doubly bidirectional meaning. As I see it, narrative person (NP) "carries over" to viewers' experiential field (into the co-elaborative online space as well as into preceding and concurrent private contemplation, i.e., narrcept's *storyworld*) and "catches on" therein, establishing

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[101] In a related connection, Dolf Zillmann (2005:164) writes of how especially cinematic narrative compresses time and hence disallows for the emotions to naturally "run their course," i.e., develop over a particular stretch of time.

thus *twistory* intrinsic to COM. On the other hand, though, exposure *per se* exposes viewers to the life and assumed reflexive experience of "characters" the more they obtain knowledge *of* them. Theirs is the "slow-building portrait [of a person's life]," fraught with ambivalences and contradictions, not unlike the intertwined lives of the recipients and their conspecifics (Gorton 2009:124–125; Livingstone 1990:59). As corroborated by media psychologist Schiappa and colleagues, viewers observe these "screen persons" as undertaking "self-disclosures," which, in turn, facilitate the formation and profound incremental quality of interpersonal relationships. Piecemeal, and co-elaboratively, viewers build up a sense of understanding with regard to narrative persons (Schiappa *et al.* 2007:302).

"Digging deep": seeking contextual fits regardless of the favorite/marginal polarization

Furthermore, as user-generated content on *Breaking Bad* can readily intimate, the revelations about these NPs are not always explicitly graspable on the momentary "surface" of the narrative. Hence, in order to truly ascertain the intentional and emotional depth possibly characteristic to any such persons, viewers recognize the significance of burrowing deeper. In effect, they deploy the accumulative "shared history" *with* the narrative person, looking for relevant clues as to why the latter (re)acted or still might (re)act the way s/he did/does/will. Consistent with how H&W originally conceived of the term, then, "parasocial interaction" becomes an interaction which "occurs along the similar lines as evaluation of people in face-to-face contact" and can be taken to be a "normal consequence" of television viewing (Schiappa *et al.* 2007:302–304; cf., Caughey 1984). As the phenomenologist television scholar Tony Wilson explains, viewers become caught up and participate by onlooking the NPs' inter-related searches "to find the world intelligible" (Wilson 2004:79,81; cf., Wilson 2009). That is, what ultimately drives the varied contents of a narrcept—from twistory to intend-worlds to text makers' worlds to ultimately *storyworld*, then (see, chp. II clarifications on latter terms)—is the reciprocal attentiveness to a kind of intersubjective interaction which effectively interpermeates or 'entwines' *experiences.*

Accordingly, what Hartmann *et al* meant by their *Interaktionsmuster* amounts to participant's idiographic bottom-up "relation-schemas[102]" (*Beziehungschema*), first correlated with narrative persons and thereafter expanded on co-elaboratively in prolonged online discussions. Put differently, what occurs

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[102] Note that Wulff shall later employ a comparative term in referencing the "constellation" of media persona's social relations. The reason I call attention to it here is because it helps to outline the multilayered nature of social cognition taking place: (1) viewers↔characters, (2) characters↔characters, and last but assuredly not least importantly, (3) viewers↔viewers; whilst my COM-model accommodates (1) and (2), it is conceptual power diverges in enabling to also account for (3) within the same dynamics. All aforementioned becomes further enforced by the critical adaption of the Possible Worlds Theory (PWT) as an interpretational framework for the finalizing analysis (see, chp. II).

is a highly attentive "perceptive-cognitive" sub-process of PSI[103] (Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:42). Here, participants make a consistent focused effort (i.e., they intend at) to "understand perso[n]'s situation, his goals, thoughts [*Gedanken*] [and] intentional actions and predications," thus accommodating latter's "history" accordingly (*ibid.*:32; see, 1.5 and 1.5.2 for the *narrative* development of such an effort). The availability of such schema becomes indispensible since the first perceptual encounter with the narrative person because continual observations and evaluations both "outfit" and are "filtered" through it in a cyclical process. Participants' observation of the narrative persons is anticipative, whereas understanding the latter becomes an ever-continuing process, wherein a contextual fit is sought (cf., Wilson 2009:4–6,32ff.). In other words, bearing in mind the discussion from 1.2, the "ofness" with the world becomes two-fold here. Opposing the deploying of some preconceived schematic knowledge of how persons "function" in real world, the schema as understood here is developed from ground up by perceiving of how the Others specifically *are* of-their-world. Not only do viewers' co-elaborative sense-making consistently punctuate the self-Other coupling, but they specifically elaborate on the being-in-the-world operating with regard to that observed Other. In doing so, recipients "assess how persona's circumstances might in the near future develop [and] what the persona himself might do or shall do next" (Hartmann *et al. ibid.*). Conversely, similar reciprocal discourse can also be *retro*fitted, as JP's narrcept, discussed in the Introduction, intimated.

Admittedly, though, these kinds of developments ordinarily are not split evenly across observed "characters." Drawing on the notions of "obtrusiveness" and "selectivity," Hartmann *et al* assert that only some person(a)s may evoke such intensive "High-Level-PSI" (HLP) *vis-a-vis* the viewer (evoking, in turn, a deeper sense of person's world-ofness). The magnitude of "previous knowledge" (*Vorwissen*) is key. Obviously, serial TV narratives are not for casual attendance, being already *ipso facto* wrought with complexity for an incidental viewer. Already H&W anticipated that much:

> The persona offers, above all, *a continuing relationship.* His appearance is a regular and dependable event, to be counted on, planned for, *and integrated into the routines of daily life.* His devotees 'live with him' and *share the small episodes of his public life* [...] their continued association ... *acquires a history, and the accumulation of <u>shared past experiences</u> gives additional meaning to the <u>present</u> performance.* (H&W *ibid.*; emphases and underlinings added)

Another point to stress here is that whilst the idea of a "obtrusive" person(a)s assuredly has a valid basis for participants do tend to navigate towards protagonists and their closest conspecifics, whilst ordinarily forsaking the "marginals," it nonetheless hints at the danger to be theoretically ensnared by

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[103] Also delineated are affective and conative dimensions, respectively (see, Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:34–36). For present purposes, the inclination is to accept Wulff's position on empathy with which, in fact, Hartmann *et al*'s account differs (see, *ibid.*:35).

the "chosen/favorite character" tunnel-vision Giles had warned us about. Indeed, although Hartmann *et al* at once anticipate this criticism by ultimately noting the multiplicity of person(a)s participants have to deal as well as emphasize throughout their writing the relevance of person(a)'s social context, this aspect is nonetheless insufficiently developed (but see, 1.3.2).

Similarly, such introduced polarity becomes challenging when reconciling cases where marginal person(a)s may "graduate" into evoking HLPs, *viz.* "High-Level PSIs." *Breaking Bad*'s Huell, the hunky bodyguard/comical "side-kick" of Saul, Walt's criminal lawyer, is an excellent case in point. Right up to and including serial's end, viewers had learnt nothing *at all* about his past endeavors (even Gilligan's 4th season's post-mortem interview remained close-lipped). Yet, his centrality in key events that shaped trajectories in equal measure for both Walt and Jesse begs for him to *have one.* As I will explore in detail in the analysis (see, chp. III, 3.4–3.5), viewers indeed "dig deep" in considering Huell's (hypothetical) background on the basis of his present "actional context" (e.g., he could've been an "expert thief" once, considering the kind of people Saul must employ due to his criminal disposition) (cf., Schema 5–6; chapter III, 3.5).

Furthermore, for the sake of absolute clarity, I find it relevant herewith to firmly stress that the framework proposed by Hartmann and colleagues implies the representation and mental "stabilizing" of interactional data *about* the person(a), and <u>not</u> the imagining of the latter in one's mind's eye (see, 1.5 for further elaboration). To put the same point differently, their contribution doesn't contest the principles of directedness and directness as previously considered (see, 1.2). In fact, the inspiration of Hartmann *et al* as well as other authors considered is seemingly the social constructivist assumption that real life interrelations are too, to a point, comprehended in a mediated format. From here follows that "social entities" in media (i.e., in narratives) are "processed" in a congeneric fashion (Hartmann *et al.* 2004a:11,19). As such, the development of an extensive *Bild* pertaining to the narrative person is homothetic to what would be obtained from an interlocutor in real two-party interaction (Hartmann *et al.* 2004b:32). Given the obfuscation of such border area, then, Hartmann eventually even turns critical of the theoretical value of the notion of "interaction," proposing thus respectively parasocial "processing" or "engagement" as more precise notions to consider (see, Hartmann 2008:186–187). The former can be dispensed as stereotypical (simple, automatic reactions; fully in line with "folk scripts" (see Plantinga 2011, 1.1) and deployed more in case of generic Low-Level-PSI where our "surface" knowledge resources of Others may suffice); whereas the latter is elaborate (deliberate and motivated; deploying the provided information creatively for "pleasurable interest", *op. cit.*; Anderson 1996[1998]: 135–136; Wulff 1996b:5).

1.5 The Girl on the Beach: Narrative person's "social field." Empathy and Identification Re-Constructed

Ecological media theory; character engagement as an interpersonal event
Prolific media scholar and former film-maker Hans Jürgen Wulff approaches central issues touched upon in the previous sub-chapter with his semio-pragmatic approach to film and television (Wulff 1999; cf., Hippel 1998). He seeks common ground with how the particulars of *narrative* itself may be integrated into what he refers to as the ecological media theory, attesting to the observation "that television watching [*fernsehen*] is not only the reception of texts, but also an *interpersonal event* [*Geschehen*] between depicted [*abgebildeten*] persons and recipients, is just as much self-evident as long known" (Wulff 1996a:1; my translation—S.S.).

As I noted in passing on the outset of present chapter, this "ecology" of interpersonal experience becomes a crucial constituent of the everyday experience *per se*, as the media consumption begins to accentuate the "social-medial," the recognition ((re-)cognition) of the Other out of whose being-in-the-world meaningfulness (*sinn-voll*) can be found (Wulff 1996a:3,6,6n5).

With that in mind, Wulff presents two superbly compelling examples. First, he describes correspondence with a colleague who intimates to him a story of a protagonist—a certain steam boat captain—who enjoys cinema visits when on shore. During one of such stopovers, the captain watches a film with Brigitte Bardot. He finds himself enchanted and entranced, but is unable to finish because the cinema catches fire and the captain is impelled to flee. In another port, he catches the same movie, but yet again, interruption occurs; revolution breaks out and film is cancelled. The captain becomes heartbroken. Henceforth, the girl on the screen was all he was able to think about. On yet another day, the captain encounters a girl on the beach. They start to chat and ultimately he recounts to her, with utter fascination, his experience. The girl on the beach was Brigitte Bardot, but the poor steam boat captain didn't recognize her.[104]

For the second example, Wulff draws on Martin Esslin's semiotical stage theory, referencing an example of an actor depicting "a boozer" in accordance with how the inebriated usually appear in real life. Accordingly, the resulting "invented person" is at once an individual *of* his world, whilst also sharing common ground with that of the viewer (cf., Wulff 1996b:1,4–8).

Amongst other detectable layers, these fascinating examples permit to pinpoint the breadth of Wulff's "interpersonal event." Wulff stresses viewerly "sketching" activity, which takes its cue from the corporeal (*Körper*[105]) de-

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[104] On the flipside of the bitter-sweet, unfortunately, rest cases where actresses are horrified at cases where their "real" self and narrative person conveyed becomes conflated in online discussions (see, Gunn (2013): http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/24/opinion/i-have-a-character-issue.html?_r=0 (Accessed: 24.10.2016)

[105] In connection with corporeality, Wulff also speaks of actor's "impersonations," of how their embodiments of diverse characters over time "seeps into" how each new character is perceived through and *due to* him-as-actor. This "character synthesis" (Wulff 2006, 1996b:2-

piction of an *existing*[106] someone and pertains thus to the relation respondents/observers[107] develop with her; which, in turn, evokes "model-like imagining" (*modellhafte Vorstellung*) *about* the person under observation (Wulff 2006:47; 1996b). Accordingly, such interaction can be acknowledged as a "socialization modality" (Wulff 1996a:11). I deliberately highlighted "about," for Wulff's "picture-making" rather implies a relational map which decisively transcends the solitary observed individual in favour of elucidating the relational, inter-personal properties that make her/him one. To put the same point differently, narrative persons (NPs)—not unlike real ones—(be)come to respondents'/participants' knowledge through the (explicit and/or implied) diverse interrelations they elicit in their own "actional-context" (see, Palmer 2010, 2011a, 2011b for a sympathetic view from cognitive literary theory).

Concurrently, such an effort to understand NPs correlates closely with participants' real-life everyday social understanding. It pertains to the persons of their local, proximate environment (*unmittelbaren Umgebung*) (Wulff 1996a:3; 1996b:6; cf., Rescher, from chp. II). The latter phrase here enables to stress and to reiterate two significant points under development in present work: (1) narrative persons can be ascribed with the capacity to become "localized," they "carry over"—as I put it, become **realitized** in participants' immediate (discursive) environment, e.g., via the narrcepts within (and *across*) the "sites of engagement" (see, chp. II); thus (2) adding auxiliary expedience for the NP becoming a *subject* of such co-elaborative social cognition via *twistory* which functions simultaneously on the intersecting levels of private and collective (Wulff 2006:47–48,58).

Accordingly, Wulff builds on Hartmann *et al*'s prior work and considers "the parasociality [that] occur[s] between depicted persons and audience" as possessing a constitutive quality, something that's intrinsic and cannot be "strip[ed] away, thought away, or also replace[d]" (*ibid.*:48), on the one hand; and which "conduct" (*Verhalten*) is open for reflexive viewerly interpretation, on the other (Wulff 1996a:9). As implied by this contention, the proverbial poles of "fact" and "fiction" are necessarily flexible and not rigidly fixed, and thus, the acknowledgement of the 'screen Other' as someone of sovereign capacity doesn't hold any exclusivity over the "mediality of the events and the

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6) is undoubtedly a very important topic, though not necessarily in the purview of present investigation (but see, Mittell 2012-2013/2015 for the relevant discussion of how Bryan Cranston's prior roles as a likeable comedic actor might have influenced his reception as the notorious Walter White) (Mittell 2012-2013:48-50).

[106] In the context of Wulff's arguments I am using this notion with caution, for Wulff ultimately accentuates "the experience of actor's presence," whereas I underscore that such experience, as Wulff sees it, is crucially comprised of dual, concurrent presences.

[107] These usages I have lifted from Zillmann (1994, 1996), though majority of German-Dutch criticism adheres to this language. As I see it for my purposes, "respondent" (*viz. participant* in order to emphasize the co-elaborative aspect) is actively involved, whereas "recipient" is more, quite literally, on the "receiving end." As such, "respondent" and "observer" are not unequivocal, but rather can be used in tandem, for the latter emphasizes the inherently observant tendencies of the former.

communicative [and narrative] frames that circumscribe them" (*op. cit.*:48), and *vice versa*. Both frames of looking, as it were, can intertwine and co-exist, instead of cancelling each other out or requiring the participant to opt for one against the other.

Twin senses of constitutive viewerly interpretation of world-ofness (NPs' intentional field+participatory twistory*)*

Especially this prior emphasis encourages me to contend that the term "constitutive" begets twin senses here. On the one hand, it adheres to the processual PSI-model, especially as elaborated further by Wulff's take on H&W's notion "social scene." By his contention, the latter—which Wulff intermittently terms "social field," "actional-context," and most strikingly, "intentional field"—has to be known *as* narrative (Wulff 2006:50[108]; 2003a:139,146ff.; 1996a:3); and *as* narrative persons' *Handlungsraum* ("space of acting"), their intentional reality (Wulff 2012:1)*.* As discerned, it is the latter's "data"—<u>with</u> the narrative proper, but not necessarily (always explicitly) *in* it (see, 1.2)—that persistently feeds the respondents/participants' *Bild-machen* (Wulff 1996b:3–4).[109] On the other hand, however, the usage of "constitutive" corresponds to the assumption of establishing couplings, dyads or *twistories* comprised of the accumulation of participant(s)-narrative person(s) experiential data, for by Wulff's (and H&W's prior to him) own admission such interactivity is participatory (*mitmachen/ teilen*) (cf., Wulff 1996a:2).

Last but not least, "constitutive" is also seemingly consistent with the phenomenological assumption of "ofness," the natural proclivity to (and perceive) intend(ing). Wulff is, I would argue, resolutely against the kind of unyielding radical solipsism which views narrative experience, by definition, only as a prolonged thought experiment, void of any—however soft—realist claims (Smith 1995 *passim*; see, 1.6 for critical discussion; cf., Redfern 2004). At the same time, it doesn't follow that this "*tangible* relationship [experience]" has to result in participants' "simulating the character's actions and bodily postures" (D'Aloia 2012:220; emphasis in original)**.** "Seeing is not meaningful or conceivable without an *object of seeing*, the subject at which seeing as an intentional activity is directed" (zu Hüningen and Wulff 2005:3,5–6; emphasis added; cf., 1.6).

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[108] Although I have to vehemently disagree with what Wulff ultimately develops as the "implied viewer" (*implizite Zuschauer*) (Wulff 1996a:3,8). His argument about how the viewer only has the designated "structural role" in the interactive event rings technically true (we are not, after all, speaking of "true" interaction), however, I cannot accept, like phrased by Wulff, the viewer ceasing to be "individual subject" (*ibid.*) within this kind of involvement. This distinction, unfortunately, goes against the very core of *twistory* as deliniated indeed.

[109] See, 1.4 explicating the interrelation of these complex layers by utilizing the notions of "normalization" (Hutto's NPH) and "narrativization" (from Fludernik's 'Natural Narratology' framework).

1.5.1 The "intentional field" of the narrative person

Against the usurpation of NPs' agency: narrceptivizing empathy from within NPs' intentional field

In further outlining such "alternative" line of thought, however, let us further scrutinize Wulff's ideas. Consistent with Hartmann *et al*, the aspect of inter-action (as gradual reception—and *seeking*—of pertinent person-specific information) is implied in Wulff's account. What Wulff specifically adds to the ongoing discussion is his resolute challenge thrown at the "simplistic [and] unsustainable" view of empathy (Wulff 2002:1) which holds, as Wulff notes, that we not only "copy" depicted Other's emotion and "tune" ours accordingly, but we effectively usurp experiencer's *agency* in doing so: "figure's emotion, according to this controversial thesis, *arises also* from the viewer" (*ibid.*; emphasis added).[110] Countermanding latter impression, Wulff suggests caution *vis-a-vis* "the emotions of another person" (albeit a "fictional" one), hence proposing that the traits and "desire-orientations" (*Wunschorientierungen*) of whom I am terming narrative persons are gleaned by the viewers through "penetrat[ing] [former's] *intentional field from within*" (*ihr intentionales Feld*[111] *von innen her durchdringen*; *ibid.*; Wulff 2006:48, emphasis added). Empathy so re-conceived allows for rich, contextual abductions from the "intentional vigours of [narrative person's] emotional life" (*Seelenleben*) (*ibid.*:59–60; cf., Feshbach 1989). Accordingly, Wulff identifies such empathic quality as intrinsic to respondent-NP relationship (in the sense correlative to both the ideas of Hartmann as well as to my conceptualization of twistory considered previously). Hereby, the depth of the "empathic field" (*empathische Feld*), as Wulff calls it by developing a "lamination model" as an alternative to Smith's "imaginative scenario," is actively worked out (*aktive Tätigkeit/Teilnahme*) through and by the commitment (*Bindung*[112]) to the depicted person, uniting hence latter's "social field" with diverse viewerly knowledge (Wulff 2003:137–138, esp. 142ff.; 2002:7–8).

> I will call such scenario the *empathic field* which I take to mean the symbolic context [consisting] of social life, genre, [and] the special action[s] and dramatical conflicts. This contextual complex is not merely integrated into the story [*Geschichte*] (it therefore has narrative before and after), but is above all

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[110] Wulff similarly contests "overtaking," i.e., identifying-with, see 1.5.1.

[111] I.e., emotions, antipathies, preferences, etc.—in all: narrative person's "social style" (*ibid.*) Note here that Smith, too, has written along similar lines (Smith 1997), but whereas Wulff clearly distinguishes 'self' and 'other', Smith—by drawing on Wollheim's notion of "central imagining"—maintains that we "self-imagine" *having* experiences of the kind the Other is presumably experiencing at the time (*ibid.*:413). In addition to exemplifying what presently is called into question, Smith's conceptualization veers too closely to Freud's terms introjection/assimilation, of which long-lasting effects in film theory Smith self-proclaims to have fought against (see also, Wulff 2003:158n2).

[112] Note also, that in a literal translation "Bindung" additionally means "association," "connectedness (with)," hence further underscoring the bottom line made thus far, i.e., my proposition of *twistory*.

realized in a constellation of persons [*Personenkonstellation*]. (*ibid.*:1–2; my translation—S.S.)

While the above may seem commonsensical, Giles did previously remind us that there remains a prevalent theoretical-practical propensity to cultivate narrow-cast understandings of character engagement—and by extension— empathy. Meanwhile, Wulff convincingly maintains that such stance of singularity, i.e., the focus on a "favorite character," only tells half the story (if, indeed, even that). Accordingly, as implied by Wulff's theorizing, empathy *per se* is concurrently highly expansive as well as can be rendered into a gradual cognitive construct, evoking a specific kind of all-inclusive processes of 'keying to,' evoking multiple at-once "intimat[ions] at a distance*"* (H&W). That is, the respondents/participants **narrceptivize** NPs' life-environment as a kind of system for actions, estimating thus their intentional orientation with regard to their "possibilities for action [and] the probabilities for the successes and failures [of such actions contemplated]" (Wulff 2002:5–8; Wulff 2006:57; Wulff 2003:142; Schiappa *et al.* 2007:304; Tröhler 2006).

Hence, the claims put forth thus far allow to draw upon the narrativizing base-line arguably inherent in everyday social interaction wherein "the Other" is comprehended through contextual attributions (Hartmann 2008:190). Not coincidentally then, Giles (2010) draws from Wulff's emphasis on context, tying it to "logical 'humane'" responses facilitated by the narrative as latter's conspecifics' *Handlungskontext* sui generis, i.e., the *biographical* and *historical* knowledge (incl. narrative person's "private moments") obtained of him (*ibid.*:454; Giles 2003:255; cf., Livingstone 1990:46,58). Consequently, Giles' arguments recall the heading of 1.3 for he conceives of such involved recipients as "psychologists." But how does such psychologising activity—scaffolded on the tangibly real—operate exactly?

Following Wulff, the objective of such adductive psychology is consistent with working on a processual, incremental "picture." This is not, however, a "solipsistic modellation," Wulff heeds, restricted to a singularity. In poet Walt Whitman's undying words, it is necessarily a picture containing multitudes (Wulff 2003:145–146).

> In a fictional dyadic relationship I have to not only comprehend what something means for *one* figure, but also, how he understands another figure; and I have to simultaneously comprehend how each [of the] other [*andere*] figures the first [*die erste*] interprets and what [kind of] hypotheses he maintains over what this Something [*dieses Etwas*] for everyone [*jene*] means. (Wulff 2003:143; emphasis in original; my translation—S.S.)

NPs' sovereignty: a third personal perspective in reconceiving empathy as a contextual, objective *process*
Now, how do the aforementioned statements influence the nature of empathy? Accordingly, notion's reconception further underlines NP's *sovereignty* on the level of shared experiences, whilst cutting out the (representationalist) "little

man in the brain" in favor of the third personal perspective. Understanding and *recognizing* NP's "actional context" (*Handlungskontext*) becomes paramount, as the partiality ("openness") it may entail demands reciprocal elaboration, which—in turn—complements knowledge of and facilitates understanding of the person(s) observed even in those cases where "disliking" them actually becomes the foundation onto which the relationship is paradoxically built (Wulff 2003:139–140; Kippel 1992:137; Wulff 1996a:9). These arguments reveal that empathy can be conceived as opposing both its presumed fixedness—it never just *is* as a "traitlike ability" to be activated (Zillmann 2006 [2011]:151)—as well as its firm anchorage to respondents/participants' "likes." Instead, empathy becomes an *objective* process which can be viewed as navigating from the initial transience *vis-a-vis* narrative happenings toward a (possible) permanence in accordance with the self-modifying situational whole, i.e., narrative person's "constraints and affordances" as a being-in-their-world (Wulff 2002:2; Anderson 1996[1998]:137).

Accordingly, this approach gesticulates towards lifting a particular handicap from empathy. Being foremost a contextually-empowered communicative construct which is both developed and utilized by "respond[ers] as observers, as third parties" (Zillmann 1996:212, 2011:106), the evaluation of some empathic responses as "perverse," of somehow unbecoming, reciprocally speaking, may become a misnomer. Why? As renowned media scholar Dolf Zillmann aptly puts it, any indication of stepping onto another's shoes, as it were, "is simply not necessary [as] it violates parsimony of explanation, and most importantly, *is empirically unfounded*" (*op. cit.*; emphasis added; cf., chapter III, 3.4–3.5). In fact, Zillmann has fruitfully developed latter view, termed the "witness perspective"—under his emotional reactivity paradigm—over a decade (Zillmann 2011:106; Zillmann 1996:213; *op. cit.*:105; cf., Zillmann 1991, 1994, 2003).

1.5.2 "Living terrain of response and responsibility": alternative insights in conceptualizing "empathy" and "identification"

Assimilation of social realities
Specifically, Zillmann adopts the stance of semiotic iconicity of a given representation under the auspices of which he argues for latter's perceivable "apparent reality." This assumption, taken to supersede Coleridgean "suspension of disbelief," enables for the onlooker to treat the "social situation *before* [her] the way an actual social situation [would be treated]" (Zillmann 2011:106; cf., Caughey 1984). Zillmann's accentuation here brings to mind feminist audience researcher Tania Modleski's argument that female viewers of soap operas don't identify with narrative persons, but rather "*relate* to them as *intimates*, as extensions of [their] world" (*cit.* in Stadler, H. 1990: 48; emphases added; cf., Stadler 2008:42, "*outward* extension of the self"; emphasis added).

Hence, if to consider Wulff's and Zillmann's views in concert, instead of keeping with the doubling of "re-," representation as herewith proposed bleeds

over to onlooker's everyday, or more accurately for present consideration, *carries over into it* (the "Carry-Over" Model). As such, it "augments" the latter, or, if to recall Paul Ricœur's phrasing—feeds it back to itself in a more *experientially meaningful* form (Andringa and Schreier 2004; Stadler 2008:30–32; cf., Nicolopoulou and Richner 2007).

Building a case for attentive empathy
Nonetheless, some of Zillmann's arguments remain contestable. Primarily, it is arguable whether his opinion that empathy—which the present work conceives of as a narratively scaffolded, longitudinal process capitalizing on concern and attention—can be conceived as a structural entity where you partition one specific 'slice' for "bad people" (what Zillmann calls "ill-wishing" and "schaden-freude") and something entirely different for those who are considered/perceived as "good" (Zillmann 2011:107ff.) For such distinction, unfortunately, reminds us how heavy contrasts tend to breed distrust toward half-tones to the point it becomes inconceivable that latter even exist. Consequently, such research readily overlooks the proliferation of contemporary "morally gray" (anti)heroes, as those in contemporary "complex" television, from *Mad Men*'s Don Draper to *Justified*'s Raylan Givens, all the way back to the trend-setter himself—Tony Soprano. In such notorious line-up of "complexly human" narrative persons (perhaps most definitively transcending the contour of mere "figure"; cf., Wulff 1996b:5), *Breaking Bad*'s Walter White, however, may be an example *par excellence*. Throughout his downfall from mild-mannered husband into a feared mafia kingpin (or, from Mr. Chips to Scarface, as Gilligan initially pitched the story idea), Walter—out of self-preservation, greed, and ultimately both—facilitates or indirectly effectuates despicable acts on an exponential scale and thus, viewers' judgments of him do correspond by growing successively negative, even veering on revolting.[113] Yet *simultaneously*, what could be called 'empathic interactivity,' i.e., *attention* to *and concern* for him amidst his actional context, may consequently, for the sake of discussion, defy (or perhaps rather, instigate a 'pause' on) such impulses; something the narrcepts also vividly attest to (see, chapter III, 3.4–3.5). In other words, this "witness perspective" as presently outlined crucially re-structures the intial ground of the concept of the empathy, hence underscoring an exigency for a clear self-Other *coupling* which zooms in on the empathy with Other's experience. As such, it draws from *the* tendency of our intrinsic, insuppressible world-ofness.

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[113] Case in point: in analysis (see, chp. III, 3.4–3.5), one of the descriptive elements attributiable to a narrative person such as Walt is "monster," accompanying, e.g., discussions running across various "child-threads" in A.V. Club blog environment post-4th season finale "Face-Off."

Alternatives to conventional understanding of "identifying-with"

As I have thus far has aimed to elucidate, the leading contemporary approaches regarding the complex issues discussed (see more for critical discussion in 1.6) call for a re-negotiation of the deep-rooted requirements for both empathy as well as identifying-with ("Sich-Versetzen") as the very nuclei of narrative (character) engagement (cf., e.g., Cohen 2001). As a direct consequence, Wulff thrusts ahead by anticipating identification *per se* as a non-occurrence, because "observed affects cannot become wholly those of the observer," whereas what he refers to as "approximation" (or coming-nearer, convergence; *Annäherung*) undoubtedly occurs (Wulff 2002:1; cf., Rescher, in chp. II).

In his elaboration on "identification" and "empathy," Carroll (2010) shares Wulff's initiative[114] by coining the notion of "vectoral converge[nce]." Here, audience's emotive uptake is co-inciding or joint with that of the protagonist. Observe, however, that latter's fearfulness doesn't *cause* dread in the recipient, although he might still feel it following a situative appraisal, independently of— whilst congruently with—the narrative person *feeling it*. For Carroll, then, the "emotional sync," as ascribed into the conceptualizations of "infectious" or "contagious" identification, respectively, is substituted with "the idea that audience[s] [are] resonating emotionally or 'communing' with the pertinent characters" (for comparison, see, Coplan 2004, 2006). Thus, in what in some ways might correspond with previous considerations, emotional "replication" becomes exchanged for an endeavor to capture ("approximate") the "general drift" of Other's *Seelenleben*. The vectorality of "like" overturns the horizontality of the "same" (*op. cit.*:338–340). Carroll's argument is additionally noteworthy for its subtle discernment of cognizing agents involved. As complete "sync" ultimately opens itself up to the charges of superimposition, Carroll's treatment appears designed to side-step such pitfalls.

Reconceiving empathy a narrative third personal concern for the Others
(the meaningfulness of <u>their</u> "why?")

Keeping all the major strains of thought thus far considered in mind, I will now turn to inquire: although we frequently might, would we indeed *always only* "wish for" the worst for a narrative person we might not actually like (or, having been "forced" to gradually dislike over a stretch of time, e.g., Walter)? Although Walter White's example is one of many notably complicated ones, it nonetheless attests to the unlikeliness of such deduction. Our engagement with narratives might not necessarily always play off of our worst impulses. Rather, I am inclined to agree with Wulff's estimation that empathy and counter-empathy can be "synthesized" into one empathic field which develops, unbiased, "along the action line [*Handlungslinie*]" and comprises of everyone of note (Wulff

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[114] Later in his work, Carroll, like Zillmann before him, stumbles exceedingly deeper into the deceptive rabbit hole of "good" (or, "us") and "bad" („them") characters. The "gray," as it were, is denied any existence whatsoever. One can only surmise that it is excluded in order to avert any undermining of the very neat Smithian (corroborated by the usage of "allied") emotion hierarchy that Carroll eventually develops (*ibid.*:343–344).

2003:139,142). In fact, the "positive" or "negative" depictions may ultimately inhibit sympathetic responses, and, at worst, evoke apathy altogether (*ibid.*:139–140; Wulff 2002:7). On the other hand, in accordance with previous deliberations, a more appealing solution would be the "concern" for the Others, manifesting as an intrinsically "responsible, constructive form of attention that parallels *the ideal form* in which one might attend to others, or to ethical issues" (Stadler 2008:31; emphasis added).[115] Note that I am not at all claiming subjective judgments, evaluations and overarching social norms, taboos and prejudices enforced by our everyday becoming excluded. Rather, they are 'seeping in' in proportion to them potentially 'meshing' with participants' own utilizable experiences as the constituents of the intersubjective *twistory*.[116] Thusly, like in the case of *Breaking Bad*'s commentary texts as (subjective) *narrcepts,* respondents are availed to genuinely probe their knowledge of "the Other" as a (narrative) person; to ascertain the intentional backdrop, the meaningfulness of *his/her* "why?" (cf., Carroll 2010:330–332; cf., Stadler 2008:24).

In her monograph *Pulling Focus. Intersubjective Experience, Narrative Film, and Ethics*, phenomenological film theorist Jane Stadler (2008) draws on Ricœur's notions "configuration" and "redescription" (see, 1.1 for short discussion on the latter) and considers the above inquiry into Other's "why?" under the guidelines of "practical reason" which she takes to be scaffolded on the inherently narrative, interpretative and thus, volatile core of our everyday (*ibid.*:20ff.). Stadler's reference to the kind of merger wherein the worlds of both NP's and participants' alike interweave—or, I would say, become perceived in their *engrènement* [intermeshing]—can be seen as preserving consistency with my notion of *twistory*. Accordingly, in exemplifying the complex relationships between "moral agents" at the core of feature film *Dead Man Walking*, Stadler's thoughts are additionally instructive for the present debate on one's empathic focus for they illuminate the "real-life" moral ambivalence, so

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[115] Observe here the claim of *accessibility* considered earlier *vis-a-vis* our admission to others' lives in any real life sense. The relationship Stadler also espouses is especially "ideal" in that regard, insofar as focusing at length on "complex, extended narratives," wherein "complex" corresponds to moral ambivalence, "extended" however to intersecting and overlapping "actional contexts" of the narrative persons involved (*ibid.*:31ff.) Note also Wulff's (2003:143) implication that in such "synthesis" the concern as "caring about" (*sich sorgen für*) particular NPs (like those of "more liked") in conjunction with the anticipation of narrative events is absent. Wulff appears to be saying that in order to unite everyone involved under the same proverbial banner, one has to outgrow one's "concern" for fellow beings. I don't think, however, that such absolutes are wholly necessary. As such, my present utilization of "concern" keeps closer to Stadler's ideas and—especially—those of Gallagher and others (see below).

[116] Similarly, these claims do not mean as if these same "norms, taboos and prejudices" are not, or wouldn't be, judged *in the context* of the world *of* which the "offending" narrative person is part of; a world which can be (re-)recognizably, as it were, like ours. Equally so, too, they can be judged favorably, with no offense having taken place, or, if to recall Anna Gunn's experience, 'channel' real life patriarchal gender prejudices onto the discussive treatment of a narrative person (like Gunn's Skyler, Walter's wife and unwitting accomplice).

frequently (re-)recognizable on the screen: "The film doesn't exclude the possibility that there may be fixed moral landmarks; things that are always wrong, or always right. Instead it offers a vision of the *living terrain of response and responsibility* that often moves under one's feet" (*ibid.*:34; emphasis added).

Consequently, the kind of witnessing spoken of thus far and empathy following from it does not—perhaps indeed cannot, by its very definition—necessarily endorse Other's actions, world-view, etc. (Hutto 2012:67). Rather, what conceivably is evoked here is viewers' "solidarity" (in strict Carrollian sense) towards the actional and emotional backdrop of sovereign Other's experiences (Gallagher 2012a:375–376).

Accordingly, it is exactly here where I find philosophers of mind Shaun Gallagher's (Gallagher 2011, 2012a, 2012b) and Dan Zahavi's (Zahavi 2010, 2011; Zahavi and Overgaard 2012) work on *non-simulationist* empathy to evoke prime insights. It is especially evident after Jane Stadler's emphasis on narrative persons' actional context (i.e., their interconnectedness facilitated by "extended narratives"; Stadler 2008:34), on the one hand; and, respondents' attentiveness to the "detail of the situation" former facilitates, on the other (*ibid.*). These two investigative threads, complete with Wulff's assumptions on narrative constraints, I take to accompany and significantly intersect in the following discussion.

1.5.3 Against "ontological exclusivism": Realist (Direct) Narrativist Assumptions on the (Narrative) Other and Empathy

Narrative "double sight"
Nonetheless, present implementation of the narrativist approach on social cognition, as outlined by Shaun Gallagher *et al.* (for criticism, e.g., Lavelle 2012) and opposing the simulationist and theory-theorist views on "mind-reading," may at first blush, appear premature. Throughout present chapter of this dissertation, however, I have relentlessly underscored the intrinsically social, interactive, and shared qualities of character engagement, whilst also embracing respondents' narrative "double-sight," as it were (the simultaneous acknowledgement of the artifice which is also the "intentional reality," an 'habitat' to, the narrative persons; see also, cf., text makers' world, in chp. II). Hence, this particular shift to social cognition research as currently undertaken should not be grasped as detours, but rather, as finalizing roadworks for the path laid thus far.

Still, further pause is given by the fact that narrative scholars have generally steered clear—although with some exceptional examples of the contrary, ranging from capitalizing on the "externalist" initiative (Palmer "continuing-consciousness frame" and "social mind"; cf., Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Wertsch), radical-constructivist approach on "experientiality" (Fludernik), to the respondent's "experiential background" (Caracciolo 2014)—from giving these "non-

existents" too much (or, indeed, any) leeway, in disproportion to what everyday, situated and longitudinal interactional engagement may suggest.

Against isomorphism, for <u>discovery</u>

Indeed, the tendency just suggested has produced a long-standing situation wherein the only approach that has been acknowledged as staking any claim on character ontology is possible-worlds semantics, even though the way it has been utilized distinctly disvalues any intermeshing with respondents' world-ofness. For it paints narrative persons—that is, possible INDs (*viz.* individuals) in PW terminology—as merely "constructs[, ...] stipulated by story texts [and recipients], *not discovered*." By such ruling, characters are supposedly always *in,* and their *fait accompli* is to go through—merely *mediate*—the motions of the story (Margolin 1990:846–848, emphasis added; however, see chp. II for my critical adaption of PWT). Even more recently, Marco Caracciolo's (2014) admirable pass at integrating enactivist philosophy with reception analysis resulted in an oddly disproportionate claim that "experience[s] [we] attribute to [characters, e.g.,] Hamlet [are], *as a matter of fact*, the experience[s] [we under-go] while reading" (*ibid.*:5; emphasis added). That is, we appreciate the predica-ments of those we observe or read about only insofar as we have the proclivity, the foreknowledge (or both) to see *ourselves* in their problems. Meanwhile, the very idea of acknowledging narrative other *as an Other* remains utterly incon-ceivable.

For good measure, though, other recent critics, like Palmer, do decry the disinclination to see of such person and her/his functional mind behind the forest of signs, i.e., recipient's own experiences. In fact, Palmer, in spearheading the relevance of—correlating with my emphasis on intentionality—character dispositions, identifies an "absence of a holistic approach," for the examinations of narrative person's characterization ("traits") and mental events (i.e., consciousness), respectively, are seemingly segregated in narrative theory as such (Palmer 2010:28,31). More recently, David Herman's illuminating *Story-telling and Sciences of Mind* (2013) amasses a wealth of inter- and trans-disciplinary insight which seemingly facilitates a complimentary conception of narrative person however one can still identify the old reliance of the "in" thinking (see chp. II for my specific treatment of Herman's approach, however).

In summation, I think that majority of the above anxieties are—on the most generic level— traceable to the isomorphic[117] mindset by which we do not enact on a given environment, but, instead, "operate on [the] mental models" gene-rated by our perception *of* the former (which, of course, begs the question where did the "knowledge" come from when it *never* was direct) (e.g., Kintsch 1998:14; cf., Gallagher 2010:114; Thompson 2007; Varela *et al.* 1991[1993]; Hutchins 1995[1996]; 2010; Dewey 1896). From here, the claims of characters as "models," constructed from the mental representations they evoke, obviously

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[117] In fact, Zahavi (2010, 2011) ties the notion of "isomorphism" directly to the short-comings of the simulationist (ST) and theory-theory (TT) accounts of cognition.

are not far behind (e.g., Eder 2010:19). Yet, would it not be more natural to allege that if some sort of contingent non-immediate "modeling activity" *vis-a-vis* narrative experience exists, it emerges rather on the observative stage of academic analysis, without necessarily pertaining neither to real-time perception nor to the postexposure discussions which are inherently of *realitizing* nature (cf., Sorokin 2016a, 2017a, b; analyst's observational stage indeed carries my treatment of PWT, see chapter II). Accordingly, the *idea* of representing as "storing" the knowledge *of*, surely is not without merit altogether insofar as one cannot go without some means or a "toolset" in circumscribing what one perceives *of* the intentional focus on hand, e.g., a narrative person (cf., Casebier's notion of "codetermination," below).

NPs' experientially perceived sovereignty w i t h the narrative (as their "intentional field")

As very broadly delineated, then, such is the atmosphere of distrust any validating, "alternative" view of narrative person faces. Consequently, these limitations do exasperate present aspiration to accentuate NPs' sovereign agency (as experientially given) *with the narrative* as their "intentional reality," facilitating thus, through continuous interaction, direct and immediate reciprocal understanding. Yet, the explicit opposition doesn't mean that such—apparently "radical"—construal should be offhandedly disregarded altogether, as there are notable academic works that have, to significant effect, interrogated the issue at hand.

Late Alan Paskow, a phenomenological aesthetics scholar (Paskow 2004, 1994; for reviews, see Worth 2005; Dostal 2007), cautions us not take reciprocal experience lightly in arguing for what he identifies as the "ontological exclusivism regarding fictional beings" (Paskow 2004:59,77n52). Hence he turns to investigate the experiential aspect of taking-as-real by building upon comprehensive philosophical insights (*ibid.*:77–78; cf., 1.2). Paskow links such experientiality evoked by what he argues are beings experienced *in absentia* ("overseas daughter" vs fictional being) by maintaining that they can be posited as "out there," partial to the joint world (Paskow 2004:60)[118]:

> [I]f I take my consciousness of my distant daughter to be truly *of her*, then she, as my intentional object, is posited to be in my world. But what shall we say about a fictional being? Can I say the same thing about Anna Karenina that I say about my daughter? Is she an intentional object whom I posit to be in my world? If so, is she taken to be real in the same way that I take my daughter to be real? (*ibid.*)

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[118] Note that "out there" can—on the surface—introduce affinities with the leading view from possible worlds semantics, but, as the discussion below will attest, this would be a misrepresentation of Paskow's ideas. Cf., for my critical treatment and adaptation of PWT, see chp. II.

The dual consciousness

At the first glance, Paskow's positive answer can be broached as neglecting one of the integral aspects characteristic to my proposal throughout (*viz.* "narrative double-sight"), but this claim would be unwarranted. Elaborating on the works of Wollheim and Wittgenstein (see also, 1.6), Paskow instead contends that our "seeing as" and "seeing in" comprise essentially parallel discourses. We can posit the depiction as "truly real" and become involved "in his life" as well as remain perfectly cognizant of its artifice. We do not "shout our curses at Iago," though being perhaps inclined to do so. These inherent dynamics are, for Paskow, exactly what enables for these beings to "dwell" in the world *with* us (as beings-that and beings-how) (*ibid.*:61–62,67). Put differently, Paskow concludes that we possess "dual consciousnesses," those of "agent$_1$" and "agent$_2$" which enable a split alongside the "double-sight" of narrative experience (or "dual vision," as per Paskow). We may "(wrongly) shed the belief" of agent$_1$ as we mature, but that doesn't mean that this agency, set deep in our awareness, suddenly dissipates (though critics evidently less truthful *about themselves* may argue so). Instead, these consciousness-agents remain "dialectical" with each other (*ibid.*:63–69) (for comparison, Smith's creative/critical faculty, discussed in 1.6). For, as Paskow wonderfully states of such seemingly contradictory dynamics (or, a dilemma enforcing choice, for some),

> [its] net effect is not the sheer overruling of my first-person consciousness by my rational, third-person consciousness, for the sense or felt-meaning that I derive from the experience of the signified being continues to reverberate in my world. (*ibid.*:64–65)

However, it has to be noted that whilst considering the above points, Paskow's early insistence on the inherent "absence" of such beings may give pause (recall how his example of "fictional being" correlated with that of "overseas daughter"). Yet, these hesitations prove premature (see, discussion on Zahavi below).

Depictured presences recognized as discoverable by the perceivers

Meanwhile, another phenomenological film scholar Allan Casebier (1991) draws in his much-polemized (see, Sullivan 1997) "anticonstructionist" (*op. cit.*:6) account largely from same sources and ends up contemplating cinematic mediation through the lens of Husserlian reduction. The core term Casebier returns to time and again is, yet again, "recognition." Be it Dürer's knight or the Italian boys in de Sica's *Sciuscia* (Shoeshine), they "exist independently of [the] conscious acts of apprehending" as constituent parts of the "depictured" reality, to use Husserl's phrase (*ibid.*:9). Insofar as their presence precedes any conscious contemplation, they are "*discoverable* by the perceivers"[119]—a term Casebier employs to counteract representationalist constructions (and also recalling Gibsonian terminology, to boot). Intuitively, one can spot twin affinities in the notion of "recognition" as presently deployed. As discussed by Casebier,

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[119] For "discovering," also see, Turvey's critique on Smith (1997), in 1.6.

it firstly relates to the respondent-independent "presence-ing" of the (depicted) narrative person (also see, Turvey, in 1.6). Secondly, however, it also shares similarities with Nöel Carroll's treatment of the term (cf., 1.2). How so? In order to hint at an answer, let us try to unpack Casebier's thought.

From the outset, he introduces a plethora of Edmund Husserl's highly technical terms (see, *ibid.*:12ff.). As Casebier explains, "noematic" and "hyletic" data relate to the appearances ("boy actors performing") and extradiegetic data/knowledge (camera placement, editing, sound, etc.), respectively. Consequently, both are deployed by "noesis," i.e., how the mind "positions itself" *vis-a-vis* the objects perceived. Here, hyletic is *ap*perceived (i.e., "passed through," e.g., camera movement, editing rhythms, acting, etc.) and noemata apprehended (as appearances having been formed through the former). All this dynamics leads to the "grasp[ing of] *the* object represented"—i.e., the real Italian boys (*ibid.*:14–16; emphasis in original). In accordance with these terms Casebier employs the concept of "codetermination." With this notion, significant for the larger discussion at hand thus far, Casebier elucidates what he calls "spectorial contribution." Prior subjective experiences, Casebier argues, enact a "determinative," though likewise apperceptional role in ultimately perceiving the object—through the noemata—as real.

Presence p r e d a t i n g its construction (determining the Other from within)
The key difference, as Casebier alleges, with constructivist paradigm is revealed in that object's presence *predates* its construction. That is, whilst intending towards uncovering the real through various "indeterminacies," you nonetheless cannot—by definition—actually *discover* something if you, always and already, have to *construct it.* Or, and even more notably, if to put the emphasis on the prefix: all the perceiver does (can do?) is become a participant in a joint action, of "determining" the Other from within their Otherness (the "affordances" interacted to you, to adapt J. J. Gibson's language), as opposed to wholly singularly "constitut[ing] the properties of *the* object of perception" (*ibid.*:19–22; emphasis in original; cf., Zahavi 2010:301–302).[120]

All the above ideas are encouraging in regards to the discussion thus far. Yet, Casebier's account is not without its shortcomings. As by far the worst offender, it is tricky to overcome Casebier's recurrent claim of "depictured objects" (e.g., the white horse in *Shoeshine*) being taken to "exis[t] independently of the motion picture" (on top the of being recognized as, say, a symbol for freedom (*op. cit.*:16,23). That is to say, obviously: *that kind of* horse *as such* does exist separate of the film he's brought to "perform" in, but is not that distinction

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[120] Implicit in Casebier's notion of codetermination also appears to be wider social sphere in the sense of idiosyncratic results (see, Casebier 1991:21). This draws the term even nearer to my conception of *twistory.* See also, Husserl's notion of "horizon," *ibid.*:21-25: in the experience of *Shoeshine*, we codetermine the young boy as Italian boy in the postwar society via "predelineated expectations" as to "what properties an Italian boy has" (*ibid.*:23). Although possibly an incomplete understanding of him, the gradual *discovery* and not up-front "construction" leads to a fuller understanding of him as a person on its own right.

something along the lines of claiming that the *actor* (like those boys "performing" in *Shoeshine*) exists apart from the film? Hence it appears that although Husserl seemingly cautions to take "depictured reality" as something *situated*, and so—if to keep with Casebier's favorite example—a horse there "depictured" is *the* horse for *that* particular context, Casebier's read on Husserl doesn't necessarily accept that. Nonetheless, his further treatment of intentionality—used as its Latin translation of "extending or stretching out to" – may leave some fruitful common ground (if issues noted above were bracketed, that is):

> Husserl would counsel the use of reduction to notice how we pass through the sensa [hyletic], how we permit ourselves to reach beyond what appears to us, to intend a real white horse without noticing in the perceptual act that we are doing it. (*ibid.*:17)

The above statement, read at face value, shares clear connections with my previous discussion of *realitizing* (see, 1.2 *passim*)*,* hence allowing for a partial compliance with Casebier's views. I can additionally contend that such stance correlates rather neatly with CO-Model's claim that narrative persons' reality pertains to them as sovereign entities <u>with </u>the narrative—i.e., the "depictured reality" as something *situated* and non-reductable. In summation, then, Casebier's attack on the solipsist tradition is impressive and well-met, and hence enables, in concert with Paskow's more respondent-centric account, to add further momentum on my claim of narrative persons' sovereignty.

How does knowing what we would do help us know what someone else would do? Everyday cognition research, ST and TT
Yet, the arguments outlined throughout would still face considerable opposition. So, how to proceed next? We could, for instance, review how our everyday cognition is traditionally theorized, for I believe that these peculiar resistances regards to narrative persons' ontology are, in fact, rooted in the similarly ingrained incredulity leveled at our direct approach to the everyday life at large. Accordingly, the approved views on social cognition in general and on empathy in particular, fail, *in earnest,* to account for the "minded life of others" (Zahavi 2010:290–291, 2011; Goldie 1999 *passim*; for criticism of latter accounts, see e.g., Jacob 2011). One of the leading figures of the simulation theory (ST) branch of mind-reading, Alvin Goldman, for instance, although conceiving ST as an extended form of empathy, conceptualizes simulation as "involv[ing] imitation, copying, or reexperience of the mind reading target's mental processes" (Shanton and Goldman 2010:527; "replication," Goldman 2006:36; Stueber 2006, 2008; Currie 2008; Gallese 2003:513, empathy as "inner imitation"). Hence, by definition, the *consideration* of Other-as-Other is relinquished altogether and we can join Shaun Gallagher in asking: "how does knowing what we would do help us know what someone else would do?" (Gallagher 2012a:363).

However, as Dan Zahavi observes, this prevalent line of thinking keeps with the "orthodoxy" introduced by ST and TT (and STT, see 1.2)—dating back to German psychologist Theodore Lipps' work (Lipps 1907)—by which both traditions work off of the common understanding of Other's mind as a "black box" for "the only mind I have any direct access and non-inferential knowledge of is my own" (Zahavi 2010:286,289, 2011:542–546). As such, the latter is then, consequently, "put through paces" to probe ("re-iterate") what's essentially its own content (Gallagher 2012a:363; Hutto 2008:13; Zahavi 2010:295; for comparison, Goldman 2006:36,40; Lipps 1900:418). However, claiming it may occur (which Zahavi, at least, doesn't contest in and of itself) and taking it as the "default method of "mentalizing" are two different issues altogether, as such substantial claim is uncorroborated by phenomenological and experiential evidence (Zahavi 2011:553,556). Indeed, verification even on neurological level, i.e., mirror neurons, as Gallagher scathingly argues, may have been mis-represented as the claims ST has staked on it oppose the conception of its own theory (that is, manipulation of own experiential resources in order to under-stand "the Other"). For in the "intersubjective circumstances ... [i]t is not us (or our brain) *initiating* a simulation; it is the other who does this to us via a per-ceptual elicitation" (Zahavi 2012a:365). Consequently, a better fit in comple-menting the "nightmare vision of the solipsist" is the *practical* view by which "our recognition of others as minded creatures is not only more fundamental and certain than our ascription of specific beliefs and emotions to others; but the latter practice is firmly rooted in the former conviction" (Zahavi 2010:299; 2011a:552–553).

Empathy as the basic, irreducible form of intentionality: Narrative competence and Other's Context

Hence, empathy becomes *the* "basic, irreducible form of intentionality" towards another's experience, for latter becomes one's central cause—or, a point of concentration—in fashioning some kind of understanding of (*op. cit.*:291,295). Hence, another's emotions are not merely transmitted, they are reacted to(ward) (cf., Carroll's "vectoral convergence" *et al.*, in 1.5.2), i.e., experiencing (enacting) another occurs, but never in the capacity of analogical one-to-one mapping, as it were.

However, how to enact on Other's experience without *appropriating* them? How to ascertain the "whys, meanings and motives" *they*, in their precise being-of-the-world, might insist on? In their criticisms of simulationist/theory-theory views on empathy and mindreading, Shaun Gallagher (Gallagher 2011, 2012a, 2012b) turns to an interdisciplinary, and explicitly narrativist approach, whereas Zahavi's draws on the work of Alfred Schutz (Schutz 1932, 1967) on inter-personal understanding which rests on the general thesis that the Other is a "minded, experiencing subject" (*op. cit.*:297–298; see also, Heider 1957). As such, both propositions adhere to what's come to be known as the context-sensitive direct social cognition. Especially, Zahavi underscores Schutz' insis-tence on the contextualized interpretation in—to recall Casebier—"uncovering"

the necessary indeterminacies at hand (memory about the perceived Other, or memory of oneself having some experience the former goes through). Crucially, by Schutz' distinction, this *is not* direct perception, for in a face-to-face relationship, there's a concrete "*we-relationship*." Instead, for Schutz, the former activity occurs after the fact (when, say, we are not wholly satisfied with the explanation our friend gave us in regards to his sudden burst of anger).

Now, this emphasis could be—on the surface—construed as entirely incompatible with how I have so far outlined the respondent-narrative person interaction, but not so. Although it is worth to note that I have taken from the outset to denote "direct" as gradually built *access* towards the Other, that is, the narrative person, such claim is not necessarily intended as a defense. As Zahavi observes, "directness" can be conceived of as our intending towards Other's psychological state as our primary intentional object, i.e., it is correlative with "experiential character of access," as such (Zahavi 2011:548–549). If that assumption has merit, "direct" can be observed to have similar connotations with "concentration." Consequently, I could maintain that respondents' interpersonal relationship with NPs is undoubtedly direct in the sense of being *concentrated* (through different degrees of familiarity) at them amidst their social, or "intentional field." Hence, the consideration of "direct" affords certain fluidity, hence maintaining its accordance with interactive knowledge obtained through joint recurrent encounters with "media figures." In addition, the suitability of "direct" can be further interrogated strictly on Schutz' (and by extension, Zahavi's) terms.

Firstly, Schutz, whilst taking it as fundamental, yet acknowledges the inherent limits of the face-to-face encounter and the usefulness of knowledge *of* the person scrutinized. "[I]f we wish to reach a deeper level of interpersonal understanding, we have to *go beyond* what is *directly available*" (Zahavi 2010:299, emphases added; Schutz 1967:169; cf., Casebier 1991). Secondly, as Zahavi accurately insists, face-to-face interaction doesn't possess a verbatim quality, but is rather a "theoretically unmediated quasi-perceptual ability" (Zahavi 2010: 302).[121] For interaction is multilayered, consisting of, but not limited to, previous face-to-face encounterings; interactions with those abroad; with (experientially) non-concrete individuals like tax officials as mere "points" in our social strata; or even, recalling the grandmother example Paskow used, with those who still continue to influence us, as it were. Here, too, experience is direct, but in the precise sense of "co-exist[ence] in time" which allows for the concurrent absence from one's "immediate surroundings," *viz.* face-to-face proximity (Zahavi 2010:300).[122]

Yet, even in cases of Schutzian "they-orientation," these contemporaries as ideal types (e.g., mailmen) one ordinarily lacks intimate knowledge of are indisputably constituents of the two-fold orientation of "we think of each other as *one of them*." In both cases, same pragmatic context is shared (*ibid.*:301–302;

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[121] A claim particulary evident in the contemporary everyday life where we are—like it or not—deeply immersed in various social media.

[122] Cf., Paskow's "absence," from previous discussion.

Schutz 1967:202; Zahavi 2011:547–549). In the distinct case underwriting present dissertation, such "pragmatic context" emerges through the *realitizing* of (*viz.* passing through the data of the artifice) the long-familiar narrative persons into a narrcept (expressed as an individual commentary text with a 'fluid' construal of storyworld of "reasoning agents") that may express a joint phenomenon of *twistory*. The latter, in effect, develops them—as "objects of gossip" within the "sites of engagement"—into comprehensible constituents of participants' "in the world," whereas NPs' own world-ofness (even though it, strictly speaking, is not *our* world) won't be neglected. In summation, then, the "general thesis of other self" prevails throughout for the "contexture" pertaining to the encountered Others is of primal significance. Hence, "[o]ne can consequently concede that our typical understanding of others is contextual *without endorsing the view* that our engagement with others as minded creatures is primarily a question of attributing hidden mental states to them" (Zahavi 2010: 302; emphasis added).

Meanwhile, Gallagher's developmental narrativist account (like that of Hutto's considered shortly) greatly contributes to and, indeed, terminologically specifies Zahavi's account. In accordance with Wulff's understanding of empathy treated previously, Gallagher's approach (1) links the knowledge of/understanding dynamics of peoples' narrative directly to "empathic attitude toward them" (Gallagher 2012a:374); whereas (2), following (1), allows to maintain the possibility to emphasize with those unlike us (e.g., aliens from other planets, circulating geometrical shapes, etc.). Now, how can that be? Here's where the developmental narrativist aspect becomes evident, for it is the diverse know-how obtained *through* narratives (since a young age) that scaffolds our later (mature?) understanding of others (in all, "massive hermeneutical background," i.e., various practical knowledge concerning the expectations and guidance of how to deal with other people; Gallagher 2011[123]; for a more up-to-date treatment, cf., Gallagher and Allen 2016:15ff.). Recalling Paskow, it is the consumption of narratives that single-handedly makes our consciousness' agent$_I$ possible. In other words, this "narrative competence" enables us to recognize others (real or fictional) as *storied* (cf. Batty 2014). The sheer knowledge of their "contextualized details" facilitates narrativist "fram[ing]" of their, to use Hutto's phrase, "storied happenings," which might not be—at first—explicitly comprehensible (Gallagher 2012a:370). In fact, as Gallagher suggests, this deep focus on other effectively restructures empathy *per se* (and, as such, comes full circle in underscoring the intrinsic interpretative quality linked to making sense of our world-ofness; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008), as it comes to indicate "[one's openness] to the experience and the life of the other, in their context, *as* [one] *can understand it*, not in terms of [one's] own narrow experience, but in terms that can be drawn from a diversity of narratives that inform [one's] understanding" (*ibid.*:372; emphasis added).

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[123] I can see this term as having specifically Other-centric connotations on what Casebier references as "codetermination" in the previous discussion.

Hence, there is always necessarily a *distance*—narrative distance, by Gallagher—between oneself and Other (*ibid.*:376; Zahavi and Overgaard 2012). Other's situation is always *his/her* situation, whereas claiming so doesn't automatically preclude empathic responses, i.e., the "concern condition," nor facilitate a *reducito ad absurdum* of conflating selves (Gallagher 2012a:362):

> Only when I find out his story will I be able to move to a level of empathic understanding. If, however, his story is that he is crying because he lost the gun with which he was going to kill me, then it is unlikely that any sort of positive emphatic understanding will result, *although I may still understand his intentions, his actions, maybe even his motives*. The story, the narrative, helps to fill in the circumstances, and for understanding of the empathic sort, *one needs to understand the circumstances.* (Gallagher 2012b:17, emphases added)

Promptly put, empathy, then, emerges in and becomes empowered through the unpacking of Other's context; of aspiring after that person's intentional wholeness (*Einheit*) (Wulff 2006:57–59). Additionally, and especially importantly for the discussion up to this point and onwards, this (learned) proclivity to craft peoples' narratives as espoused by Gallagher is not merely situative, but moreover, *expansive in time*. For we observe others "engaged in long-term projects (plots) that add meaning to what they are doing" (Gallagher 2012a:371). Subsequently, this enables us to understand them—iteratively—in a more nuanced fashion. To put the same point differently, developmental narrative account facilitates a kind of feedback loop—either outside of or engaged with "fictional" narratives, we are always already developing highly fluctuating narratives of the Others encountered.

Everyday narrative-practical "realist" stance of character engagement
In my opinion, the previous discussion develops a sizeable argument in justifying what could be referred to as the everyday realist stance (perhaps qualifiably separate from "naïve" realist). This approach would (incidentally) contribute to both "real" and "fictional" social cognition, and in so doing, can be seen as cutting across the prevailing trends. As such, it is gratifying to note that the idea of "narrative practice" in understanding another is not inherently foreign for the studies distinctly set on the cognitive "poetics" of audiovisual narratives. For one, David Bordwell's notion of "emotional intelligence" (Bordwell 2008: 52) could, concerning prior insight, function as a conceptual bridge. As clarified by Bordwell, our narrative comprehension and intentionality towards depicted Others are severely interlinked. A far more important facet of the same equation, however, is that we consistently "run scenarios" which hypothesize how these Others might act on *their* intentional proclivities in "story situations" which circumscribe their actional context as intelligent agents. As Bordwell's account, though constructivist, puts it, we "gauge personalit[ies] or current attitu[des] on the basis of [narrative persons'] emotional responses" (*ibid.*). Such *narrative* understanding becomes an "intersubjective way of knowing" (Stadler 2008:37). Once again, given distinction reminds us the *with-principle*

(1.2): narrative persons just are not transparent pawns the perceiver can somehow vicariously "live through," experiencing illicit desires. As Dolf Zillmann has noted on various occasions, this Freudian mindset is not adequately proficient and lacks empirical heft, to boot.

Previously discussed ideas and propositions find their culmination in the following sub-chapter where a preliminary empirical analysis sketch is outlined. It highlights how precisely narrcepts—expressed as individual commentary texts—operate and emerge. Thereafter I will move to introducing and explicating criticisms on the still prevailing key theoretical points on the (non-being of) "character" (see, 1.6) and close with the summarizing concept of "television social network," meant to round up present chapter as well as lead into chapter II.

1.5.4 Narrative Persons and their "social field": A Preliminary Proposal for an Everyday Realist Analysis

As the previous sub-chapters endeavored to explicate, everything pertaining to the idea of character engagement as evidenced in the online discussion space reverberates by and through the foundational notion of *interactivity* which could additionally be characterized by so-called three-dimensional understanding of narrative persons (NPs): (a) interaction(al engagement), (b) relationship/*twistory*, (c) network (see, 1.7). Going further, one could even insist that what we have here is a kind of *twistority*, as CO-Model's key notion *twistory* evinces multiple bi-directional relations. Its narratively substantial movements circumscribe a (self?-)*storying* interactive system on top of specific technical strategies facilitating the discussional space as such.[124] However, what comprises of such "3-D understanding" is an assumption which is to be taken in the precise sense of a *well-rounded* comprehension of the narrative other *as a person*, emerging from "a multiplicity of relational dimensions" (cf., Shotter 2001:346):

1. Viewer/participant↔narrative person/s: i.e., the subjective/idiosyncratic gradation. It is about how one individual respondent perceives of a NP as developing large-scale reasonings of some situation at hand: (i) ordinarily drawing on what s/he knows to be possibly accurate about either the thinking, doing or thinking of doing of his conspecifics; (ii) or of her/his own possible outlook as potentially perceived by a reasoning NP. Hence, the attentive, concerned observation (witnessing) of Other's "social field" amounts to specific kinds of narrceptivizing perceptions of intentionality – in short: *narrcepts*, expressed as individual commentary texts;

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[124] E.g., thematically correlative commentaries establishing "distributed" threads (of narrceptive thinking) amidst the larger data entity, i.e., weekly commentary section at *Uproxx/Hitfix*, or recipient-made episodic discussion threads at *Reddit*. See, chapter III, 3.4–3.5.

2. Narrative person↔narrative person: the key layer onto which participants' intending focuses (concentrates)—the social, "intentional field" of narrative persons as they habituate *their* "world"—feeding into the operative tendencies as put forth in (1);

3. And lastly, viewer↔viewer: here—with the analytical prospects afforded by IBM SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys (TAS4 for short), such as identifying the interlaced relationship of narrative motifs (cigarette, poisoning, ricin) and narrative persons (Walt, Jesse, Gus, Huell, Saul) within the "big data"— it is investigated whether, and if so, how, the diverse narrcepts as outlined from a number of users (and across two episodes and several online discussion environments) enable to circumscribe distinct macro-patterns of storying (for my critical-adaptive approach on the possible worlds semantics as a necessary *interpretational framework* to further flesh this out, see, chp. II).

That being said, the present chapter has and continues to be primarily dedicated to expound on the first of the noted 'gradations,' whereas both the more terminologically precise analysis as well as the intrinsically "macro" approach— guided by the original notion of **beacon**—as spearheaded in this study (as emphasized primarily by (3), shall be held for the analysis section proper (see, chapter III, 3.4–3.5). However, for subsequent explanatory purposes, additional commentary contributions relating to the prior text concentrating on Gus (cf., JH's narrcept in the Introduction) are provided below and considered based on the "alternative grammar" of participants' "creative vernacular" as elaborated on *thus far*.

> [T]here is no way the doctors would know the boy was poisoned unless someone told them, and no one could have told them but Jesse. So the fact that Jesse knew about the poisoning, didn't kill Walt, and caused Gus to be led to a place where he could be "gotten to" would all cause alarm bells to go off [for Gus]. This is a man who, through careful planning and extreme patience, outsmarted and took down the entire Mexican cartel. There is no way he would be outsmarted by one of Jesse and Walt's plans. (Joseph, *Hitfix*, 3.10.11)

Out of many of its kind, Joseph's text maintains how Gus cannot be the poisoner. This can be taken, following prior discussion, as the general "framing" of the overall *narrcept* on hand. It is chiefly substantiated by Gus' last minute reversal of actions whereby he chooses not to return to his car following the meet with Jesse in the hospital's chapel (*viz*. Jesse and Walt had a plan to blow up Gus via his vehicle and that was the reason Jesse coaxed him to the hospital). In accordance with JH's text, here, too, the focality rests on the meaningfully charged "Mexico incident," though noteworthy is the alteration of the accent that comes with it. As the former text implied, JH didn't treat the proceedings in Mexico as an end-game contingent on Gus' nature, his strength of character ("careful planning," "extreme patience"), but instead, as a pragmatic seizure of power, a logical continuance to the hitherto accomplishments for someone like him. Therefore, a blatant self-sabotage of something long-last achieved (i.e., a

mafia kingpin who answers to no one), is out of the question. Conversely, whilst Joseph concentrates on (intends of) Gus, he observes these two events (the "take down" of the cartel, and Gus' present detour) as having an indisputable common ground which (*contra* JH) perhaps even fortifies Gus' focal involvement with recent events (i.e., the possible child murder). In effect, the Mexico incident becomes the *overlapping aspect* to both *narrcepts* (JH's and Joseph's) through which the intentionality of the same NP (Gus) is "normalized" (Hutto 2007:7) to emphatically differing returns. Where JH deploys the aforementioned event as the rationale for Gus' non-involvement, Joseph binds the emotional backdrop of it expressly with the possibility that Gus could be—entirely justifiably—the man behind child-murder. "This is the man," writes Joseph, whose ironclad consistency ultimately reaped benefits in obliterating the whole cartel from the face of the earth by deploying an extremely finely tuned plan. Hence Joseph develops his *narrcept*, embedding onto it the assumption that Gus cannot be the kind of man who'd take the bait of Jesse/Walt. Rather, by weighing all the evidence, only thing left to do is to adduce that Gus was way ahead of everyone else involved (approx. five steps, as another respondent noted) (Cf. 3.5). He effectively saw them through, and agreed to meet Jesse solely due to the desire to do some reconnoitering. However, at the very moment he realized that the possible poisoning scare could've only emanated from Jesse, whereas Walt is still alive (due to which one knows/suspects *his*, i.e., Gus', involvement), he smelt a trap and thought appropriate to abandon his car in the parking lot altogether.

However, let us also examine another narrcept, now from another discussion environment concurrent with *Uproxx/Hitfix*. Respondent Nickysix's text is lengthy, at first concentrating on (intending of) Jesse (and on Jesse *through* Brock), however the portion of present interest is as follows:

> [--]What convinced me that Gus really did do it was the chapel scene: 1. I think that when Jesse made a point of saying that Brock had been poisoned, Gus knew what he [Jesse – S.S.] suspected. And that is why Gus gave him time off [from work]. And that is the moment that Jesse knew for sure that Gus really did do it (and the moment that I was convinced that he did). Why else did he suddenly develop what seemed like a sense of empathy for Jesse in that moment? 2. That also explains why Gus was suddenly telepathic and refused to get in the car. It hit him that Jesse knew about the poison and that he had been summoned to the hospital for a reason other than a pissing contest in the chapel. This is how I see it anyway. To me, it is the only real explanation for everyone's actions, especially Gus' big realization at the end.[--] (Nickysix, *The A. V. Club*)

Likewise to Joseph's, Nickysix' narrcept's general "frame" is also Gus' involvement, though he arrives at the affirmative assumption. Similarly, the point of origin of his/hers abduction pertains the confrontation between Gus and Jesse in the hospital's chapel. A significant facet characteristic to Nickysix's reasoning, however, is derived from the peculiarities of Jesse's behavior in the focal scene. Similarly to a number of respondents, Nickysix zooms in on the nuance in

Jesse's articulation which reveals his suspicions—namely his particularly emphatically presented statement that Brock's illness originates expressly from poisoning. By such embeddedness, Nickysix stresses Jesse's explicit intentionality to express himself just so; hence opening a possibility to "read" Gus' reaction (having some time prior bought into Walt's categorical denial). By implication, then, Nickysix views Gus as the executive force behind such monstrous act. Such understanding, in itself, however, is contingent upon of the dynamics of "action" (to recall Wulff's phrase) intertwining these two narrative persons—Gus and Jesse. Hence, the events in Mexico as the 'overlapping aspect' interlacing all the narrcepts presently considered—although perhaps remaining on the background—bears on the agenda here as well as it did in the cases of JH and Joseph. For what's presumably obvious information for Gus, Jesse should recognize the lethal effect of ricin from his own immediate experience, as he saw Gus "cutting down" the whole cartel with that particular poison. By previous considerations, then, Nickysix' narrcept differs considerably from JH's and Joseph's. JH linked the cartel murder and its aftereffects on the account of Gus' personal character firmly with the impossibility of the act of child killing (one excludes the other). Meanwhile, Joseph thought that Gus' assent to meet in the hospital was primarily charged by the desire to reconnoitre in the sense of observing how "far behind"—in comparison to himself—the others involved actually are. Yet, it concluded with him "sensing the trap" (i.e., he killed the kid, because deeply levelheaded plans are not foreign to him, although he couldn't have predicted Jesse and Walt picking up his trace, as it were, so quickly). Conversely, Nickysix attests for the possibility of another interpretation altogether; one by which Gus may have gone to ascertain the fulfillment of his plan (that is, to confirm Jesse's conviction to go and kill Walt immediately), however, once there he recognized that others had seen "through" his plan and it wouldn't be advisable to return to his car. Accordingly, whereas Joseph explicated Gus' "spidey-sense" (that is how the respondents kept on referring to the man's decision not to return to his car) through his skill—refined to perfection in time—to make far-reaching calculations, enabling him to foresee the networks of moves of his conspecifics already in the germinating stage, Nickysix explains Gus' "telepathy" chiefly *in situ* as Gus is forced to re-evaluate his previous doings on the fly. Although that facet represents the man as a kind of calculator *par excellence*, it also develops him as not nearly so ironclad of an individual, who rather attempts to minimize possible damages (cf. above the ordinary norm of friendlier-warmer behaviour towards Jesse). Here Gus understands—to keep with Nicksix' argumentation—that even if he is not wholly "caught" yet, then at the very least, he is being suspected, and, as follows, his life may be in danger. Hence, he decides to desert his car.

The final close analysis, also taking into account the elaboration on conceptual ideas introduced in the present chapter and elaborated on in chp. II, shall be provided in chapter III, 3.4–3.5. The objective of the present short analysis was, first and foremost, to put the preceeding theoretical insight—drawing on

its still "fluid," under construction analytical vocabulary—into practice for the first time. In other words, it specifically highlighted respondents/participants' proclivity in developing narrcepts—specific kinds of *narrativistic perceptions of intentionality*—by concentrating on (intending of) the NPs they've grown familiar with over time. As such, what was presently proposed can be conceived of as the empirical culmination of the theoretical claims entertained throughout chapter I, hence providing a practical angle in challenging the intrinsically solipsist (and "modelist") view on character engagement. Hence, what is still left to do is to propose further, even more targeted criticisms against the latter. This is going to be the objective of the next sub-chapter.

1.6 The review and criticism of and discussion on Murray Smith's character-theory

The purpose of the subsequent sub-chapter is to come full circle, as it were, in my core criticisms, whilst I take on the review and criticism of the renowned film theorist Murray Smith.

1. It is herewith useful to recall previous discussions focusing on and touching upon empathy (see, 1.5.1–1.5.3) and it is (im)possibility when faced with narrative persons (NPs), who are "dislikable," or otherwise outside the "norm."
2. I will intend to closely review Smith's initial account (Smith 1995), by observing its stages which, in some cases, over amplified originally rather harmless concerns with his theory.

For (1), one should primarily interrogate Smith's highly influential and much-cited text "Gangsters, Cannibals, Aesthetes, or Apparently Perverse Allegiances" (Smith 1999). In further championing his key contention of "imagining from the inside" (Smith 1997), Smith asserts that we imaginatively self-have the depicted, "illicit," actions of the other. In doing so, Smith proposes, our "thrill" begets a dualistic quality. That is, due to those actions being inherently *fictional* and strictly non-occurring, feeling of guilt is effectively absolved into a "sense of excitement," for

> fictional persons don't perform actual deeds. In our *imagination* we *indulge forbidden desires* (including desires that are desires only because they are forbidden) and *experience emotions apt to the actual realization of these desires,* while ultimately being reassured that we, *like the 'good-bad' characters*, are attractive and *morally worthy.* (*ibid.*:224; emphases and underlining added; Smith 2011:238)

These thoughts unwittingly evoke a celebrated—albeit, ironically, "fictional"—exchange:

Do not try and bend the spoon. That's impossible. Instead, only try to realize the truth.
What truth?
There is no spoon.
There is no spoon?
Then you will see, that is not the spoon that bends, it is only yourself.
(*The Matrix,* 1999)

Obviously, for Neo, these suggestions were tremendously beneficial. They instructed him to appreciate his conditional existence in a "desert of the real" wherein the *real itself* can be "bent" and re-shaped if and when one's will can be trained to be sufficiently superintending. Within the confines of such unpredictable virtual architecture wherein twice-seen black cats signify a code change and previously non-existent walls are suddenly erected, nothing that appeared was of actual presence, but rather the *programmed* uptake of one's mind. Hence, the key insight—as compacted by the fastidious language of the "enlightened one"'s to Neo—was to reach beyond, to comprehend the unfixedness of these propositions, of realizing the negotiable quality of the shown imagery (and sensations), for it is essentially *him* who *makes them* to begin with.

Now, how about our experience with audiovisual arts? Smith's quotation above makes for a complicated and confounding read. Being as Smith has acknowledged his reliance on the tool-set of analytical philosophy (primarily the "paradox of fiction" argument), the lines of thought he sketches, as it were, hardly come as a surprise. However, does it not, perhaps, end up undermining his objective to make theoretical sense as to how viewers *respond to characters* the way they do? Nevertheless, his ostensible reluctance to stop cold with the denial of any ontological rooting has caught my eye tracing back to *Engaging Characters*. Let us ask thus the following. When "social entities" in fictions are incapable for "actual deeds" and if everything we know about (and come to know of) those deeds essentially resides in our (playful) imagination (as the character is nonexistent and we only see actor-as-character as a "imagination guide" of sorts; see, Smith 1998), why would Smith nonetheless bookend such a claim by ascribing *some* agency to the narrative persons observed (i.e., moral worthiness). Indeed, Smith, in his attempts to make the cake and have it, reaches even further by utilizing such tendency through *comparing* them (as our imaginational content) with *us* as embodied beings. If to add all this up, however, the contrast undermines the very vigorousness of the contention he proposes.

Now, in keeping Smith's general outline in mind (I will take on his wider theory shortly), let us consider the corresponding thoughts of spectator engagement researcher Margaret Bruun Vaage (2013). Vaage, in fact, grapples with how to frame her colleague's post-watch culpability of having cheered on to the climaxing events of Lars von Trier's controversial *Dogville*. Vaage asks thus whether the consequential *quality* inherent to the emotional pleasure one draws from Grace's bloody display of they-had-it-coming revenge is conceivably *relieving* this kind of judgment from its full, real life weight, because, well,

nothing *really* happened (=it was "fictional"). Vaage summarizes this as "fictional relief," contrasting it with a real-life news story of suffering. She then goes on to claim that emotions evoked by the two cannot be compared. So, if to allow a moment of hypothetical contemplation, consider the following. You would be made familiar with an analogous, but real news *report* of a nondescript woman, who, having been an unwitting target of a nondescript village's collective abuse, at one point goes ahead and murders the lot. Would you be dissuaded from experiencing these (satisfying) revenge-justifying emotions on account of them being not only morally wrong, but "real" occurrences, book-ended with a "factual" human deed, to boot, given to you by non-emotional style of report? Now, consider the flip side: would it follow from this concession that you're effectively condemning *the very same* act, whereas temporarily allowing yourself *not to*, whilst observing the notorious climax of *Dogville*—note: having thereby been a long-term *witness* to Grace's growing despair? Indeed, these are tough and knotty questions to pose, but I would not be so quick to think of this dialectic as a polarity with no conceivable overlaps.

It is not at all difficult to see how the notion of fictional relief as espoused by Vaage appears to implicitly suggest that we afford to ourselves essentially an emotional reign which is free of a moral compass of any kind. This tendency is apparently especially prevalent in case of crime depictions considered taboo in real life. Vaage (2015) writes thus: "when it comes to rape and sexual abuse of women and children especially, our intuitive and emotional reaction seems to be that (almost) anything goes" as far as dealing with the culprit is concerned (*ibid.*:426). To unpack Vaage's thought, then: allowing oneself the emotional satisfaction when abusers in *Dogville* get their due introduces "guilt" afterwards which, in turn, requires legitimization, whereas in the case of a rapist, we are empowered by our real-life moral norms and hence take similar revenge scenario as infallible (no "relieving" presumably follows).

Something feels dangerously off-kilter here. I am unconvinced that we would just disconnect our real-life "moral system" and activate instead a R-rated transitory disposition exclusively for fiction, effectively turning ourselves into ruthless sociopaths who are free to cherry-pick severities of crimes witnessed (cf., *ibid.*:431). Or, let's take another, more recent example: BBC's serial *The Fall* (2013-…). How to "label" an emotion towards a protagonist, who, in a far darker reversal of *Dexter*, is a family man and grief counselor by day, and a serial killer and sexual sadist by night? Whilst no one would understandably "cheer" him on, it is nonetheless palpable that we can trace an empathic component here via the "concern" for him in regards to the inescapable capturing. This may be further exacerbated by subtle hints and eventual reveals both about his childhood traumas and lack of family, respectively. While it would be easy to write it up as "concern is present because viewers do not want the serial to end," I do not think that spells the whole story. "Bad" narrative persons seem to endlessly fascinate us and the storytellers who construct

them[125], to be sure, but are we really collectively "perverse" for not adhering—in a "fictional" space, no less—to some agreed-upon moralistic normative, on the one hand, whilst incapable to empathize—however "minimally"—with such persons, in the sense of Gallagher, Zahavi *et alii*? Hence, although it unlikely was Vaage's intention, readings like the sort she gave above essentially eliminate empathy full stop.

Conversely, it is worth to concisely consider two views here. Milly Buonanno's contribution contrasts with and draws on Alfred Schutz's assertion pertaining to the plurality of life-worlds and one's navigation between them (i.e., from 'fantasy' back to 'everyday') (cf., Schultz 1972:230ff.). Buonanno, in associating televisual storytelling (e.g., drama serials) with evoking a "narration of society" (Buonanno 2008:80), would rather sustain a healthy nexus between the two, because "the imagined is real not only because we let ourselves believe it ... but also because it *can intersect with and to some extent modify our everyday life itself*, or at any rate the perception we have of some of its dimensions and our way of relating to them" (*ibid.*:77, emphasis added).

Meanwhile, Nöel Carroll (2004), in broaching the eponymous protagonist of *The Sopranos*, develops the twin notion of "allied fascination," or, as it becomes refined in his later writings, "solidarity" (see, Carroll 2010) (cf., 1.5). As viewers, we find ourselves fascinated in negotiating a pro-attitude towards Tony, because, as Carroll puts it, the show concurrently "exercises our talent for calculating the most morally optimal allegianc[e] possible in ethically murky situations" as well as makes us *understand*—in-depth, I might add—why Tony does and is how he is, in short, his *reasons* (*op. cit.*:94,96). As Carroll eloquently observes, the impulses for such a fascination line up especially lucidly through Tony's therapy sessions with Dr. Jennifer Melfi, for "[t]he layers of intentional dissembling, unconscious self-deception, understatement, knots, hypocrisy, and misdescription that [he] puts in motion are consistently engrossing; one is constantly comparing what he says and *what he is aware of with his actual situation (as we know it)*" (*ibid.*89–90; emphasis added).

Herewith it is appropriate to return to Murray Smith, as his seminal *Engaging Characters* espoused principles very similar to the critics above, and it is only his later work which has become exceedingly adamant in underscoring the unflinching dichotomy as previously discussed, hence enabling to detect notable discrepancies whilst analyzing his earlier and recent sentiments on the matters on hand.

Smith (1995a) concedes as his objective a theoretically strengthened understanding of "naïve realist" folk response to character ("I identified with her," "I feel as if it were myself on the screen")—"a psychology and sociology of spectatoral responses to character, understood as elements of narrative film structure." In rejecting psychoanalysis as the dominating "'metapsychology' of cinema," he draws primarily on analytical philosophy and cognitive anthropology

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[125] Strangely enough, noted thematics are also central to Vaage's recent monograph, see Vaage (2016).

(and, to some degree, (post-)structuralism), hence aiming to devise a revisional "system which posits several distinct *levels of engagement* with fictional characters [leading to] the *structure of empathy*" (emphasis in original) (*ibid.*:5– 12). In so doing, Smith opposes the Genettean structuralistic devaluation of character, claiming instead that "basic human agency or 'personhood'" is an unmistaken part and parcel of our "imaginative engagement with fictional narratives" (*ibid.*:17). Whilst retaining the principal ideas of Edward Branigan's approach (character's mimetic[126] constructedness and latter's non-independency from the text), Smith renounces Branigan's preference of not conceiving character as the nucleus facilitating the "intelligibility" of (filmic) text. Namely, Smith is unconvinced whether the privileged state—in the sense of being the key for making narrative intelligible—of character can be so easily dispensed with. Whilst he acknowledges that it wouldn't necessarily be the case *all the time*, some centrality of character always has to be sustained. By such emphasis, however, Smith doesn't intend to fall back on, as he puts it, "[the] realist characterization as the only legitimate goal of narrative fiction, a view in which characters should transcend the work in which they are produced and take on an independent, albeit merely imaginative, existence" (*ibid.*:18).

Instead, by relying on the correlation with agent-filled "immediate experience[s] of the social world" (i.e., agents constrained by social structures, e.g., a policeman), Smith advocates for a kindred salience whilst speaking of character as the fictional analogue of the human agent. Salience he conceives foremost as interdependent with narrative (as it is "node" that does not "stand outside [it]"), thus operating for viewers as a mediating structure, facilitating their "'entry into'" narrative. Contrasting his "dynamic model" with closed and abstract structuralist account of relying entirely on textual markers which recipients' cumulatively gather in order to ultimately unveil the "whole" (i.e., "traits" into general thematic motifs)—approach, which, by Smith, leaves "the *nature* of this agency inchoate" (emphasis added)—Smith argues that viewers "bring to [the cinema experience]" their own pre-knowledge (a bailiwick of cultural models and stereotypes) which they then subsequently utilize in "'fill[ing]' out' the information provided by the text" (*ibid.*:19–20).

By identifying *imagination* as the key ingredient in comprehending the relationship between self and others, Smith moves to enlist the assistance of schema theory which, as a "realist, constructivist epistemology"—accentuating the running organization of external "sense-data" by protean mental struc-

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[126] Mimesis, as conceived by Smith's account, has to be specifically deliniated here. In employing it, Smith's objective is to dismantle it from the purview of theories seeing it as denoting "reproduced" reality. Instead, Smith's idea correlates closely with narratologist Monika Fludernik's. Both of them conceive of mimesis as a process that appeals to (a) one's knowledge of textual and artistic conventions (itself founded on the assumption that recipients do not just *ipso facto* suppress this knowledge in favour of "pretense"), and (b) knowledge of the real world (Smith 1995a:53). However, I do find Fludernik's proposition far more complimentary regards to the claim of the narrative-internal soverignty of narrative persons primarily because ultimately for Smith, the latter remain all but mediating "nodes" waiting to be "filled."

tures—leads him to underscore, following Gombrich, how character as an agent (constructed through and as a "person schema") doesn't necessarily have to be something wholly unified. Rather, this assumption can be retained on the basis of "'loose integration' of schemata," merely implying capacity for "purposeful action" (as schema is always constrained by attainable goals). What follows from the latter connection is that Smith preserves schema theory's inherent *automaticity.* In what he dubs "natural habits of mind [that] transparently" scaffold our everyday behavior (*ibid.*:49), drawing hereby on cognitive anthropology, Smith argues that we tend to assume, without necessarily thinking about it beforehand, that character in a fictional representation is contained in one body (Smith subsumes these ideas later into his "structure of empathy" framework, specifically under "recognition" that he synonymises with character "construction" (*ibid.*:75)[127], but which I find definitively non-alignable with how both e.g., Nöel Carroll and or Allan Casebier employ the term).

Smith recalls here the relevance of one's imagination, broaching it as the capacity to "expand [on] and adapt existing conceptual frameworks through new experience, including [one's] experience of fictional representations" (*ibid.*:52). Consequently, Smith coins "mimetic hypothesis," that is, a stance which underscores viewer's experiential ('encyclopedic') pre-knowledge as the prerequisite for "seeing characters as persons." It can be achieved, Smith maintains, because of our initial know-how reveals us that we are "processing an artifact." Along similar lines, there should not be anything intrinsically "unintelligible" in our emotional responses to "fictional events" *vis-a-vis* real ones. Although the *existence* of particular object is merely our "imaginative propo[sal]," making the existential tether, as it were, incompatible with a real-life analogue (and thus, allowing us to be "sympathetic" towards someone we wouldn't—e.g., a murderer), it doesn't follow as if emotional responses to real events are imbued with more significance and legitimacy than emotional responses to fiction (*ibid.*:57–58). Our ability to fathom such artifact grows out of "our experience in the world," and, as a direct result, we are sophisticated enough (though, perhaps, slightly miffed) to "draw upon the two structures of emotion simultaneously," in the cases, say, when the film obfuscates the margins of (historical) real and fiction. Ultimately, however, "the text itself may transform the way we understand and experience the world" (*ibid.*:54). Our experientiality, then, can be found in constant flux, under revision due to exposures to fictions (each, quite possibly, with its own spin on what we may've taken for granted beforehand).

Concurrently with it "changing" us, however—Smith claims, following Paul Ricœur's work on fiction and reality (Ricœur 1979)—our own *attention* to the "real" becomes suspended. But not only is "our real" been postponed, as it were. As embraced by Smith, fiction, too, by such a view, affords a kind of distanced in-look, enabling us to "try new ... ways of being-in-the-world" (*ibid.*;

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[127] Smith notes, however, that schemas are not wholly rigid and that there's "a certain degree of flexibility" to them. That is, they can change "historically as social practices shift."

cited *op. cit.*), wherein we entertain diverse emotional responses which, though tantamount to their "real" analogues, are yet intrinsically once removed from the "real," precisely because they are *entertained*, as opposed to (directly) *felt.*

With reservations, a number of ideas from *Engaging Characters* could conceivably operate within the vocabulary established in the present dissertation. *However*, in succeeding years, Smith appears to have resigned almost entirely to reduce everything onto the level of imagination. Whilst considering our engagements with "fictions" more generally, he hence claims: "in *responding* to a fiction film, we see a film *and in seeing it are led to imagine* that what it depicts takes place" (Smith 1998:63, emphases added; cf., Allen 1998). For as far as character is concerned, Smith goes on to remark, we don't actually *see* one, but we are rather taken by the "activity of make-belief" initiated by the *depiction* of actor-as-character. This assumption right here introduces the central predicament I am having with Smith's position, even if there's much to be indebted for in his consideration—especially, again, in the earlier work—of "filmic" character.

As previously clarified, the very existence of character, as a "salient node of narrative structure", for Smith, is specifically what affords spectators with distinct possibility to imbue some narrative film with "intelligibility." In rejecting ideological and illusionist "subjection" accounts (Smith 1995b:123) as well as "realist characterization"—taken to mean characters transcending the work in which they are produced and taking on an independent, albeit merely imaginative existence, Smith rather considers character *qua* narrative "node" as functioning like a *mediating* structure, fostering entry-way "quasi-experiences" (*ibid.*:124) through which our immersion takes flight (Smith 1995a:18; cf., 1.6).

Although, as sub-section 1.5 showed, the relevance of narrative *situatedness* perseveres within the confines of my own framework, I do not envisage it as stifling as Smith's reliance on such thoroughly either-or opposition, whereby, indeed, any consideration of *narrative persons*' "intentional reality" is neglected altogether. Admittedly, though, it comes as no surpise, because Smith's framework—by definition—doesn't expound on the "ways and means" by which narrative persons *as agents intending and making sense* are reciprocally perceived. After all, acknowledging that would make him undermine his own solipsist perspective by which audiovisual narratives do not provide us with "intentional objects" at all.

Times and again, Smith emphasizes that "human agency" is the core tenet onto which our "comprehension of narratives" is scaffolded, but he cannot have it both ways. If such aforementioned "agency" is not only our "construct," but a subordinate one for—and not equal in relevance, whilst epistemologically differing, to—"plot"; in that case, all we do, essentially, is *re*-represent it imaginatively and, as such, all of our understanding of others (as Smith too, especially in his early work, correlates 'human agency' also with our "real life" interactions) is predicated on whatever we come up within the confines of our minds.

Pace Smith, narrative persons (NPs) do not just mediate for us whatever it is we expect a "human perspective" to mediate in a particular story. Instead, we observe an independently *experiencing, intelligent agent* whom we can, indeed, consider as our "guide" to his world at large, but then and only then, when we first accept him as having a life outside of our grasp— within the "off screen spaces," to borrow Wulff's phrase—but yet within the narrative context as his intentional, psychological world (reality). In other words, we have to overcome the perspective based on which, as the prominent television scholar Jason Mittell recently sharply put it in his thought-provoking *Complex TV*, "in moving image media like film and television ... character tends to be taken as a *self-evident given*, wrapped up into conventions of performance and stardom" (Mittell 2015; *Cit.* in: Mittell 2012/2013[128], "Character", section 2; emphasis added).

Murray Smith's forceful corollary goes even further, however. Hence, his suggestion as if the measure of realness of characters is tantamount to realness of imitating decoys—i.e., both are unequal to "real persons" and (real) ducks, respectively—is, whilst *prima facie* a humorous play on words, actually an incisive summary of his views on the subject. By Smith's account (Smith 2011) our perception of characters is informed by their "twofoldness" (term originally coined by Richard Wollheim). They are at once "more or less realistic representations of persons [as well as] artifacts." Put differently, a decoy is "real" insofar as we allow it to be, once modeled in our mind. Smith refers to this as "cash[ing] out in several different ways" on the "reality of characters." I find the latter a rather quaint phrase, however, considering how he has increasingly denied characters any kind of agency outside of the viewerly purview. Smith's "mimetic hypothesis" framework, in fact, thoroughly contests character's "ontological integrity," of him/her being a "real entit[y] to which we can make reference" (Dauer 1994:37n2), and calls it an "over-simplification." I cannot help but wonder, however, whether Smith's own anti-realist proposition, "stress[ing] the role of the imagination in the creation and appreciation of characters" (*ibid.*) may eventually fall prey to similar accusation. By these ideas, a realist approach (or rather, what he identifies as the "realist, constructivist epistemology") to character is allowed insofar as it *explicitly* states that recipient's mind is the originating space, or more accurately perhaps, the Cartesian Theater (Dennett 1991) that realizes the real, as it were, of/for the character.

That is, we imbue a decoy with a measure of "realness" in making it resemble its referent—the duck. In so doing, if to trace the logic of Smith's argument, we superimpose our presumption of duck's realness, as it were, onto the decoy, whilst, in turn, indeed relieving or usurping, in and of itself, any measure of realness—and by extension, agency—it might have had beforehand. Not only is "real decoy" not a "real duck", it isn't even a decoy proper, unless *we* make it so. However, doesn't the decoy resembling duck exist regardless of

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[128] Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, pre-publication edition (MediaCommons Press, 2012–13), http://mcpress.media-commons.org/complextelevision/

whether we specifically distinguish it to *re*-represent something? If we construct some nondescript "prop of make-belief" and call it "duck," would the act of naming make it any more real than it previously was? In evaluating Smith's account, I suppose the takeaway is yes, it would. Even if people on screen may crucially resemble *persons*, such "cruciality" is derived from the murky depths of our mind where we, as prop-masters of representationalist bias, pull strings at will, making things go bump in the night.

Conversely, I have maintained throughout present chapter that realist ontology should not be discarded off-handedly as something "naïve," because the acceptance of narrative person's "actional context," his/her "intentional field" as being possibly real and thus—for sake of argument, at the very least—resulting in him/her being *contingently* real in—having *carried over* into— the experiential field ("site of engagement") of online discussion (and the private contemplations scaffolding it), is, on the face of it, hardly a simplistic undertaking the opposition makes it out to be. As aesthetics scholar Peter Lamarque puts it, there is no "metaphysical reason" why seemingly opposing camps maintaining character as person-in-fictional-world (e.g., realist) and character as fulfilling some narrative role(s) (e.g., eliminativist) should not amicably co-exist, adapting each other for an inclusive hybrid theory (Lamarque 2010:190). In fact, the inspiring arguments previously made by Hans Jürgen Wulff only prove the correctness of Lamarque's claim. Hence, philosopher Sarah E. Worth, too, concludes her thoroughly invigorating article "Fictional Spaces" (2004) by noting that given our story-telling capacity in and out of "fiction," the distinction between "real" and "fictional" intentional objects results in a "false dichotomy" (*ibid.*: 455)**,** even more so with the rising popularity of virtual reality environments, IMAX and 3-D cinema.

In his latest writings, Murray Smith, too, almost appears to subscribe to such ideas as he agrees that "well-constructed character[s] [may] enable this sort of [realist] stance" (Smith 2011:278). That is, of facilitating the conception of characters as "flesh-and-bone humans unless otherwise noted[, who] live in a world that works physically in the same way as does ours" (Worth 2004: 454). However, contrary to Wulff, Smith nonetheless unfortunately insists upon the reality-fiction pairing as a strictly either-or opposition. In describing how the listeners of a long-running UK radio drama *The Archers* responded to the passing of a prominent character, Smith argues that "[listeners'] willingness and ability to respond to The Archers' characters as if they were real is matched by a thorough understanding of the characters' *irreality*" (*op. cit.*:279; emphasis added).

By "irreality" Smith here refers to listeners' sophistication *about* the show (as "artifice"). By my lights, though, the realness of characters and the "irreality"[129] of where they are situated are not issues that can be viewed as mutually exclusive. Indeed, what I have called *realitizing* is much like an umbrella notion hinting at complex cognitive operations which definitely are

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[129] A term which sounds dangerously "material" for an analyst of an art form as well as perilously psychoanalytical for someone claiming distaste of the latter.

not limited to "back and forth [flipping] between references to characters and the stars and performers that embody them" (*ibid.*:237). Hence, it is—surely—inefficient to speak of *experiences* of a character, and by extension, of how we perceive *of* and negotiate *with* those experiences as well as decipher as to how *character him/herself may perceive them,* without first—in principle—inscribing this very cognizer with sovereignty of existence that necessarily backpedals (without thereby losing sight of) the external factors of this kind of "twofoldness." It goes without saying, then, that in an ordinary setting of television or movie watching, all of us naturally comprehend the artifice of it all, but unless it starts to insists upon itself (e.g., Tarantino's *Inglorious Basterds* may be a good case in point here), we not only proverbially "buy into it," but we *in situ* emphatically generate as well as— and this is important—constantly elaborate on our belief. In short: we tend to intend creatively towards—we *narrceptivize* the audiovisual experiences unfolding before us. In doing so, we cannot but complement it with *naturalizing* "touches." It was cyberspace researcher Janet H. Murray who conveyed this very same idea I think very acutely already more than a decade ago:

> The pleasurable surrender of the mind to an imaginative world is often described, in Coleridge's phrase, as "the willing suspension of disbelief." But this is too passive a formulation even for traditional media. When we enter a fictional world, we do not merely "suspend" a critical faculty; we also exercise a creative faculty. We do not suspend disbelief so much as we actively *create belief.* Because of our desire to experience immersion, we focus our attention on the developing world and we use our intelligence to *reinforce* rather than to question the reality of the experience. (Smith 1997:110; emphases added)

To put the same point in more practical terms, we are not monitoring, say, Anthony Hopkins play-acting of play-eating play-someone's play-brains on the silver rectangle of the movie screen, so much as observing an autonomous, intentional activity of an atrocious serial killer named Hannibal Lecter. And yes, in fashioning out this kind of perspective we indeed may take into account our present or accumulative enjoyment of seeing Hopkins bring out the best even in the flattest of characters (my mother, incidentally, thoroughly enjoys seeing Hopkins *everywhere*, no matter how "bad" the film) (cf., Wulff 2006). But this fact doesn't change the wheel-turnings of our cognitive machinery whilst we perceive of Hannibal as a person of agency in his world!

To recall cybertext theorist Janet H. Murray's distinction of "creative" and "critical" faculty, one could say that this sort of external knowledge plays into our "critical faculty," which, running in parallel with its creative-*intentional* counterpart, should not necessarily suffocate it.[130] In other words: it does not

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[130] In fact, this assumption of "critical faculty" can be seen as correlative with how Wulff considered narrative in relation with characters as other people. Also, recall Paskow's distinction of agent$_1$ and agent$_2$.

stop us from discussing Hannibal's actions as those of a regularly conceivable human being (even if a *narrative* person).

Hence, I would think it insightful to conclude present sub-chapter with Malcolm Turvey's perhaps the most targeted criticism on Smith's and early Nöel Carroll's (Carroll 1990) work which claimed films engendering experiences that are not actually real, but imagined as mere thoughts being entertained (i.e., re-representations). As he accurately concedes, however, such view conflicts with our "ordinary language descriptions of experience" (Turvey 1997[2003]: 433ff.), whilst crucially extending to our descriptors of (conceptual) *thinking*, as well. After all, none of us presumably conveys our narrative experiences by noting that "the *thought* of having been saddened by the passing of a great character saddened me." Indeed, "it is almost as if the prototypical spectator of these theories is blind to the film itself" (*ibid.*; emphasis in original). Mind in nature, to borrow Evan Thompson's influential book title, is assuredly more sophisticated. As I have maintained throughout present chapter, we directly perceive *presence* without doubting its veracity or constructing some kind in-between space, as if compelling oneself to rationalize the *impulse* for immersion as coming from within. In fact, Turvey—having subscribed to what he calls the "seeing theory"—summarizes this polarity remarkably succinctly by constructing the verb "presence"-ing. Hereby greatly indebted to Wittgenstein's enriching discussion of the duckrabbit image, Turvey argues that

> it [the "seeing as" rabbit/duck] is not the product of our mental agency, imagination, or the mental activity of interpretation. Rather, the aspect [i.e., seeing-as rabbit] is something that seems to *presence* itself or *emerge* within the figure in question *independently of beholder,* and it is for that reason that we describe this visual experience as if the figure itself had changed physically, thereby *attributing agency to it.* (*ibid.*:452; emphases added)

Now, if we take the "aspect" to correlate here with the notion of character, this read of Turvey's invigorating contemplation, additionally charged by Casebier's prior thoughts, leads me to believe that though there is *some* constructing activity apparent (e.g., the *narrcepts* organizing narrative persons' reasonings *vis-a-vis* key events into *storyworld*, see chp. II), it doesn't eliminate the existing presence-ness; if anything, it may become further enriched and "fleshed out" by the cognitive capabilities of the viewers as active participants (respondents) as opposed to recipients (passive "receivers").

As phenomenologist television scholar Tony Wilson puts it, there is certain *immediacy* to the "interpretative looking" (2009:2,56). Similarly, Turvey goes on to maintain that "the rabbit-aspect [is something] the beholder must go *in search of*, <u>even if he knows</u> [it is] there" (Turvey 1997[2003]:451; underlining added, emphasis in the original). Again, here we can recall my proposition of realitizing. While it is not, as such, *ipso facto* acknowledged (see 1.2), it is nonetheless conceivable as an *emergent* outline, accompanying and circumscribing discussional dynamics, whilst we are, in deploying our cognitive toolset, "in search of [it]." If to adapt the words of Italian philosopher Alfonso

Iacano, a successful (I take it here in the sense of involved, "intending-at") engagement with "world of art" in and of itself naturalizes the "fiction" buttressing it (Gallese and Wojciehowski 2011:19–20).

But let us afford now a quick summary. As I have maintained throughout, viewers—especially those of longitudinal serialized televisual narratives that ordinarily foreground "complexly human" characters—can be conceived as initially observing and subsequently subscribing to in-depth contemplations in regards to the unfolding of "other lives." They become "caught up" in the narrative persons' "perceptions of the possibilities and problems" as they *participate* in their individual and interrelated searches "to find the world intelligible" (Wilson 2004:79,81) amidst their environmental contingencies (Livingstone 1992:9). For viewers, these narratively situated existences appear concurrently inescapably fragmented and impenetrable (similarly to how we perceive "everyday individuals," as well as our own stance *vis-a-vis* the world) (Bortolussi and Dixon 2003:139; *op. cit.*[131]). As such, narrative persons (NPs) are (1) *directly accessible*, and characterized by (2) *directedness*—narrative persons evoke the "ofness" with—i.e., intentionality towards—their world that viewers "tune into" naturally. Directness (not to be mistaken with intentional directedness), meanwhile, I have taken to correlate with the overarching narrative-historical knowledge—of the "Other" and more especially, about his/her world and its co-inhabitators about whose experiential operating the "Other" may have limited comprehension of, whereas viewer frequently *might not*; but also of narrative genre tendencies, etc.—that affords a range of exposure impossible to successfully maintain in everyday interactions (also see, text makers' world, in chp. II).

1.7 Stage-setting for Chapter II: Television Social Network

Weighing diverse previous insights, then, the CO-Model (COM) as I envisage it highlights narrative persons' (and their "constellations"') carry-over to recipients' socio-sphere, i.e., their online commentary space (cf. Wulff 1996a:11, 5n.), onto the "sites of engagement" (see, chp. II, discussion on *discourse world*). Through this reciprocal act, the ontological playing-field, as it were, becomes "leveled" in a situation-specific sense as *realitizing* is deployed distinctly within the *co-elaboratively* functioning discussion realm. These modifications, however, necessitate further complementation of the terminology to properly account for nuances of my CO-model in general and its operative forces *twistory* and *narrcept,* in particular. Here I proceed to adapt Paul Booth's recent notion of "television social network" (Booth 2012). The latter shall work

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[131] Frith and Wentzer (2013) take it even further, arguing that "even if I am talking with you face-to-face, I cannot access your mind to check whether my interpretation of what you have said corresponds to what you intended me to understand. *I can create a coherent story*, but I can never get independent evidence about the correctness of my interpretations" (*Cit.* in: Gallagher and Allen 2016:13; emphasis added). Cf., "predictive engagement."

as the proverbial conceptual bridge guiding the discussion thus far towards chapters II and III, respectively.

Whilst similarly criticizing the theoretical prevalence to take character as plot's subservient, hence undermining the ontological factor indicated through such person's relations and "extra[-]textual" tidbits *of him/her* (especially significant in complex narratives), Booth's attractive idea of the social network "mode" seeks to "map [the] narrative" specifically *around* such "social systems," as Wulff put it (Booth 2012:313–315). In regards to narrative persons, indeed, majority of Booth's argument overlaps with Wulff's. Aside from equating recipients' (everyday) social networking—off- and online—with those facilitated by narrative persons, Booth even draws on the analogy of accumulatively changing "picture" of "person and all [his] network forms" (*ibid.*:318). Hence, for brevity's sake I will skip straight to Booth's implication of participants and characters being conceived as "nodes," co-existing in a joint social space where the focus dwells on the observation and (re-)negotiation of narrative persons' "networks." Crucially, the analysts as observers shall also *themselves* become part of them (see, Extended Research Hypothesis, in chp. II, 2.0), as will narrative's "creators" and "writers" (see, text makers' world, in chp. II).

Here, Booth borrows the notion of "node" (not to be mistaken with how Murray Smith developed the term) from David M. Boje's influential "antenarrative" account in organization and management theory. There, "node" is constituent of a "folk story network" (Boje 2001:65), indicating a "living story of becoming" (Boje 2013).[132] Specifically, as Booth's reading implies, these are the emerging and intersecting character-stories which are experienced jointly and *in situ* (Boje 2001:62ff.).[133] Within the confines of present chapter, nodes are conceivable as the foci of communicational exchange wherein participatory narrcepts build upon the fragmented and possibly ambiguous stories of narrative persons, whilst concurrently drawing from—and feeding back into—participants' own experiences. As I see it, such re-calibration of *twistory* enhances the original notion substantially, leading to its self-expansion which explicitly includes the co-elaborate effort in discursive online environments. In claiming that, though, my approach diverges from Booth's, who, incidentally, appears to overlook Boje's vehement denial of *narrative* in its sense of something finite (a debatable claim, indeed).

Even more to the point, Booth goes to maintain, on the one hand, that "we are *silent members* of our television social network, *barely participating* in the social interaction" (Booth 2012:315, emphasis added); viewers become, then, not only Zillmannian "onlookers," but "lurkers" (Baym 2000) on the lives of others. On the other hand, Booth takes the networked relationships within narratives to *literally* account for either "connections" between characters or

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[132] See also Sonia Livingstone's earlier notion of "multidimensional scaling" (1992:10).
[133] Boje's construal of social network analysis also echoes the chp. III of the present work for archived commentary data affords to trace the *natural*, untampered reciprocal development of long-term narrative's "people ... and [their] stories" (*op. cit.*:64).

functioning as "re-furbishers" for explicit story events wherein novel knowledge about and story-building of (minor) characters retroactively intersect with "stories" of major characters.

Assuredly, Booth's reading of *Lost*'s utterly infamous episode "Expose" is shrewd and admirable, however it nonetheless evokes the question whether this one-off episode's eponymous Nikki, seen intersecting with Boone in what was show's pilot and hence "filling in" an admittedly marginal piece of Boone's "story" several years after the fact[134], builds a sufficient basis for speaking of narrative persons' *stories*, in their own right, on the one hand, and their (relative, possible) plot-independency, on the other. For the latter, one could argue that it wasn't as much Boone's story than a fleeting "scenic bit" partial to the major plot-point—fixing Jack as the (coming) leader (*ibid.*:318–19).[135] Meanwhile, for the former, this event of "pen-asking"—I dare to infer—*meant*, in the grander scheme of an immediate plane crash(!), precious little to those involved (i.e., Nikki and Boone)[136], which, in turn, gives reason to believe that Booth's conception of "network" forgoes any implications pertaining to the phenomenological functioning of these narrative persons—something which, in a natural reception situation, is not so readily overlooked.

Consequently, my suggestion of the CO-model as so far delineated is designed to circumscribe and effectively trace exactly this sort of more reflexive insights. As present chapter maintained throughout, narrative persons "carry over" into the recipients' experiential field. This "field" is at once idiosyncratic (in the sense of a singular recipient's experiential knowledge), but likewise expandable onto a "site of engagement" where such singularities overlap and intertwine *vis-à-vis* the "social fields" observed. In such an environment, narrative persons become *subjects* of discussion, and are hence *realitized* due to both tacit reason and necessity. Consequently, NPs' (possible) social, intentionally-enforced interactions are disentangled with great attentive care, ultimately leading to always already *becoming* discourse worlds, comprised of the experiential "stuff of characters," as it were, developed through the dialectical, contextualizing impulse of the *beacon* (see, chp. II). Although participants are indeed unable to introduce *change* with their observations of the narrative

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[134] In *Lost*'s pilot episode, Jack attempts to resuscitate someone post-crash and sends Boone to look for a pen (to guarantee air-flow to the lungs), which the latter ends up asking from Nikki.

[135] Booth's emphasis on availing characters their ontology is welcome, but unfortunately *Lost*'s example, unlike that of *Breaking Bad* (and, a number of others, to be sure), is not a perfect fit and can even be seen as contradicting—to a degree—Booth's own argument given that the literal "tidbits" of "extra" information pertaining to persons in *Lost* hardly ever amounted to the latter wagging the tail of the former, as it were. Though fanfiction may attest to a different perspective, from the ongoing commentary discussions examined (but ultimately excluded from the present work), it became evident that Island's mysteries were always emphatically at the center.

[136] Booth anticipates as much, it has to be noted, in 4n.

occurrences[137], it doesn't follow as if they cannot be creative in how they intersect with the social occurrences on a global, communal co-elaborative level writ large, i.e., in *postexposure* discussions. Recognizing explicit connections, then, as Booth attempts to, bares usefulness in building participants' attentiveness from the ground up, but it doesn't really explain the accompanying claim for (deeper) phenomenological factors, as esp. sub-chapter 1.5 attempted to outline. Consequently, it is precisely how this kind of "attentiveness" emerges and senses are *reasoned*, that the next chapter of present dissertation aims to elaborate on. I will approach it by proposing a critical reading on the famous Possible Worlds Theory, adapting it—in the process—into an appropriate interpretational framework for the Analysis ahead (see, chp. III).

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[137] Though there have been times where fan feedback has driven certain far-reaching modifications down the road, e.g., Michael Emerson's guest performance as Ben expanding into far more in *Lost.*

CHAPTER II

Sense (in) making worlds:
Possible Worlds in the Blink of a Beacon

2.0 Analytical Interlude: Extended Research Hypothesis

> Vygotsky's is a vision of the social constitution of mind: "through others we become ourselves" (1931b, p. 105 [SS 3, p. 144])
> – David Bakhurst, In: *The Cambridge Companion to Vygotsky*, p. 56
> Process is fundamental: the river is not an object, but a continuing flow; the sun is not a thing, but an enduring fire. Everything is a matter of process, of activity, of change (*panta rhei*).
> – Nicholas Rescher, *Process Philosophy: A Survey of Basic Issues,* p. 10
> Clearly such forms, then, apart from their moment-by-moment emergence within the unfolding flow of activity in which they subsist, have no substantial existence in themselves. Yet, in being 'out there' as distinctive othernesses in their own right, partially but not wholly responsive to our actions ... they are 'somethings' with a felt presence.
> – John Shotter, *'Real presences'. Meaning as a Living Moment in a Participatory World*, p. 366

The hypothesis and its expanded description for the Analytical portion of the present dissertation builds on and is guided by the theoretical discussion advanced in chapter I and subsequently, in 2.1 and further. The analyzable corpus—focused on in chapter III (see, 3.4–3.5)—consists of Internet commentaries with regard to two successively aired episodes of the popular and critically acclaimed TV serial *Breaking Bad*. Topical tendencies channeled by specific attention-channeling *narrative motifs* (CIGARETTE, RICIN, POISONING) are observed in the Internet discussions. In addition to going concerns with diegetic deficiencies, the conclusions of the authorial narrative also—even if concrete or strongly suggestive—can cause dissatisfaction for being conceived as contradictory and incoherent. Hence, complexity in TV narratives (cf. Mittell 2015(/2012–2013), 2013; see also, Kroener 2013) becomes concordant with sense-making complexity. Consequently, I hypothesize that the latter can be approached by and further elucidated through the adaptive criticism of the "possible worlds theory" (Ryan 2001; Lewis 1986; Rescher 1975; Loux 1979; Goodman 1978; cf., Doležel 1998; Bruner 1990, 1991b, 2004).

  I take "possible worlds"—such as *storyworlds* (Herman 2002, 2009), *intention-worlds* (cf., Ryan 1985, 1991, 2008), and *textworlds* (Werth 1999)—, pivoting on **realized** *narrative persons* (NPs) (see chapter I; 2.1) as "rational constructs" (Eco 1979/1984:220). As I envision it, my subsequent propositions into the "possible worlds" terminology develop in a synchronized and interwoven fashion, progressing bottom-up towards a composite *discourse world*. In particular, speaking analytically, when observing developing viewer-com-

menters' singular narrcepts as well as their wider inter-dynamics, an implicit process of *gliding* between various "worlds" can be established. On the level of analytical reflection, then—in "narrating the narrating"—"worlds" can be differentiated, i.e., "decomposed" from the whole narrceptive content (*viz.* individual narrcepts and their interrelations in content); and, thereafter, composed, i.e., unified as a potential interpretation of a ongoing discourse world. Meanwhile, speaking reciprocally, viewer-commenters' utilize the "world" resources *latently*, although creatively (see below; 3.3 for prompt summary of my adaptive propositions; also, Conclusion, vi). Accordingly, as already emphasized in the Introduction, such activity underscores the significance of a *becoming* experience, developed context-sensitively (one could say "hi*stori*cally"[138]) *vis-à-vis* narrative's seriality.

I maintain that the above conceived navigational tendency of "gliding" altogether characterizes my original notion of **beacon**. As I have envisioned it, beacon signifies concurrent *analytical-methodological and reciprocal dimension* (of character engagement) and my provocative intention is to consider it as a metaphorical mobile signal fire (cf., Rescher 2000:4ff. *inter alia*). Functionally, beacon's a kind of feedback loop with its existence set betwixt the "worlds," "transilluminating" their interrelations and affiliating them into the composite "discourse world." Descriptors of viewerly activity such as "narractivity" (Booth 2009, 2010), collaborative (liminal) "plotting" (Dannenberg 2004, 2008), "narbs" (Mitra), and others (cf., G. Prince's "disnarrated," see Dannenberg 2014; Fish's "intellection") are vehicles of viewerly storytelling. Importantly, here storytelling deploys world-building *latently* in order to negotiate with and furnish (narrative) experience (cf., Herman 2013:5–6ff.). Consequently, the aforementioned notions respond to and characterize the "operative variances" of beacon's *reciprocal* dimension. However, these intertwined layers of the beacon suggest it being a dialectical mechanism, a dialogical contradiction between the "popular" and "academic" interpretations. Hence, taken from the *analytical-methodological* perspective, beacon is an (1) interpretation mechanism, a contextualizing *impulse* teasing out and organizing the incremental and indeterminate bottom-up build-ups (cf., Sorokin 2011, 2013a, b, 2014, 2015, 2016a, b, 2017a, b; cf., Grishakova and Sorokin 2016) within *and across* the Internet discussion spaces. Consequently: (i) subjective **narrcepts**— the 'expressive form' of the commentary texts—exemplify the *interactional*, narrative dimension; (ii) thereafter, with beacon utilized as an analytical **applied method**, this narrative motion becomes, *by the analyst*, "sorted" into "kinds" of differing weight[139]—i.e., "worlds"; This is what is meant by beacon's analytical-methodological dimension; (iii) Hence emerges methodologically construed *composition* of an omni-directionally context-sensitive discourse world (cf., van Dijk 2008). Due to the influx of episodic narrative information from the two key episodes chosen, beacon both originates from and outlines the

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[138] Cf., Gapunian "storying," In: Sorokin (2010a:27-28); Kulick and Willson (1994).
[139] Cf., "[H]ierarchy of world versions," Gutenberg (2012).

consistent multi-world dynamics. As noted by Goodman: "[i]f there are many worlds, the collection of them all is one" (Goodman 1978:2, 8).

Accordingly, beacon is (2) <u>the discursive guiding *principle*</u>, elaborating on the path toward this "one" world. How? First, as noted, beacon decomposes (differentiation into worlds), thereafter composes (unification into (one possible interpretation of a) discourse world) (*ibid.*:7–14). Hence, my <u>hypothesis maintains</u> that the utilization of the PWT framework enables for the analyst to "narrate"—by introducing <u>beacon as a dialectical applied mechanism of dialogical interpretation</u>— the ongoing viewerly narrations by sorting their storytelling into "kinds" of "worlds." In other words, "worlds," too, become "tools for thinking" (Herman, Vygotsky), for viewers and analyst alike, though in the former case such 'categorization' can be observed as *covert*, unacknow-ledged and latent, as opposed to *overt* in the latter case. Hence, analyst's capacity becomes that of the "editor" (Hafstein 2014) and "bridge-builder" (Mello 2002) and beacon *just is* method capitalizing on that objective. In exploiting the impulse and principle subscribed to the beacon, the tellers and the told, the many a world "fictional" and real, are all leveraged in construing— *sans* discriminative "focus" (ultimately involving implicit hierarchies)—a fluid (and one potentiality of a) discourse world of *Breaking Bad* on the Internet (cf., Goodman 1978:6–7).

2.1. Critical-adaptive 'sorting-hat' for the Possible Worlds Theory (PWT); or, Kinds, Wholes, Parts, and Donkeys, Oh My!

> [T]he property of being a donkey comes out as the set of all donkeys, the donkeys of other worlds along with the donkeys of ours.
> [W]e know a priori that besides the donkeys among our worldmates there are countless other donkeys, spread over countless worlds. They are other-worldly donkeys, unactualized donkeys, 'merely possible' donkeys, but donkeys nonetheless.
> – David K. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds,* p. 50, 110

The Leibnizian concept of "infinitude of possible worlds" (Leibniz 1710[2007]: 131) was distanced from its religious context[140], repurposed, and developed in the contemporary field of propositional modal semantics by logicians Monta-gue, Hintikka, Kripke, and others (see, Loux 1979a for introductory overview; cf., edited volume, Sture 1989). However, as Nathalie Jacoby (2005) has observed, the theoretical thinking pivoting towards PW is long-standing, earliest noted in the theory of poetry, as developed in 18th century Germany, by Leibniz' contemporaries Baumgarten, Breitinger and Bodmer (*ibid.*:105). Illustrious explanation, fit for the occasion, is provided by Breitinger:

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[140] See also, Jacoby (2005:106n3) and Bell (2010:20).

> [D]enn was ist Dichten anders, als sich in der Phantasie neue Begriffe und Vorstellungen formieren deren Originale nicht in der gegenwärtigen Welt der würklichen Dinge, sondern in irgend einem andern *möglichen Welt-Gebäude zu suchen sind*. Ein jedes wohlerfundene Gedicht ist darum nicht anderst anzusehen, *als seine Historie aus einer andern möglichen Welt*. (Breitinger 1740:59f.; quoted *op. cit.*.; emphases added)

The evocative semantics availed by phrases such as "possible world-building" and the "[observing as] history from another[,]possible world"[141] both echo the Extended Hypothesis (EH). Let us specifically earmark the former for now, observing its influence in contemporary sciences, taken broadly.

Hence, some theorists have built on the notion of "worldmaking" (Goodman 1978), adapting it to scaffold "scenario worldmaking," affording attunement of "discordant[ly] pluralist" perspectives (Vervoort *et al.* 2015:1–4). Worldmaking as "dialogical, imaginative engagement," Vervoort *et al.* contend, would accentuate "ontological creativity" in world-building over merely "representing" it (*ibid.*:3–4, 8; cf., Bakhtin 1981; see also, Ramírez and van der Heijden (eds) 2008:189ff.; van der Heijden (Ed.) 2002).

Cast through the previous ideas, "worldmaking" could be conceptualized as granting agencies (social actors as "worldmakers"), whilst—crucially—imputing, *ex hypothesi*, (constructive) agencies on <u>others</u>. All this is facilitated through open-ended "*collaborative creation of imaginative future scenarios*" (cf., Vervoort *et al.* 2015:5; emphasis in original), understood as bracketing "real" whilst realitizing[142] (*viz.* fashioning *as* realistic) the "imaginary"—a kind of mutually agreed upon "reality pact" (Grishakova 2017; Vervoort *et al.* 2015:8; also, Grishakova and Sorokin 2016; Sorokin 2016a; Onuf 2013; Putnam 1983[1996]; cf., Boyd 1997[2000]:53–55).

The aforementioned assumptions, however, avail the PWT framework—taken in a generalized fashion[143]—to be broached on its suitability as the vehicle *tout court* in the theories of fiction, fictionality—and especially—, of reception. In fact, literary theorist Göran Rossholm (2004) has gone as far noting that PWTs "explain fiction by introducing fiction" (*ibid.*:258). Being as they are inherently "incomplete" (a tendency characteristically absent in PWs, by Rossholm's view)—he charges— "[t]here are simply no such things" as existent fictive universes (fictive worlds). "If they existed," Rossholm alleges, "they wouldn't be fictive" (*ibid.* 2n.). Deeming notions such as "to imagine" and "imagination" as too "vague" and "inclusive," Rossholm's overriding stance is rooted on reader's "attitude" towards (commonsensically perceived? accessed?)

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[141] But also "to look for" [*zu suchen sind*], cf., Casebier, from chp. I.
[142] See. chp. I.
[143] Truth conditions for fictional worlds; the way the reader deals with textual gaps (Eco's inferences and possible scenarios, Ryan's "minimal departure"), the ontological status of characters, fictional worlds (Doležel, Pavel), analysis of the character worlds in terms of beliefs, wishes, obligations, goals and plans (Ryan), conceptualizing "world" in digital narratives (Bell); immersion, transportation and make-believe (Ryan).

information[144], considered in "*actualistic* cognitive terms" (*ibid.*:257–259; emphasis added). Consequently, Rossholm suggests that our experience of "fictional" narratives is encapsulated through the posture of "taking *as* true" (*ibid.*:262ff.; emphasis added), for

> what makes a text as true[?] [T]he reader makes it so [through the processes of] fiction reading and *truth seeking, truth finding or truth confirmation*. This does not mean that verisimilitude … does not play any role in the game of making the reader take the text as true. In a watered-down sense it is necessary: without recognizing anything we don't grasp anything. (*ibid.*:266; emphasis added)

For Rossholm, taking a text as "true" counterfactually, then, is "too strong." Instead of being potential "facts" in counterfactual elsewhere(s), he argues, counterfactuality amounts to "tak[ing] the text as true *non-factually*" (*ibid.*:262). Arising conundrum is such only seemingly, however. What Rossholm actually underscores here is, in my opinion, rather straightforward. Namely, he alters the power relations—the "truths" and the "facts" are no longer "properties of the text," but appropriations into the purview of the recipient, This, in turn, links with the perspective reinforcing the absence of conflict (*pace* Smith; see, chp. I[145]) between "taking as true" and "non-factuality," respectively, because the "truth-finding" itself is consciously conceived of as non-factual *whilst* taken as (commonsensically interpreted) "truth" (cf., Introduction).

As I argued throughout chapter I, we have a proclivity to "read for reasons," or, then, to "take as true." Rossholm doesn't necessarily disagree with the former, for he brings out three interrelated tendencies playing into such stance. (1) "expectation of consistency"; (2) *in practice*, the process of inferring "truth" from fictional/factual *operates* "in [the] same way"; and (3) in the "fictional" experience, "factual beliefs" are, to a point, utilized "in the same way" as they are with "factual texts" (*ibid.*:267–268).

These kinds of polemics are approached seemingly more conservatively were we to observe the establishing of PW for the narratological field. Specifically, Marie-Laure Ryan returns directly to modal semantics noted previously. She draws on Michael J. Loux' unpacking of Kripke's thought where PWT is taken as "a set of possible worlds," wherein the "actual world" (AW) is "is *one of the objects belong*[ing] [to a set]" (Loux 1979a:21; Ryan 1991:16; emphasis added). Such articulation, however, can be undercut by virtuality, were it characterized by way of convergences, entanglements, and leakages across the member set. Consequently, this potential set—a *discourse world* to the *story*-, *text*-, and *intention-world* channeling *in situ* into the former—begets "fuzzy" characteristics, if to build on Ryan's usage of the notion (see, Ryan 2006). As Loux explains, in Kripke's (1963) "propositional modal system M" the afore-

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[144] As opposed to some objective "truth" (*ibid.*:257). Cf., also, Rossholm's critique on Walton (*ibid.*:259).
[145] See also, Sorokin (n.d.): https://www.academia.edu/12253269/Article_review_of_Murray_Smiths_On_the_Two-foldness_of_Character_2011_

mentioned tendency is conveyed by "a *relation over* members," i.e., a nexus granting mobile "accessibility" (see, Loux 1979a:21; emphasis added).

This relation *constructs* the world-potency, in general, and the interrelation of worlds, in particular. In not so many words, it is the "worldmaking" impulse, writ large (cf., Bruner 1991b *inter alia*; Goodman 1978). How to precisely define and characterize such relation for present project, however? Although I will take up my propositions shortly, it is evident that echoes of what I have referenced as beacon in EH can be detected. Still, at this juncture, and especially in light of previous implications, let us linger for a moment on David Lewis's proposition—considering "possible worlds and their contents [as] equally real" (Loux 1979a:9) (*viz.*, worlds/inhabitants) to the AW—offering an intense corroboration indeed.

> There are so many other worlds, in fact, that absolutely *every* way that a world could possibly be is a way that some world *is*. And as with worlds, so it is with <u>parts</u> of worlds. There are ever so many ways that part of a world could be; and so many and so varied are the other worlds that absolutely every way that a part of the world could possibly be is a way that some part of some world is. (Lewis 1986:2; emphases in original; underlining added)

Although above quotation seemingly collides with Lewis' previous reasoning prohibiting any sort of overlap between the worlds, his subsequent claim of non-categorical differences does introduce a complementary fluidity, however. "The other worlds are *of a kind* with this world of ours. [...] The difference between this and the other worlds is not a categorical difference. Nor does this world differ from the others *in the manner* of existing" (*ibid.*; emphases added). Consequently, Loux frames Lewis' position as formalizing "our *common-sense thinking* about modality" (Loux 1979a:10; emphasis added). Building on this, Ryan defines Lewis' "modal realis[t]" position as "indexical realism" for PWs are taken as "respectable entities in their own right" (Lewis 1979:183; Ryan 1991:18,21ff.). Further, hypertext theorist Alice Bell (2010) clarifies Lewis' stance as "concretist" for "the ontological status of *all* domains is relative; [possible and actual worlds are] ontologically *indistinguishable*" (*ibid.*:21; emphases added).

Now, were we to take Lewis' absolutism with folk-psychological undertones at face value, what could we surmise? Firstly: "parts" (of "worlds"), *too*, manifest as sovereign entities. Whilst existing within bounds of one world (their AW), the very existence of "parts" opens up novel worlds for which *the former* become AWs (discursivity). Secondly: in transposing the logical implications of previous thinking to "this world of ours" and speaking of "kinds with" and "manner[s] of" with regards to NPs, *I* can maintain of being of "my world," in proportion in *kind* to them being of theirs. Bluntly, if *I* (supposedly) exist, don't *they*? Further, if *I* can claim to exist in a sovereign *manner*, wouldn't one derive that something similar can be actively entertained by the NPs with regards to (themselves and) their compatriots? That is, wouldn't the *manner* of existence in their AW beget them sovereignty in the sense of them being *with* their world,

as opposed to merely passively itemizing it (playing up the "in," i.e., authorial force/artificiality)?

In short: where resides the authority to decide over the *validity* of the inter-relation of "necessity and possibility" (Ryan 1991:17ff.) the recipients develop with their experiential world, on the one hand; and, what they perceive NPs as doing, which is construed as matching in *kind* and *manner* to theirs, on the other?

Were we to recall Rossholm's ideas or espouse Nelson Goodman's explanation, "authority"—if there even has to be any—can be laid on the proverbial feet of sense-making. Conceivably building on what Nicholas Rescher had previously termed "world-derivative tactic" (Rescher 1975:77), writes Goodman:

> [W]orldmaking consists of taking apart and putting together, often conjointly: on the one hand, of diving *wholes* into parts and partitioning kinds into subspecies, analyzing complexes into component features, drawing distinctions; on the other hand, of composing wholes and kinds out of parts and *members* and subclasses, combing features into complexes, and making connections. (Goodman 1978:2,7; emphases added)

Where Goodman's constructivist approach is generic, Rescher's specifically capitalizes on the perception of *individuals* inhabiting these kinds of worlds, thereby regarded as latter's "stock," not unlike "the actuals" in a "real world." Hence, he sorts PWs into two distinctive kinds:

> (1) the *proximately* possible ones that include only those individuals belonging to this, the actual world, albeit perhaps in different and in fact "unrealized" variant forms and (2) the *remotely* possible ones that include also wholly different supernumerary individuals that are not to be found in this world at all. (Rescher 1975:77; emphases in original, my underlining; cf., Lewis 1986:110)

I think it goes without saying that discussion up to this point has encompassed the former "kind." Rescher boils this description of variance and virtuality down to a "less 'unrealistic'[,]merely an alternative version" of (our) AW. Therefore, PAW[146] ultimately necessitates a non-assumptive stance, for its content is taken more or less at face value. Moreover because—to anticipate Ryan's further thoughts below—these possible individuals are "of the fully individuated type" (*op. cit.*:78). Rather significantly for the arguments thus far put forth, Rescher also explores the principle of "compossibility," where (in certain specific conditions, say, a realist narrative) "a set of severally possible individuals [are] *conjointly admissible* as a "possible world" (*ibid.*; emphasis, underlining added).

Another PW pioneer for literary theory and narratology, Lubomir Doležel largely shares Rescher's views. Speaking of "one-person" and "multi-person"

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[146] "Proximately/possible actual world," if to abbreviate it so henceforth.

"worlds," Doležel views persons as sovereign "entities," for their intentional acting and mutual interaction "enriches [given] world." The former make the latter, in effect, "the space of human or humanlike existence" for world's "threshold of narrativity" increases (1998:32–33).[147] As Doležel maintains, the story-generation directly correlates with persons' existence *within* the world. Nevertheless, Doležel treads cautiously lest any alarm bells be sounded. Where the emphasis of the "with" appears though fitting, he opts for the "safe" middle-ground—"within" (see, chapter I for my specific counter-argument).

However, if to proceed construing both Rescher's and Doležel's prior work specifically under the aegis of the arguments of NPs' "intentional field," former's sovereignty within it, and the overall realitizating potential produced by such a stance, the seeming implication is that these possible individuals not only *make* the world they inhabit, but this very creation is socially distributed—in a kind of 'associated humanity' fashion—both "on screen," and behind it. Whilst NPs *inhabitate* their worlds, the viewers/participants are "coupled" with them in that very undertaking, actively realitizing it. Indeed, as analysis presented in chapter III will prove, NPs are perceived not only as exerting their individuality *vis-à-vis* the narrative[148]; but they do so *collectively*, via a detailed network of relationships that the recipients may confide in, as opposed to what the "official" storytellers maintain. Cast under such light, I would have to disagree with Bell's (2010:21) read—following Nolan (2002)—of Rescher being an "abstractionist" (*contra* Lewis' "concretism"), because Bell seemingly disregards[149] the potential fertile merger the ideas thus far considered and suggested, although, indeed, purporting to "reconcile any relevant theoretical debates" (*op. cit.*:23).

Nevertheless, the discussion thus far does appear consistent with the CO-model as outlined in chapter I. However, we should still further examine what kind of feasible tangencies can be preserved between the latter and the specifically narratologically driven approach to PW, most prominently spearheaded by Ryan. One potential opening can be introduced by building on the Ryan's elaboration on previously discussed ideas in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative* (Ryan 2005[2010]:446–450).

Following Maítre (1983), Ryan refers to a narrative-world typology, including, amongst others, "strongly realistic texts" which depict "imaginary states of affairs [that] could be [construed as] actual" (*op. cit.*:592). While latter description is readily reminiscent of *Breaking Bad*'s narrative—which springs

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[147] Cf., however, Ryan (1991:112): "Narrativity resides in a *text's ability* to bring a world to life, *to populate it* with individuals[...]" (emphases added).

[148] *Viz.* in constructing the storyworld, their realitization overpowers the rule-set pertaining to the "authorial" narrative; that is, the prior history of the NP is entrusted *over* what the narrative may even go as far as to spell out.

[149] See, e.g., *op. cit.*:22, where Bell conflates "concrete" experience with *material* experience even though neuroscience has shown how our brain responds similarly in cases of "real" and "fiction" (Emmott and Sanford 2012:141; cf., Solymosi and Shook 2014).

from a potential if a mildly exaggerated core issue[150]—, such supplementary criteria[151], as proposed by Ryan, excises any lingering hesitancies.

Although realism may appear palpable enough for making its distinct emphasis unnecessary, it could arguably still afford an important re-tuning of abstract arguments thus far for they become positioned on a more "solid," commonsensically comprehensible footing. It affords complementary credence to key claims behind the inquiry as to (i) *why*, in particular, peoples' relationships with the NPs of *Breaking Bad*—characterized in its most "intimate" by the original notion of **twistory** (see, chapter I)—indeed are so inclined to seep through, as it were (cf., Black and Barnes 2015); and (ii) how, in general, the terminological framework presently proposed further contributes to the rising importance of "quality TV as conversation phenomenon" (Schlütz 2016; cf., Mittell 2012–2013/2015; Allrath and Gymnich (eds) 2005).

Hence, in going forward, key tenets fleshing out the critical-adaptive read on the PW could, in principle, be ultimately reconstructed out of Ryan's "principle of minimal departure" (PoMD) (Ryan 1991:21ff.). As stated, in constructing a fictional world, participants principally dwell on latter's similarity with the "real world"—a tendency, lest we forget, which is not necessarily exclusive to "realist" texts (Herman 2009b:82). Emergent gaps are filled with experiential knowledge, i.e., pre-learned, rudimentary everyday schemata[152], a 'formal' toolbox with genre-specific expectations.[153] The comprehension of "fiction," then, involves the usage of tools—resources—for real-life thinking.

In her classic *Possible Worlds*, Ryan prospects for a conceptual segment which would connect modal semantics to the theory of fiction. She evokes Aristotle's recognition of "poet's function [being to] describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e., what is possible as being probable or necessary" (Aristotle 1451a37–1451b26; *The Revised Oxford Translation* 1984:1459).

Now, ordinarily Aristotle's phrasing has been taken to convey that an author is something of a magician. Where's initially an empty hat, an author pulls out a white rabbit. She lulls (or overwhelms) us with mundane (or prosaic), lest we sight the unsighted, i.e., read between the lines. However, we consistently do, and, therein, one may argue, might perhaps lay the mightiest paradox attributable to narratives, by far. It can be suggested that Aristotle's phrase conveys how in reception—permitting here an idiomatical play—we tend to forage for, appropriate, "poach" and invoke proverbial "*trees*" for the "forest." To clarify:

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[150] A mild-mannered chemistry teacher with a secondary job as a car washer discovers that he is terminally sick, and possessing high grade knowledge of practical chemistry, proceeds to produce methamphetamine.

[151] Common ground with the "actual world" (AW) afforded by the depicted geography/ history, technological progress, natural species, human population. E.g., how the television production had to "move out" from the Whites' house once its owner in the "real life" required it back.

[152] E.g., in the restaurant, you commonly sit down and wouldn't storm the kitchen.

[153] E.g., unlike in horror genre, the dead don't suddenly re-animate in dramas, whereas dramas rarely have conventional happy endings the way fairy tales, i.e., fantasy, do.

in deciphering hidden subtexts and veiled meanings, we absolutely thrive on second-guessing our narrative experience, even in seemingly redundant, "foolproof" cases. For Ryan, this kind of inherent distrust is precisely the essence linking with and emerging as hypothetical (counterfactual) "worlds." Latter arise from slightest of (changes in) events, thence unraveling into divergent potentialities (i.e., the butterfly effect; counterfactuals such as "killing Hitler as a baby," etc.). However, as strikingly illustrated by strategic, though relatively *en passant* Aristotelian gambit here (as well as more specifically later on), Ryan also ends up revealing herself as an upholder of the mentalistic-representationalist paradigm.

By contrast, the present dissertation enacts a modest call to expand on and re-conceptualize this key idea of Aristotle, although bracketing his undisguised and presently conflicting affinity for "imitation" (cf., *op. cit.*:1453). Herewith, the key difference is sketched if we would understand Ryan addressing Aristotle's phrase *from within* (i.e., author mediating the narrative, it being h/er "function"). Meanwhile, present work has insisted upon a kindred interpretation, but *from without*. That is, one could inquire: what's *participant's* "business"? Piecing together author's *intent*? Or instead, articulating, ordinarily in nuanced detail, ones' own *intending for*? Differently put, as similarly active creators, recipients readily cultivate their proclivity to not only see more than meets the eye—but to *transplant*.[154] Accordingly, in consistently constructing and developing hypotheticals, participants also leverage their prosaic disposition to intend for *someone*.

Previous description amounts to the core distinction making the emphasis on narrative persons (NPs) *viz.*, *potential* real persons, significant. Specifically, NPs incrementally become through **gliding**, the 'sorting' of information—the key navigational force of **beacon**'s concurrent reciprocal and analytical-methodological dimension, as maintained by the Extended Research Hypothesis above. Hence, gliding vacillates between contents of worlds NPs inhabit either (i) as sovereign agents; (ii) in their independent thought as common-sensically *narrceptived* by the recipient (my critical interpretation on Ryan's "intent-world" (IW), see 2.3); (iii) or ultimately, in the "world" *with(in)* which NPs' agency commences, writ large, including thus "extratextual" criticisms on storytelling strategies (*text makers' world*), on the one hand, recipients' real life experiences, on the other (i.e., *twistory*; see, chapter I).

In short, then, narrative persons (NPs) are conceived of as exhibiting the virtually sovereign contours paralleling their potential real life counterparts. Consequently, they are developed in accordance with how the knowledge of "the Other" in an analogous real life situations emerges—as emphasized many a time throughout chapter I—as being "shaped" through and by intentionality (cf., chapter I, i.e., *twistory*; the *scale of with-in*). That is, NPs—as *realitized* "persons"—start to "inhabit" similar experiential frames ordinarily explored by recipients with regards to their daily lives' compatriots. Whilst observing

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[154] Taking the "active" stance, as opposed to "being transported." See below for more.

these lives, there's no mimesis, no simulative "becoming," but a processual, intermeshing sense-making *of them as them*.

Neurologically speaking this blueprint is followed in formulating extensive hypotheses about people—impinging on their "social field"—at large, their being "fictive" or "real," notwithstanding. Indeed, extensive research on our brain processes has shown to corroborate this. As maintained by Sanford and Emmott (2012): "[T]here is considerable evidence showing that there is overlap in the areas of brain that are responsible for *actual perception*, and the *imagination of perception*" (*ibid.*:141, 160; emphases added).

Another perspective, perhaps more accurately corroborating the non-representationalist stance elaborated on previously and especially in chapter I, comes from the neuropragmatist current, drawing on classical pragmatism and neuroscience. Criticizing the cognitive neuroscience's "mechanist" perspective of neat, sectionalized units, neuropragmatism proposes a non-reductionist view wherein diverse processes such as "[s]ensation, thought, feeling, and volition," though "discriminable," become "interfused" constituents in "continuous flow of neural activity" (Solymosi and Shook 2014:8; see, 2.3 for Herman's (2013) provisions on this). Thus, "organism's" situated interaction with environment is holistic and the assumptive clear line between "external world" and "[internal] cognition" dims. Cognition *is* interaction—we "transform [our] lived environ-ment" (*op. cit.*:8,10), 'shape' the informational affordances for contextual "fits" (cf., the work of Gibsons', shortly overviewed in chapter I). Consequently, neuropragmatists emphasize contexualized, ecological and social comprehen-sion of cognition, for only in these *active* processes "mind is studied and nowhere else. At no time do an organism's activities or cognition deal with some 'external world' that can be specified *independently* from the organism" (*op. cit.*:9; emphasis added).

How does neuropragmatist view relate to issues scrutinized in present dissertation, however? Shortly put: if we would accept the hypothesis that viewers consider NPs as "social Others," it stands to reason that both the latter and the "environment," *viz.*, their social-intentional "field," become treated in "interfusional," i.e., *twistorial* fashion. Similarly, above conception of "lived experience," i.e., the inherent perceptual "transforming" of the life-while-it-lives, also significantly links with the Rescherian/Doleželian observation of (possible) individuals' conjoined agencies in being *as* a "possible world"; of making it—crucially—*become* through their interaction. "If a storyworld[155] is anybody's world, it is the world of the characters" (Ryan 2014:32). To put the same point in more specific terms for present purposes—as David Herman notes, referring to Lynne R. Baker's work--"worlds" are "intention-dependent" (*Cit.* in: Herman 2013:75).

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[155] Ryan's usage of "storyworld" here is mired by representationalism. Hence, I think it is wise to repeat that by my reasoning, the "storyworld"—my usage preserving the spirit of Herman's—of the NPs *cohers* as the processual result the reciprocal sense-making (*viz.*, *sense reasoning*) of former's—*as another*'s—lived experience, their social field. For further criticism on Ryan, see below.

From here, I would reason, naturally flows that if—to paraphrase Doležel—the existence (and interaction) of "entities" elevates story's narrativity, it has to be taken bidirectionally. In proportion to the increased narrativity due to NPs, *sense-making,* or *reasoning—viz.*, narrativizing proclivity—also heightens, and begets a social primacy, to boot. "Our thinking, decision-making … are all impacted by our environmental situations" (Sholymosi and Shook 2014:10). Hence, one could argue that reflexive (narrativizing) narrative experience, in particular, and narrative research, in general, can elaborate on what's termed the "cultural origin of *creative* reasoning," referring to potential fenestrations suggestive of "transmitted modes of cultural activities engaging human brains," where not ready-made "theaters" of experiences are produced, but "rough continuities," accentuating dynamic adequacy (*ibid.*:10,11). "Much of human experience … and all of knowledge is an emergent feature of *social epistemic practices*" (*ibid.*:12; emphasis added).

This neuropragmatic and direct perceptionist emphasis on "environment"—in union with Hutto's "narrative practice" (see, chapter I)—gains further vigor from Vygotsky's approach on the integrality of consciousness and behavior. Although a kind of implicit leitmotif for present work, chapter I did reference his legacy only in passing, however. I intend to rectify this in 2.3 by employing Vygotskyian thought in wholly solidifying my conception of Hermanian "worldying." Vygotskian paradigm does still casts a productive shadow, reverberating in, say, social learning theory and cognitive anthropology where inherently social basis for "learning and development" are underscored (*ibid.*:38–39), and should therefore, I think, be expanded even further from existent usages in narrative research.

On the surface, Ryan's work might not necessarily disagree with the admittedly wide-ranged position outlined thus far, however some differences can perhaps be detected with regard to her later work, considered shortly (Ryan 2014; cf., also Ciccoricco 2015). Nevertheless, Ryan's earlier work distinguishes in narratives (i) "textual actual world (TAW) (the factual, i.e., explicit narrative information) and (ii) its "virtualities," the implicit, i.e., non-factual. The immersion is thus deemed "imaginatively real," Ryan maintains, complete with ontologically wholesome NPs (cf., Ryan 2005[2010]:591). Seemingly in accordance, then, with the previous discussion, "actualization" is always preceded by/simultaneous with counterfactual "intent-driven action[s]." To recall Lewis' whole-part dialectics, Ryan concedes these virtualities as, for instance, the content of characters' "intention-worlds" (IW). In Ryan's framework, IWs are the PWs *within* the generic modality of TAW (see 2.3 for more). Elaborating on previous ideas, Ryan goes to generalize PWs as being (a) "imagined and asserted by the author;" (b) "imagined, believed, wished by the characters;" i.e., "sub-worlds" such as the IWs; (c) and, ultimately, the potential narrative "forks" reciprocally hypothesized (*ibid.*:591–592; Eco 1979[1984]:246).

Considering the discussion up to this point, one mark appears crucially unchecked, however. Namely, the fourth kind of quality, arising from the participant↔NP interrelation for which I have proposed characterization

through my original notions of **realitization** and **twistory**. Consequently, here then I would have to take some departures from Ryan's thought. These caveats have to be explained, however. In the edited volume of *Storyworlds Across Media*, Ryan argues, "[i]t is therefore necessary to distinguish the world as it is presented and shaped by a story from the world as it exists autonomously. The former is storyworld, the latter the reference world" (Ryan 2014:33). Ryan's argument follows conventional core modal logic. What it boils down to, by my lights, is how you *define* "autonomously." Drawing on the discussion thus far, an argument can be made that "storyworlds" (or rather, to avoid confusion with my usage of the latter term, narrative worlds) are "autonomously" existent, in the precise sense of this "me-Other," intentional distinction which is afforded form by narrativized "worldying." To be fair, Ryan may concede to that, for she clearly distinguishes "text of the story" as an "material object," whereas story-world as "the meaning" (*ibid.*:34)—and is not the very act of realitizing, i.e., *making real*, meaningful? Similarly, why, if to utilize Ryan's own phrasing, does "fiction[al] experience" have to nominally be "a blend of objective knowledge and make-belief [wherein recipient] *pretends* to believe that [storyworld] exists autonomously or, in other words, that it is real" (*ibid.*:34–35; emphasis added)?

When talking of (tele)visual[156] narratives, NPs can be depicted as, say, actively *thinking* (e.g., Walter White in that pivotal scene in his back-garden, concocting his poisoning plan). Yet, channeling Smith (see, chapter I), Ryan says of fiction films that "[recipients] *pretend* that they are watching un-mediated events" (*ibid.*:38; emphasis added). Whilst implicitly rejecting Anderson's Gibsonian "direct approach" take (or the interactionalist and intentionalist perspectives; see, chapter I), Ryan's seeming persistence of "pretence" can conceivably be traced back to going against the grain of *literary* convention, wherein mere producing of several blank pages feigning "inner thought"—if to stay with suggested example—would obviously be absurd.[157] Is reducing NPs to "imaginary representations" the only way out, though? To put the same point differently, televisual[158] narratives in the "good writing" (the "complex," "quality TV," e.g., *Breaking Bad et alii*) variety are synonymous with abstaining from wearing characters' inner thoughts (and or pent-up emotions) on one's sleeve. This is discouraged indeed for the threat of losing maximum reciprocal effect. I would contend that narratology would find itself refreshed in embracing this crucial aspect in reception, even if it might contradict or undermine conventional theories established thus far. This is not to imply as if Ryan's vision doesn't permit expounding on the "phenomenological approach focused on the act of imagination," for quite the contrary, Ryan's adamant that "[w]hat can be the object of [representations], if not a world in

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[156] Or even cases of role-playing video games with complexly developed characters that the player may face in their quests, etc.
[157] Authors have experimented, obviously, e.g., William Faulkner. However, these kinds of aesthetical choices are not part of any currently governing "canon" that I know of.
[158] But also in cases of cinematic and visual artistry (i.e., graphic novels).

which readers, spectators, and players *make themselves imaginatively at home*" (*ibid.*:38; emphasis added).

At issue here, of course, is the highlighted portion. What occurs is essentially a two-fold interchange of "authorities." On the one hand, where previously text (author) "gave" the meanings (to unearth) and characters to "simulate," "spectators" now can just be "imaginatively" *trespassing*. On the other, it is as if such spectorial input dwindles insofar as they are told what they are arguably supposed to be doing. Indeed, one could counterclaim that it is not their "home" to "make" themselves anything "at," but that of the NPs who inhabitate it; who effectively *make it be* by their presence *with* it (and *observed* doing so by "spectators," or rather, by Zillmannian *onlookers*). In other words, to borrow Ryan's own phrase, "dialogue of the deaf" (*ibid.*:27; cf., Introduction) appears preserved—NP as a potentially realitized "social Other" goes unacknowledged.

Consequently—with noted 'radical' reservations intact—the theoretical framework outlined for present work can be supplemented with two crucial deductions for the convergence with the core *inspiration* of Ryan's principle of minimal departure (PoMD) can nevertheless be anticipated. Considered under these specifically tuned auspices, then, PoMD can be observed to extend covering, on the one hand, NPs as if "real (social) Others" (irrespective of them actually being so, either technically or narratively speaking, cf., Heider and Simmel 1944; Sanford and Emmott 2012:140–141) and the genre-specific knowledge of what is "allowed" (in the narrative as an "material object") and what is not, on the other. In the latter case, Ryan's conception of TAW can be elaborated on to intersect with subsequent illustrative close analysis in chapter III where participants' criticism on authors' creative choices and potential disconcerting "logistical" issues *vis-à-vis* experiential narrative glides with and contributes to the construal of *storyworld* as narrceptivized in commentary texts, subsuming narrative persons' intend-worlds (and or twistories developed with participants), and text makers' worlds.

As 2.0 hinted, my adaptive and critical reading of the Possible Worlds Theory proposes an alternative to various default conventions in theorizing. Having opted for a "traveling theories," "theoretical sampler" approach throughout, present chapter has attempted fill the felt void with a further (analytically centered) elaboration on the thus far established theoretical alternative in highlighting the *experiential* reception (*viz.* 'parasocial perception') of those who, in stories from time immemorial, enthrall us the most: *people*. However, as noted, rather than seizing the opportunity, narrative research has further contributed on advancing the manufacturedness of narratives and encounters therein. By underscoring the artifice with aplomb, narrative theory, instead of "cracking the code," has perpetuated the enigma.

Note though that any kind of "absolute" deciphering is obviously beyond the scope and intention of present dissertation (nor may it be entirely possible). I would hope, though—perhaps indeed against all hope—for my contribution being one of the initial steps, both in theory *and* in practice. Of course, it is not difficult—from a *theoretical* standpoint—to sympathize with the imperative/

normative thinking, as exemplified by the still favorable artificiality and the "fictional"/"real" dichotomy. However, it is harder, if not to say rather nonsensical, to reiterate such dichotomical arguments when having observed and analyzed a real, "living" creative co-elaborative "reception"—a *vernacular* of a kind—such as one provided by the lengthy and plentiful Internet discussion on longitudinal TV serials like *Breaking Bad*. In short, the core of the discussion up to this point is reminiscent of Gore Vidal's phrase from his *Screening History* (Vidal 1992): "I saw the world in movie terms, as who did not or, indeed, does not?" (*Cit.* in: Moss 2008:21).

However, it remains to be ascertained how exactly does this "sorting" into "kinds" of "worlds" actually operate within the larger terminological framework of present dissertation. Here's where primarily the notions of **beacon**, *story-world*, and *worldying* (Herman 2002, 2013); but not less importantly, original notions of **intend-world** and **text makers' world**, and ultimately, *discourse world* (van Dijk) become foregrounded and accordingly explicated.

2.2. Beacon's dialecticality—what, why, and for whom?

As I envision it, beacon is a dialectical mechanism of illumination, encircling and mirroring the *becomings* of the discourse world—from the perspective of the *analyst*—and that of the storyworld—from the perspective of the partici-pant, respectively. In short, beacon is a bottom-up mechanism, containing multitudes (co-elaboration of worlds) by scrutinizing and affiliating singularities (commentary text, *viz.* narrcept, demarcating a becoming *storyworld*). At its most generic, then, beacon pursues "*natural*, characteristically un-guided pattern forming which emphasizes thematic focal points *as they emerge* in synergic long-term commentary discussions" (Sorokin 2015:9; emphasis in original).

Why have I opted for the notion of "beacon," specifically, however? Primarily for its association, indeed direct responsibility for, *navigation*. As I have envisioned, by installing beacon as a "mobile signal fire," this notion explicitly "enacts" the (observant) narration of seemingly chaotic and vast-scale online communication processes spanning weeks/years.[159] Functionally, and analogically to real life (i.e., its act of "blinking for"), beacon is recursive and self-productive. Insofar as its real existence is preordained by deceptive waters and seafarer's hardship, beacon's abstract usability owes to the characteristic convergences and reverberations of the multiple "worlds" which it decomposes (differentiation into kinds of worlds) and composes (unification into a (possible interpretation of a) discourse world). Meanwhile, beacon itself, too, is developed through both processes (and through the *narrcepts*, as expressed through commentary texts, wherefrom the multitudes of worlds originally germinate) (see, 2.0, 2.1; for analysis, chapter III, 3.4–3.5). Ultimately, beacon

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[159] In present work, the analytical focus is on a key fortnight of episodic discussions, with large quantities of data left for future investigations.

may be taken as the "purest" analytical tool for it effectively obfuscates where "empiricality" ends and "theorizing" begins; it emerged from the data, whilst emerging ("shedding light to") particular sectors of data, simultaneously.

Specifically in regards to *Breaking Bad*'s Internet feedback, beacon lays bare convoluted viewerly understandings, the kinds of networks comprised of NPs intertwined "social fields," distributable into categories of "kinds" of "worlds*."* However, it is crucial to underscore here that to take the extracted and thus highlighted communicational patterns as "narratives" *strictu sensu* would be misleading. Rather, by its very design, the continual construal towards the understanding of NPs—be it singularly (narrcepts) or co-elaboratively ("discourse world") by the participants—evinces a narrative *quality.* This is due to intrinsic reciprocal aspiration and proclivity for intentional readings, of grasping for the coherence and closeablity (of narrative) and of (realitized) persons' stories (therewith), on the one hand; and of the analyst him/erself being the last, though merely one possible and incomplete at that, "instance" of the story formation, on the other.

Even in cases where an answer *is* obtained, its suitability might be ultimately unsatisfying due to "logistical" inconsistencies.[160] Hence, narrceptual involvement also emphasizes narrative uncertainties which consistently escape the ordained closure of "narrative prison" (Boje and Durant 2013:23). Nonetheless, the preservation of the nuanced contextual knowledge of some NP(s) is underscored, making it—in effect—the rich lens through which relevant ambivalent events with regards to them become re-evaluated.

Hence, these bits of knowledge—what I am calling attention-drawing (*collocating*, in the spirit of Mello's (2002), see below) narrative motifs—should not be conceived of as appropriated narrative information (Jenkins, fanfiction), but preferably as *acknowledgements*—conveying the intendings-of *someone* (albeit "fictional"). In other words, though "logistic gaps" in storytelling are detected and addressed accordingly (see, *text makers' world*), viewers endeavor to respect the integrity of a (narrative) person's "story," their narrative *with*—as opposed to with*in*—the (overarching) narrative. Taken from the analytical perspective and afforded a wider extent, IBM's natural language analyzing and data mining software *SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys*[161] (TAS4) affords to keenly observe such complex sense-making (*viz. sense reasoning*) at work.

As I will clarify further in chapter III, having (i) outlined these distinctive narrative motifs, *viz.* "communication artifacts" (cf., Crowston *et al.* 2012) (RICIN, CIGARETTE, POISON) in the preliminary pilot analysis in concert with the theoretical discussion, and (ii) having interlaced these with data pertaining to concrete NPs, noted software enabled to tease out layered discursive itineraries, specifically tailored to focus on NPs. The large variety of dynamisms unearthed by TAS4 allowed crafting a naturalistic theory—established in chapter I and elaborated further presently, in chapter II—which

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[160] E.g., as suggested by the feedback on *Breaking Bad*'s "End Times," Walt was otherwise occupied and couldn't have poisoned the kid.
[161] Version 4.0.1 [4.0.1.97] (c) 2010.

proposes an intriguing alternative to the traditional understanding of narrative in general and, in case of *Breaking Bad*, of "character" in particular. Consequently, indications relating to the assumptions of narrative's intrinsic finalizability and its "phasing" towards closure, respectively, can conceivably be drawn. As such, the "alternative" reading permits beacon—as a contextualizing impulse developing world-arrays—to crystallize also as an agent of meta-narration, as it were, mediating narrations *in situ*—a feat so far pegged as unrealizable (cf., Abbott 2008).

2.2.1 Making sense of sense-makers: the "analytical" and "reciprocal" dimensions of the beacon

As noted, beacon is a dialectical mechanism. As such, a beacon's "analytical dimension" corresponds to the observation that during the analysis, the data become exceedingly more "storied" and narrative *the* "[tool for the] way of knowing" and circumscribing the always already evolving storytelling (Mello 2002; Gubrium and Holstein 1998; Clandinin and Connelly 2000; cf., Eaves and Walton 2013; Davalos *et al.* 2015). In circumscribing such processual quality of storytelling, the objective of this kind of narrative mediation is to preserve the integrity of the situation of telling in developing data-specific model of analysis.[162]

This context-sensitive and all-inclusive, i.e., "collocative" analysis, as coined by qualitative analyst Robin A. Mello (2002) tracks *temporal* evolutions within the "worlds." Beacon consistently "sheds light at," decomposes, composes and pursues the alterations in these potentialities. Within these fluid 'pockets' of narrative experience, miscellaneous internal "histories" (e.g., the query of Jesse's lost cigarette and its potential relation to Walt's/Gus' guilt) are explored and minutely scrutinized, as the narrcepts and, especially, *their interrelations* reveal. Put differently, this (in a very broad sense) historically conditioned sense-making (or reasoning) reflects on the longitudinal and jointly constructed inquiry into given narrative experience and its (shared) "structure." That is, how the participants co-elaboratively expound on their joint experience and how the analyst, being the "last instance operator" within/of such participatory activity, reflects on *the former* in order to construct their "narration of narrations" (cf., Mello 2002:234,238).

To get a more clarified sense of beacon's "reciprocal dimension," however, one would have to shortly review leading theories concentrating specifically on (the formats of) sense-making—beacon's *operative variances* (cf., (i) in Introduction).

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[162] I.e., the 'story' of the "discourse world"; its setting – blog or forum; time of the telling (either promply after the broadcast, or few-to-several days later; teller and his/her interconnections with other participants if any, either across different loci or within a singular one, etc. All this marks a diverse range of issues that necessarily are not all covered in the present dissertation, but can be investigated in further depth in the future.

Consequently, reader-response theorist and anti-foundationalist Stanley Fish, back in the 1980's, led with two key questions: "what does this mean?" and "what does this do?" As text's meaning develops dynamically in parallel with "reader's expectations, projections, conclusions [and] judgements," Fish explains, the generic inquiry of the former becomes superseded by the latter. The "do" points simultaneously at the "action of the text *on* a reader" and at the "actions performed *by* a reader as he negotiates the text" (Fish 1982:2–3; emphases in original). Such "meaning experience," to employ Fish's phrase, emerges gradually from the on-line interaction between text and response, i.e., the "situated interpretive labor" (Fish 1989[1995]:8). Fish circumscribes above as the primary, "common" reading experience. However, he deems such perspective necessarily incomplete. Namely, one further builds on such "primary" response in one's *reflexion* on it (the "after-the-fact" level, *viz.* the post-broadcast discussions). Fish refers to these acts as *intellecting* the (primary) experience, of groping the "aboutness" itself. As he argues, it is the interrogation of a particular "configuratio[n] of experience" (*ibid.*:4–7).[163]

Fish goes to argue that although one can circumscribe the subjective (context) model (of the situated discourse), the "authorizing agency" of interpretation is "at once both and neither." That is to say, shared strategies of sense-making overthrow both the "subject" and "text" as root constituents. Hence, Fish's arguments corroborate the claims entertained throughout the present work (*ibid.*:13–14). Also, it is additionally crucial here to observe Fish's implication of analyst's role, suggesting that whilst analyzing peoples' "meaning experience" (say, induced by means of reading or audiovisually), the analyst tunes themselves to the participants' *mental context*, for "on any one moment in the reading experience [analyst] must take into account all that has happened (*in the reader's mind*) at previous moments, each of which was in its turn subject to the accumulating pressures of its predecessors" (Fish 1982:27; emphasis added).

In accordance with what I indicated previously as "internal histories"—manifesting, as it were, through the beacon's decomposition/composition into "worlds"—Fish's method further underscores the temporal, processual nature of the reading (*viz.* Other-observing) experience by "*slow*[ing] [it] *down* ... so that "events" one does not notice in normal time, but which do occur, are brought before our analytical attentions" (*ibid.*:28; emphasis added).

In a nutshell, then, Fish's proposition supports the thesis of highly context-sensitive *editorial* "read" *on readings*, or, as I put it previously, a narration of (viewerly, ongoing) narrations (cf., Mello 2002; see also, Fish 1989[1995]; cf., Jahn 1999).

For her part, Hilary P. Dannenberg, also a literary theorist, coined the notion of *liminal plotting*. Latter term is meant to convey the emphasis on how future-oriented suspense (e.g., Hitchcock's bomb and table) directs readers' mental engagement by way of a kind of fast-forwarding technique (Dannenberg 2004,

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[163] However, cf., Pier (2005:241-242,244).

2008:36–39). This consideration of "fast-forwarding" is what I would like to especially emphasize here. As Dannenberg explains, while entrenched in the narrative present, recipients construct potential "logical extrapolations" to some suspenseful story sequence currently at hand (cf. narrative motifs). They construct possible futures (as-if counterfactuals) which are then stored as in-progress "mental images" (2008:38). These tendencies are especially encouraged by (or more accurately, through) complex narratives that "weav[e] a rich, ontologically multidimensional fabric of alternate possibilities," thus unyielding to, and perhaps excluding even, *the* "authoritative" version (*ibid.*; 46, 116; cf., Thompson and Byrne 2002; Gallagher 2011).

Subsequently, Dannenberg introduces the notion of "double immersion." Here, recipient's attention "is spliced between two temporal realms within the *narrative world*" (emphasis added)—that of narrative's "actional present," and that of reader's liminal imagery contemplating possible futures. Thus, Dannenberg appears to assert that while constructing such mental imagery, one is still situated *in* narrative, as if its all-embracing immersive effect would suppress any independent cognitive space. Although such incongruity is significant for current work—and I thus unwise to overlook—its existence is not necessarily relevant for Dannenberg. After all, her examination also, as many a representationalist and simulationalist, admits to the rubric of transportation and trespassing, whilst simultaneously supposedly making the traveler "oblivious" to the outside world (*ibid.*:38–39).

However, for present purposes, experiential narrative proper (i.e., perception of suspenseful "actional present") and the mental constructing it facilitates should not be conflated to indicate one interchangeable cognitive realm. Alternatively, such distinction should highlight a dyadic pairing which would clearly differentiate the agencies involved in this kind of double-layered mental functioning (cf., twistory). Consequently, there would be *internally-fueled* suspense (suspense induced by the creative paces performed), on the one hand; and *externally-fueled* suspense (how narrative's "actional present" is perceived by the recipient), on the other. My line of thought is corroborated by cognitive linguist Barbara Dancygier's recent attempt, one could say, at liberating the notion of suspense out from under the decades'-long stronghold of narrative proper. Namely, as she aptly claims, suspense essentially *is* "our *need* to engage with the text and [to] have the *intention* to complete the gaps in the story" (Dancygier 2012:37; emphasis added). In other words, suspense, also, is something actively constructed whilst engaged with narratives, in general, and with regards to the NPs inhabiting the former, in particular, that is, the focus of the present work (see also, Dannenberg 2014; Prince 1988). Similarly, Monika Fludernik's (1996[2005]) account[164] insisted that even a gaping deficit of useable narrative "inputs" does not appear to constrain us creatively. By Fludernik's assertion, even if confronted with a narrative situation where our unabridged

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[164] For which the "direct realist" mindset accompanying present dissertation is—at least partially—indebted to.

comprehension becomes severely restricted, are we to remain bound by narrative proclivity (cf., Ochs and Capps 2001). In Fludernik's four level-model of what she termed "natural narratology," this tactic became known as *narrativization*. Confronted with texts that are perceived as "radically inconsistent," recipients "cast about for ways and means" for interpretive recuperation.[165]

2.3. The Emergent worlds of the blinking beacon

2.3.1 Worldying the storyworld

David Herman introduces "storyworld" as a context-sensitive modeler, operating at an integrative and measured pace and outlining "the ecology of narrative interpretation":

> [In] making sense of narrative, interpreters attempt to reconstruct not just *what happened* – who did what to who and with whom, for how long, how often and in what order – but also the *surrounding context* or environment embedding *existents*, *their* attributes, and the actions and events in which *they* are more or less centrally involved.
> […]
> Recipients do not just attempt to piece together bits of action into a linear timeline but furthermore try to *measure* the significance of that timeline that emerges *against other possible courses* of development in the world [in question]. (Herman 2002:13–14; emphases added.)

In other words, Herman's *storyworld* evinces a "macrolevel," bottom-up quality, reciprocally-speaking. Narrative (e.g., a television serial) becomes understood as a foundational "blueprint," consisting of "textual cues" (some of which specifically "stand out," i.e., narrative motifs). During narrative experience, as Herman explains it, recipients attempt to reconstruct the integrity of the narrative by tracking surrounding context and existences—whom I am calling NPs—and their interrelations, i.e., "intentional field" (Wulff); or what Herman (2002:14) calls, following von Wright, "larger acting situation") there*with*. Accordingly, recipients are ceaselessly integrating such variegated narrative constituency into a cohesive unity, while additionally continuously "measuring" the significance of their own creation (cf., Herman 1997; cf., Fish's *intellection*). Nevertheless, Herman's initial treatment of *storyworld* (Herman 2002), similarly to Ryan's PoMD, appears, at least to an extent, grounded in mentalistic-reprentationalist, or perhaps more specifically, in "first personal" conceptualizations. Although *storyworld* is professed possessing "world-creating [power]" *vis-à-vis* narrative, such operation foregrounds a predestined quality of "transportation," compounding to projections and "liv[ing] out[s]"

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[165] Similar kind of arguments are put forth for real life situations also: "people tend to change unusual events to make them more *normal*" (Byrne 2005:5; emphasis added). See discussion on Hutto's (2008) "normalization," in chapter I.

from within (*op. cit.*:15–17; recall previous discussion on Ryan; also, Dannenberg above). Nevertheless, even within this apparent stranglehold, there are detectable antithetical glimmers (see, e.g., *ibid.*:23–24, Herman drawing on Garfinkel (1967). That is, the distinctive narrative (narrativizing) proclivity inherent to everyday social relations, of how we consistently "make sense" (out of) our experiences (of our experiences) (cf., Herman 2003b, 2003d, 2011).

Latter ideas make a far more established, stronger and sophisticated re-entry in Herman's recent *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind* (2013). This work expands on the idea of "blueprint," however uniting *within* it both (1) the aspect of "world," and (2) those inhabiting it. Hence, it builds towards clarifying how "stories provide an optimal context" for (developing a theoretical framework in) understanding (realitizing?) the "model persons" (Herman 2002:24; *op. cit.*:76): "Stories [are] the primary means for *evoking worlds of various sorts*, inventorying the persons and other entities that inhabit those worlds, and tracing out the consequences of actions and events *impinging on the domain of* the … persons in the worlds in question" (*ibid.*:78–79; emphases added).

Note also how Herman's usage of "domain" can be conceived of as corresponding to my core claim about the sovereignty of the NPs. This is further corroborated both by Herman's firm antireductionist stance viewing "person as a basic concept or category [constituting an] autonomous analytic domain" (*ibid.*:79); as well as through his rather extensive and thoroughgoing utilization of ecological and intersubjective approaches to the question(s) of "person" (and by extension, "environment") which, in broad strokes, parallel dialogues with various "travelling theories" attempted throughout chapter I (*ibid.*:80ff.; see also, Sorokin 2016a).

In short, Herman's objective—in building on the tradition accommodating Vygotsky, Gibson, and others—is to develop an inclusive account of *narrative* as a perspective-enfolding "instrument of mind," *viz.* one's natural "affordance" in making sense of the world (the surroundings)—characterized by our base intentional proclivity of acting—and of presuming another to act—for reasons. As Herman puts it, "narrative constitutes a time-tested instrument for *navigating* human-scale environments for *acting and interacting*" (*op. cit.*:83; emphases added). Now, my accentuation of "navigating" obviously wasn't accidental for its employment recalls my original notion of beacon (see, 2.2): a dialectical mechanism of navigation, decomposing and composing the "worlds," in both kinds of narrceptual thinking—in the situation of reflexive reception; and later, as tracked, collocated and narrativized by the analyst.

By way of an example, when Herman subscribes a particular "sense-making power" to a compact sports (tennis) news bulletin, lamenting diverse number of features converging into it (time frames, people, events, etc.), I would suggest beacon as being the organizing—or, if to borrow Herman's term, "mesophysical[166]," everyday—"force" behind (i) not only making sense of (i.e.,

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[166] Herman builds throughout present argumentation on Gibson's notion of "terrestrial event."

granting "access," "shedding light" to) these two hundred odd words packed with meaningful information ("composition"), but (ii) also guiding him in disentangling this "narrative" in providing further nuanced detail ("decom-position" into (composite) "worlds" that collapse on the *storyworld*) (see, *ibid.*:83–85). Drawing on the above, but also on the previous discussion on neuropragmatism, beacon's operation follows a similar kind of "internalizing" (Vygotsky) logic *vis-à-vis* NPs and participants. Namely, beacon helps the latter in "calibrating" particular kinds of storyworlds (enacted through narrcepts) in *situating* events and their (potential, revealed/rejected) consequences "at the person level" (*ibid.*:85). That is, beacon first and foremost embeds the former in the wide and confined context for acting (for someone). Thereafter, beacon's *instrumentality* highlights analyst's narrceptual thinking—of how he/she further situates these individual storytellings within the grander *becoming* discursive scheme, i.e., the *discourse world.*

However, if to maintain that these upshots convey two kinds of "be-comings"—(i) the becoming of the *storyworld*, (ii) and the becoming of the *discourse world* (see, 2.3.4 below)—what still lacks is a concrete clarification of the "worlds" affiliating the two. That is, it remains to be asked how the **intend-world** and the **text makers' world** both develop, merge with and relate to this overarching "possible worlds" framework that I am specifically sug-gesting here. Consequently, I will provide a short, abstract *theoretical* sketch with regards to both (for the analytical treatment, see, chapter III, 3.4–3.5).

Worldying the intend-worlds
Marie-Laurie Ryan's approach to *intention-world* (I-world, IW) preserves and expands on, I would contend, her entire—as argued in 2.3—*from within* account (Ryan 1985, 1991, 2005[2010]). Hence, Ryan views IWs as "representations," "fictions-within-fictions" (Ryan 2005[2010]), wherein "a character commits himself, privately or to witness, to reaching a certain target" by following, or "projecting" a certain "course of action." Ryan's perspective can perhaps, to an extent, be viewed as corroborating the sovereignty claims entertained in my project, though truthfully, it may also interpolate with it. Namely, Ryan doesn't go further than allowing the recipient a mere tracking of representation's repre-sentations, whilst preserving the teleological imperative, i.e., it is always and only the narrative that's supposed to give practical "cues" for its closeability.

By contrast, what I would define as **intend-world**[167] does not only rely on obtained information, "privately or to witness," for—as I have noted pre-viously—in televisual media we lack auxiliary material to consult what a NP might have thought in cases when it is left unexpressed, even if this "lack" is, indeed, "to witness" (recall the scene of "actively" thinking Walter in his back-garden, playing Russian Roulette with his revolver). It is precisely here where—in my opinion—reciprocally passive "intention-world" becomes inten***d***-world:

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[167] I would rather opt to such a notion in order to explicitly differentiate "intention" (noun) from "[to] intend" (verb), in order to preserve consistency with beacon and its processual navigation.

participants intend *from without*, trying to comprehend realitized NPs and their social relations, whereas the latter still preserve their sovereignty with their AW (actual world).[168] As a result, the interpretative space inherent in Ryan's original notion (and also in Werth's "private worlds" (Werth 1999)—I would maintain— expands and gains more weight with regard to *in situ* sense-making (*viz. sense reasoning*) processes. To summarize: because Ryan's account of NP's "private world" is nevertheless rooted in latter's *textual* representation, it is not exactly neither accurate nor appropriate for present discussion. That is, once a social relation with NPs is established, *viz.* intentional stance directed *at them*, any kind of monological "private world" becomes promptly nonsensical. Instead, shared spaces emerge, wherein inter-party intend-worlds may even intersect and *correspond*, if and when necessary (*twistory*, see chapter I).

Worldying the text makers' world
To the best of my knowledge, my conception of the **text makers' world** is original insofar as the conventional accounts of "textworld" appear inapplicable for present purposes. As I am envisioning it, viewers/participants juxtapose their construals of narrative events and (potential) acts of NPs with how narrative's "material" authors (i.e., creator Vince Gilligan, his "writers room," as it were) may have *undermined* either the "correct" intentional activity of the NPs, the events latter significantly factor into, or both**.** In other words, in correspondence to the commonsensical, "realist" approach, what participants do is "leveling" the proverbial playing field, as it were. Thereby, they don't "switch frames" nor make "inferential walks" as more or less oriented by the narrative.

Rather, in the criticisms, evaluations, suspicions, and discrepancies mounted toward the script writers as "text makers," participants reveal a unifying, inclusive undercurrent with other facets of narrceptive thought. That is, both NPs and "text makers" are approached to as "equals." Partial within the overall process, the latter, too, are subscribed a particular acting for reason, i.e., the writing to best to their ability (subjectively taken). In other words, taken from the perspective of the narrceptivized *storyworld,* script writers—insofar as characters become NPs—are also "actors," "doers," reasoning agents whose intentions participants aim to elucidate, though from grounds seemingly different than those of the NPs; although insofar as in the becoming *storyworld*, developed by the beacon on the principle of a non-hierarchal array, these kinds of differences are negligible.

For all intents and purposes, then, the text makers' world can, in some ways, be collapsed with how, e.g., Herman has treated reciprocal proclivity to scrutinize the "authorial intent," though the twist is that it is not "authorial" any longer (*pace* Jenkins), but part of a larger, composite, *co-elaborated* pattern—a *storyworld* into (a potential) *discourse world* (former writ large). Although

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[168] AW I *am* largely taking in Ryanian sense. I don't think of there being any major conflicts in doing so.

storyworld may persist to some degree of internal "hierarchies of certainty[169]," it is nevertheless structured by deploying equal array of purpose in "sorting" into "kinds." As such, *everything* in the becoming *storyworld* is/becomes to be "story-able," "story-ied."

Consequently, *storyworld*, as I envision it, doesn't discriminate between narrative events, persons of whatever "origin," their (possible, assumed) intentional functioning, e.g., "authorial"[170] choices and contingent backslashes latter might portend (i.e., the consistency with NP's "life narrative"), etc. *Story-world*, then, is, in short, the proverbial meeting ground of *all* related persons, perceived to act for reasons. At its most minimalist, this is established every now and again in singular narrcepts (wherein *storyworld* first becomes), whereas at its most maximalist, these tendencies find their expression in the becoming *discourse world*. As such, almost everything but the attention-catching narrative motifs are "shifted" outside the purview of the "text," wherein meanings are mere—as Valentina Pisanty, in her recent article on Eco's legacy, very beautifully yet symptomatically put—"embryo[es] within the text itself" (Pisanty 2015:38).

Contrastively, the present project suggests that the senses made are not only based on the "appropriated" information (i.e., narrative motifs), but that the latter is, at most, *instigator* of a process intertwining absolutely everything.[171] Hence, ultimately the position as if "text" "gives" anything cannot be supported in its fullest sense. Obviously, text as narrative has its function, but only insofar it highlights the partial story(world) made sense of. Or, to put the same point differently, "incompleteness" is, in effect, *brought along*, not "found" (and "solved" thereafter).[172] However, Pisanty's very attentive observation can leave some space for maneuvering *vis-à-vis* Eco. Namely, his earlier work[173] *The Open Work* proposes a "second meaning" of openness for the work of art. This resides in recipient's "'estranged' attitude towards the text, while being at the same time encouraged by the aesthetic text itself" (Pisanty 2015:41). I will leave it open for discussion, however—for the position of "estrangement" might

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[169] I.e., there is more to be gleaned from the extra-narrative materials on the writing process, say, whereas in case of NPs participants are wholly left to develop their own on-the-go *storyworlds*.

[170] In fact, it can be argued that any kind of "authority" is, in effect, liquidated. There *just are* persons, carrying various kinds of interest (i.e., being "shed" beacon's "light" on, accordingly), in the middle of the sense-making process. Also note how my suggestion of **text makers' world** expands on Booth's notion of "television social network" (see, Chapter I), for script writers as "textmakers" can also be observed and made sense (reasoned) of as "nodes" in the overarching social interrelations.

[171] Real life frames can develop into twistory; NPs' "social field" relates to their intend-world; script writers' choices and following reciprocal criticism thereof emerges as text makers' world—and all the above "feeds into" *story-* and, ultimately, *discourse world.*

[172] In this assumption also the grander human design reverberates, conditioning peoples' proclivity to, *ipso facto*, seek "coherent" narratives in their lives. Accordingly, "solving" is illusory, overshadowed by interminability and unfinalizability.

[173] Taken in the order of the publications in the original language.

not necessarily be what this work supports—but, as a sum total, it may be the closest Eco comes to sympathizing with the general spirit of the ideas presently entertained.

2.3.2 Story(world)ing the discourse world

Before departing to shortly clarify technical matters and concluding with the final Sample Analysis (see, chapter III, 3.4–3.5), the totality of the theoretical discussion up to this point has to converge. Such a congregation can be found—as referenced many times previously—in what I envision as the *discourse worlds* (DW) of (in) current investigation. Heretofore, I have specified DW as the *becoming* inherent to the "analytical dimension" of the **beacon**. It characterizes the analyst as an *editorial agency* decomposing and composing the "worlds" (intend-world↔text makers' world↔*storyworld*) participants develop online in making sense of the NPs and the narrative—as former's "social field." For a concluding elaboration, I will utilize both the pioneering work of discourse analyst Teun A. van Dijk (van Dijk 1976, 1980, 2008) as well as recent MDA (mediated discourse analysis) approach, especially the promising notion of *site of engagement* introduced therein (Jones 2005; Norris and Jones 2005b; cf., Jones and Norris 2005a; Norris and Jones 2005a).

As Jones and Norris' (2005a) discussion reveals, building on MDA also proves consistent with and complements previously adapted Hermanian position of storytelling exploited as a "cultural tool" for thinking—an "affordance" with "real time" (*viz.* online) social expression (see, 2.3.1; *ibid.*:5; Vygotsky 1930[1978]; Wertsch 1998; Bakhtin 1981; cf., chapter I). Specifically, MDA approach towards "discourse" is developed from an "actionalist" position:

> [T]he relationship between the discourse and action is dynamic and contingent, located at a nexus of social practices, social identities and social goals. This relationship is manifested in the *tension* between the kinds of action that discourse and other cultural tools make possible and the ways people purposefully mix these tools in response to their immediate circumstances. MDA sees discourse as '*cycling*' through social actions. (Jones and Norris 2005:9; emphases added)

Such description dovetails relatively smoothly with what I have suggested my original notion of beacon to entail. As proposed, beacon's internal dialectical nature affords it (i) particular kind of "tension"—pitting "popular" and "academic" sense-making through "worldying"—, and (ii) mobility. By latter distinction, it "cycle[s]" through/between as well as "sheds light on" the *becoming* "worlds." Bearing this in mind, beacon, in a way, elaborates on MDA's theoretical framework as well as solidifies the case for the significance of actively monitoring and "updating" the situative experiences *of experiences* (of "big D" Discourse, like narrative such as a TV-show, and its production[174]; see, *ibid.*:10).

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[174] Both discernable as well as assumptive.

Indeed, one of MDA's key notions, *site of engagement* (SoE), concentrates on the virtual "social practices," transpiring in "real time." In solidarity with activity theory (cf. 2.3) and interactional approach more widely, a *site of engagement* is identified as an "amalgamatio[n] of the pattern of orientation towards time and space that participants bring to these moments and locations of social action mediated through … *attention structures*" (*ibid.*:140; emphasis in original; Jones 2005:141).

Subsequently, researcher's involvement is not neglected, but positioned accordingly:

> [It is considered] how we as researchers contribute to the construction of such spaces through our own actions, and how multiple trajectories of actions and practices of *both the researcher and the researched converge in these sites of engagement*. (*ibid.*; emphasis added; cf., Hafstein 2014; Mello 2002)

Hence, MDA approximates leading ideas of present dissertation in embracing "anticipatory discourses" with processual disposition (Jones 2005:*ibid.*; see also, De Saint-Georges 2005 in the same volume). Further, as Jones (2005) proposes, actions—such as storytelling[175] (cf., Hutto and Kirchhoff 2015)—do not "occur 'in' or 'at' but *as sites of engagement*" (*op. cit.*:143; emphasis in original). Hence, Jones' treatment preserves consistency with my principal approach (see, 2.2.1 *passim*). Meanwhile, the notion of "attention structures" retains a certain family resemblance with my conceptualization of narrative motifs, for they, too "open up [SoEs, which are] made up of … those aspects of space and time that we are inclined to *pay attention to.* We construct [SoEs] through our attention" (*ibid.*:152; emphasis in original, underlining added).[176]

Significantly for present usage, aforementioned notion evinces a "distributed" quality, setting out "across social, physical, conceptual [and] relational structures" (*ibid.*:152–153). Incidentally, this suggestion further solidifies the case for present utilization of natural language processing and data mining software for the qualitative analysis of such "anticipating discourses" across diverse digital platforms (blogs, forums) for the latter reveal consistent converging on similar narrative motifs (or, indeed, topical "attention structures"). Accordingly, the notion of "attention" splices individual (cognitive) and social undertones, respectively. It converts into a particular quality the "interlocutors trade in interaction" (*ibid.*:153).

It is therefore not difficult to surmise MDA's "actionalist" perspective to evince a kind of social constructionist format, already readily existent in the

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[175] Note van Dijk having drawn similar linkages back in his 1974 University of Amsterdam seminar: "[N]arrative discourse is an interesting empirical testing ground for the theory of action" (van Dijk 1974:287).

[176] Rodney H. Jones draws here on work on "attention economics," underscoring the attractiveness of information "in an age of information overload" (see, *ibid.*). I wouldn't take it as much of a stretch to expand these ideas to also cover—to a degree—„complex TV" reception, on the one hand, and the enormous quantity of feedback produced by the "creative vernacular" online, on the other.

adage of "discourse *in* action." Now, as maintained by the constructivist position, taken broadly, there's no "objective," factual experience. Instead, there's the reflexive reconstruction of the latter, of opining *about it* post-occurrence from the fleeting perspective of a "now" which Ricœur had called the "pointlike instant" (van Dijk 2008:24–25,56–61; Ricoeur 1984:9; cf., Bruner 1991a).[177] Accordingly, van Dijk persists that as a general practice, discourse elements are related to the *what*, i.e., the central situation spoken about. Meanwhile, the *how*—the socio-cultural, pragmatic mental "interface" between the two—is effectively omitted (van Dijk 2008:57,72–73; however see, Jones and Norris 2005:9, for the "actionalist" approach on *what*).

My present endeavor can be aligned with van Dijk's key works insofar as I have sought a theoretical symbiosis amidst what he calls the "organizations of knowledge" (van Dijk 1980:vii)—*discourse*, *context*, (narrative) *macro-*, *super-* and *microstructure*—and elaborated on it (i) through the introduction of my own original notions, and (i) by critically adapting and complementing the base terminology of the Possible Worlds Theory. Incidentally, the notions of "intention" and "goals" are significant fixtures in van Dijk's theory of context. For van Dijk, they formulate an interdependent duality defined as follows:

> [I]ntentions [are] (parts of) mental models. Intending an action is constructing a mental model of an ongoing or future fragment of conduct.
> [*G*]*oals* [are] mental models of actions and their wanted consequences.
> (van Dijk 2008:81; emphasis in original)

Van Dijk's mentalistic-representationalist leanings notwithstanding, the interdependency of these terms stems conceivably from the former "flowing" into the latter. Similarly, viewers/participants possess the proclivity to intend *for* something. Being engaged in a "communicative act," their narrceptive thinking utilizes "worldying" (via beacon) in order to elaborate on the perceived intentionality of the NPs (*ibid.*:82).[178] The inherent aspiration of such construal points, on top of making sense of "fictional" Other's mental gymnastics, towards the overall narrative conclusion *viz.* coherence. That is, how the whole experience of making sense ultimately becomes, as the saying goes, "tied up." (Something that doesn't actually occur, as maintained above; cf., see, Schema 6, in the Analysis.) Consequently, this perspective unites both the weekly practice

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[177] Regarding (scientific) epistemology and "facts," philsopher of science P. Feyerabend (Feyerabend 1975[1993]) has argued for the non-existence of scientific "bare fact[s]." The facts, Feyerabend suggests, "enter our knowledge" as conveyances of perspectual "ideation[s]." Accordingly unstable and non-fixed, they become scientist's produce (*ibid.*:11-13; cf., *ibid.*:22).

[178] Accordingly, same occurs with the analyst. The difference is that where participants' narrcepts express a situatively "potential" and, agreeably consistent, specifically NP(s)-focused *storyworld*, analyst *first* decomposes the latter (differentiating its content), and thereafter, *secondly*, composes editorial narrations of this (i) the initial *storyworld*, and (ii) of the possible *discourse world* that *becomes* out of all the intersecting *storyworlds* sampled subsequently.

of sense-making (*viz. sense reasoning*) as well as builds on the significance of the viewer/participant-NP intersubjective relation.

Herein lays the consistency with key currents of thought so far elaborated. In other words, it becomes possible to suggest two intersecting routes when speaking of "intention": (1) that of a singular viewer's when intending-for and constructing their "microstructure" (i.e., narrcept); and (2) that of the *analyst*, who, as an editorial "builder" of narration-of-narrations (i.e., *discourse world*), traces diverse idiosyncratic "stories" towards a (potential) "end" of, "outline" for the common knowledge; that is, analyst traces the NP-centric intending into kinds of "worlds" *by deploying beacon as the processual applied method.*

Van Dijk's approach also preserves consistency with the MDA line circum-scribed previously. In *Discourse and Context* (van Dijk 2008), he commences by correlating the notion of "context" with participants' interpretative propen-sity. Specifically, the discourse, van Dijk argues—converging on some social situation (say, experiencing a TV-narrative)—becomes produced and (sub-sequently) influenced by the shared (intersubjective) interpretations of this central, ongoing event (the experiencing of the NP in their "social field," say**).** In a nutshell, this is what van Dijk conveys with the utilization of context. On the basis *of* some situative event, a virtual "midsection" is developed which facilitates not only the production of its discourse, but also the subsequent structuring and interpretation. Hence, recalling Jones (2005), social—i.e., discussive, participatory, distributed—construal *makes* the event, sanctions its emergence. As communicative situations are inherently participatory and intersubjective (e.g., communally shared social cognitions like specific "learned" or "planned" knowledges and/or discourse genres[179]); so, too, are contexts "*personal* and *social*" (van Dijk 2008:17; emphases in original; *ibid.*:23), accommodating—indeed, becoming to be through—the "unique," *viz.* subjective experiences. Maintains van Dijk: "One of the reasons why subjective definitions of the same communicative situation are unique and different for each participant is that by definition their knowledge (opinions, emotions) at each moment must be minimally different for the very interaction to make sense in the first place" (*ibid.*:16).

Van Dijk's meaning above is not laborious to grasp. Due to diverging experiential resources that each participant bestows on comprehending some event, the experiences thus undergone cannot but be (at least minimally, in comparison) unique for everyone involved. As an umbrella notion, van Dijk suggests herewith the usage of *experience model* (EM), reminding thus also Herman's original approach to *storyworld*. Each new communicative situation necessitates its own EMs, with the chief characteristic of dynamism (*ibid.*:69):

> [They are] ongoingly *updated* and *adapted* to (the subjective interpretation of) the current constraints of the situation, including the immediately preceding discourse and interaction. In other words, contexts develop "ongoingly" and "on

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[179] Like apprehension of the supposed "rules" of a drama serial staying relatively true to "real life" (cf., *op. cit.*:18).

line," that is, <u>in parallel with interaction and (other) thoughts</u>. (*ibid.*:18; emphases in original, underlinings added)

Moving yet further, we can herewith turn to van Dijk's "macrostructure." For the key implication expounding on my Extended Hypothesis was that in a collaborative realm of Internet commentary, one can observe the emergence of macrostructural entities—which I envision as *discourse worlds.* Ensuing from participants' multifarious communication, and having made "become" by beacon's activity, *discourse world* circumscribes peoples' venture of *joint* sense-making and experiencing—a position that, I would argue, is "reductive" only insofar as, like previously maintained from various angles, actually containing multitudes (cf., van Dijk 1976:547ff.). Similarly, although van Dijk does readily insist on the relevance of "intersubjective and social constraints," I would argue that it would be proficient to also widen the dimensions of the key terminology accordingly for they largely remain—although necessarily not being of lesser relevance—built around the subjectivist, "egocentric," cognitive implications (cf., van Dijk 2008:20,60,77).

Consequently, my suggestion—also echoed in the basic theses of the MDA—would be to expand the significance of "macrostructure," so that it explicitly recognizes the shared cognition and the *co-elaborative* produce of sense (on the top of "subjective".) I insist to arrive at it through my original notion of beacon. Put differently, the question arises how to distinguish peoples' common goal *vis-a-vis* a "communicative situation" (*ibid.*:25), i.e., the experiential narrative. That is, one has to inquire about peoples' ongoing aspiration in (1) constructing the semantic coherence of the whole (i.e., how miscellaneous narrative events dovetails with the *assumed* reasonings of the NPs) based on (2) the subtle interchange of narrative's "historic" context ('stored' as "worlds") and (3) weekly, episodic information.

This is the precise spot where systematic interrelations, the semantic "levels" of micro and macro, become significant (van Dijk 1980:13). If we think of one (micro)structure in the sense of how a particular "communicative situation" is comprehended and conveyed as a narrcept (formulated as, expressed in, a commentary text) in a "fluid," ongoing discourse (say, reflexting on a TV-show episode); and if we thereafter juxtapose it with a similar conveyance of experience (an episode next week), we are effectively speaking of temporal shifts within the developing experience (as was underscored by Mello, Jones, *et al.*). Separate narrative episodes, though consecutive, each lay foundation for a unique "communicative episode," expounding on the communicative situation at hand.

Along similar lines, this situation in which people concentrate on *one* (communicative) episode can be distributed into interrelated thematic "packets" of varying, although still interrelated, importance. Now, what happens when, say, two of such "packets" are analytically juxtaposed? As the sample analysis in chapter III, 3.4–3.5 suggests, we would be left with interrelated, though differing, contexts that, being bilaterally complementary, update "higher"

constructs—the kind of "macrostructures" from *storyworld* to *discourse world*—with fresh "micro-information" on the level of individual commentary texts (as narrcepts).

To what specifically does "upgrading" amount to under the aegis of such design, however? If to draw on *Breaking Bad*'s data, these commentary texts are thematically univalent due to peoples' "magnified" focus on the narrative motifs, e.g., CIGARETTE.[180] In constructing the narrative coherence, the supposed significance of such narrative ingredient gains in relevance. However, there are also underdeveloped—the "*signaled* and *indexed*, rather than fully expressed"—sub-contexts within (van Dijk 2008:35; emphasis in original). These are discursive and referential. Their emergence can be observed when some other narrative motif is comparatively "magnified" therein (e.g., RICIN). What occurs now is that the latter may evoke important "upgrades" in the latent tendencies of the former (CIGARETTE), whilst complementing "current" primary focus, i.e., the whys and ifs of RICIN's overarching relevance.

To summarize: various kinds of "worlds"—from *intend-world* to *text makers' world* to *storyworld* to, ultimately, *discourse world* (and back)—can be taken as "macrostructures" only insofar as their impermanent, re-usable value is established, maintained, accentuated and venerated. *Becoming* is the key perhaps best suited to unlock "windows" (to take after Norris and Jones 2005a) which have remained shut for far too long.

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[180] See Appendixes I–II for more examples, presented as screen captures from the software.

CHAPTER III

Details Matter: Discussion and close analysis of the sample

3.0 Some general introductory points

The utilized commentary texts enable us to expound on how the kind of inter-sectionality of worlds (noted in the conclusion of previous chapter) precisely operates. For instance, with the commentaries under the auspices of the presently analyzed category (in TAS4 terminology) CIGARETTE, the focus is on Jesse's ricin-laced cigarette's sudden disappearance (cf., previous preliminary analyses, see, Introduction and 1.5.4). To concisely summarize the unfolding plot: the cigarette vanishes (as is ultimately correctly assumed by viewers-commenters) due to Saul's bodyguard Huell's thieving expertise. In particular, this event drives Jesse to entertain the possibility of Brock, his girlfriend's son, having been deadly poisoned. At first, he's convinced of Walt's guilt, but then urged—following a dramatic face-to-face with Walt—to set his sights on Gus instead. The 4th season ends with Jesse still thinking of Gus as having been the culprit; whereas viewers get the culminating reveal that it had been, all along, Walt. Against such highly eventful backdrop, "categories" such as CIGARETTE, but also POISONING, RICIN, and others convey and instigate participatory attention and thus correlate with what I have called narrative motifs. However, instead of appropriating them—in the Jenkinsian sense—the participants in the *Breaking Bad* discussions rather opt to acknowledge these narrative ingredients as strictly significant for the narrativizable intentional agencies involved, i.e., Walt, Gus, Jesse, *et al*. as realitized narrative persons, perceived to make sense of their own autonomous intend-worlds. *In short, the operative tendencies of the motifs permit to expound on the development of realitized models of NPs as theorized in chapter I.*

As depicted by the undirected graph in Category Network Layout (CNL, see Appendix II, Example 1), the categories as motifs, e.g., CIGARETTE, and as NPs, e.g., WALT, can evoke linkages of distinct intensity which become threaded throughout other currently relevant categories. As TAS4's terminology suggests, this tendency is known as "shared responses." For, due to software's non-exclusivity principle, narrcepts as "responses" "belong" everywhere at once. This inclination is further complemented via Category Web Table (CWT, see Appendix II, Example 2). The format of category pairs, either by using the principal category, or the latter's sub-domains, implies in itself generic statistical results, expounding on the "shared" user-generated content alongside a distinct category *vis-à-vis* category axis. Prior visualization, then, is turned into precise numerological insight, thus allowing the earmarking of "categories" (motifs, NPs) which intersect the most. It is a versatile technological method, enabling the extraction of exact sample sizes for the qualitative close analysis.

Meanwhile, visualization—as per illustrations in Appendix II, Examples 1–2—enables us to provide a graphical correlation with the unique storytelling choices employed in the (individual) commentaries. Consequently, the benefits of such bilateral motions of various categories—either conveying motifs or NPs—are indisputably vital as this is the spot where the "macro-structural" insight, *viz.* the *discourse world* becomes, as "narrated" by the analyst. However, I would caution it only being a partial view, even though these kinds of profoundly entangled sense-making (*viz.* reasoning) patterns justifiably highlight the initially unhinged focus they may evoke. As a possible means of clarification, I would suggest that additional centering can be provided by the reducing the area of interest to singular principal categories—as presently done by focusing on CIGARETTE—, exploiting thereby TAS4's expedient feature of "relevance rank." Due to such analytical tuning, it becomes possible to distinguish specialized "configurations" in the discursive storytelling practices on hand.

3.1 The Role and Measure of the Computation Method. General overview of TAS4

The Expanded Hypothesis (see, 2.0) explored in detail *theoretically* in chapters I and II rests on the applied computational method of *text mining* as afforded by Natural Language[181] Processing (NLP) techniques in IBM's *SPSS Text Analytics for Surveys* (TAS4). NLP—rooted in the theories of artificial intelligence, computational linguistics and machine learning—complements text mining where its capacities, like the advanced understanding of language (i.e., latter's high contextuality), are exploited in the advanced uncovering, predicting and interpreting of emerging patterns within a set of information (Larson and Watson 2013:2–3; Yu *et al.* 2011:735,739; for a more technical perspective, see e.g., Aggarwal and Zhai (eds) 2012b). Hence, it becomes uniquely possible to systematically analyze a variety of emerging topical patterns which help to convey how viewerly experiences about the NPs and or plot ambivalences of a serial TV narrative develop over time within and across discursive and interactional online environments (blogs, forums). As hypothesized, these exponential "growths" in the communication of coherent knowledge emerge as more or less distinct entities—as intersecting "worlds" with varying degrees of significance—from within the large quantities of commentary material, i.e., the "Big Data" (BD) (Mitra 2013; Vogt *et al.* 2014).

As a working definition, social scientists Paul Vogt and colleagues propose BD to indicate predominantly Web-based and textual social media archives comprised of "an amount of information impossible for one individual to code and analyze in less than a year without computer help" (*ibid.*:159–160, 174ff.). Surfacing as recently as 2012, BD swiftly penetrated the academic vernacular

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[181] I.e., "language spoken or *written* by humans" (Tierney 2012:176; emphasis added).

and has since spearheaded interdisciplinary conversations about data manipulation in the sense of "mining" diverse media for personalized user contributions (Mitra and Mamani 2014:84; cf., Aggarwal and Zhai 2012a:9). Hence, the technical choices for present project are in accordance with cutting-edge qualitative research interest on contextual "mining" via NLP. This kind of interest extends over diverse fields of research, scrutinizing medical records, open source software discussion lists, customer interaction, organizational e-mail correspondences, Facebook status updates, and more (see, e.g., Kahya-Özyirmidokuz 2014).

Specifically, the core objective with present episodically and asynchronously produced raw data is to elaborate on and facilitate the qualitative analysis of the narrative sense-making as an "observant narration." Although the emergence of such narration can span extremely longitudinal periods, presently an interval of two weeks has been chosen. Thus far, the phenomenon of the sense-making process has been observed in the academic circles, widely taken, primarily only via controlled (and short-term) lab experiments such as relatively short reading tests. Meanwhile, the potentially more natural habitat of sense-making like the online discussion environments has engendered superficial interest, possibly because of the sheer quantity and splintered nature of the data available. However, present qualitative *micro*analysis building on transdisciplinary theoretical framework as presented in preceding chapters surmounts such impediment by elaborating on the capabilities of NLP processing.

General overview of TAS4
Although I will soon turn to the internal terminology exploited by TAS4 in a bid to further reinforce prior claims, a few introductory words about TAS4 in general are in order.

In fact, the key functionalities which set this particular software apart from its various predecessors and contemporaries (e.g., NVivo, Atlas.ti, RQDA, CATMA, Rapidminer) lie in its capacity to generate automatic "concepts" (or, as ordinarily termed in content analysis, "codes"; Saldaña 2009:3ff.). Hence, TAS4 (1) reduces and increases the factors of labor-intensity and time-saving, respectively, by (i) rising objectivism in making inter-rater reliability check principally obsolete and by relieving the inductive load on the analyst; and (ii) by providing, through NLP algorithms, a more complex support for higher levels of language (Tierney 2012:176–180; cf., Crowston *et al.* 2012:229–230); and (iii) by providing a finalized analytic toolset where heavy complementary programming and customization is not an absolute necessity.

Specifically for (ii) above, TAS4 (2) preserves and weighs contextual linkages between the categories produced via concepts (or "terms" as employed intermittently in TAS4's vocabulary). None of the other software successfully excels in both of these areas of interest. For example, perhaps the most well-known data mining tool—Rapidminer—allows for procedures of "tokenization" and "lemmatization" (i.e., algorithms invoking word stems), but forgoes the contextual relevancies. Meanwhile, in R's qualitative analysis package RQDA,

complex "code categories" can be developed through manual coding procedure. However, categories as such are not inter-relatable through R's feature of "plotting" visualized links. Instead, they can be observed to share commonalities only insofar as their content, i.e., detailed codes, overlap. That is, you can manually highlight one specific code to observe its relationships, whereas categories *themselves* remain static.

The utmost context-sensitivity with which the participants approach the incremental discussions is of crucial importance for the following analysis. To that end, the global proposition herewith is for a qualitative data analysis (QDA) which is further reinforced the key theoretical tenets established in previous chapters.

The software of TAS4 is, to best of my knowledge, a relatively novel and innovative analytical tool. Text mining by utilizing NLP—especially as a measure to scaffold and enrich subsequent qualitative analysis—has not yet been applied to shed systematic light on the "cognitive work-out" (Johnson 2005) induced by complex narrative experience flowing into continuous, and equally intricate, process of sense-making.

The processing of voluminous data in TAS4 is subsequently aided by its usage of graphical outputs which draw on graph and network theory (e.g., "network" as an "unrestricted," i.e., non-arrowed graph; see Appendix II, Example 1; varieties on the "category web" visualizing). Hence, it becomes possible to tease out insights about the relationships between emerging categories highlighting—through the **beacon** mechanism—"networked" attempts at "worldying" and intertwining key NPs, as instigated (channeled) by narrative motifs. Of special interest herewith is to unearth latent (*versus* "manifest") meaning content, therefore—once again—directly building on the Expanded Hypothesis emphasizing the crucial *narrativist* role of the analyst.

3.2 Corpus: its Rules of Inclusion/Exclusion and Preparation of the Data

For the close analysis of *Breaking Bad*'s online feedback, commentary texts from episodic review and general entertainment sites like *Uproxx/Hitfix*, *The A. V. Club* and *Hollywood Reporter's Bastard Machine* were assembled. Forum posts from user-made episode discussion threads from *Reddit* were also utilized. Speaking in numerical totals, this unedited commentary data ranged from 100 to over 1400 (per locii) for *Breaking Bad*'s 4th season's penultimate episode "End Times" and hit the 2100 mark for the finale "Face Off." The core objective here was to collect time-accurate data, i.e., viewers' immediate, post-viewing responses. Hence, a number of elimination rules had to be introduced subsequently.

Firstly, where the technical possibilities of the web pages enabled it, the specific time/date accompanying the commentaries was recorded. However, in some cases, possibly owing to purges of archives to release resources, this restriction became only partially achievable, for the commentary archives—at

the time of the conducted fieldwork—ultimately reverted to approximate dating models for posted comments (e.g., "3 years ago").

Consequently, a *second*, complementary rule had to be introduced—recurrence of discussive themes. A Pilot Analysis examined the available data in order to ascertain (a) repeating themes and/or theme-bundles, guided thereby by (i) the appropriateness of the commentary text *vis-a-vis* the analysis at hand (i.e., brief, non-exhaustive comments were excluded, e.g., "I liked this episode"); and (ii) the range of reflextion observable in the text. The latter option was highlighted primarily for the *Reddit* data. Being a completely user-made environment with no financial implications, episodic threads in *Reddit* were usually generated prior to episode's airing and left "to run" concurrently with the episode being watched. Hence, it was further possible to isolate brief excitatory, minimally reflexive remarks. Subsequently, these data were judged not to substantially contribute to the in-depth discussions which generally occurred post-watch.[182]

Consequently, all the commentary texts that met the outlined rule-set were promptly inserted to the two-column Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel, 2007). Here, too, a certain set of pre-established rules were developed based on the Pilot Analysis. Because TAS4 software doesn't allow repeating insertions on its ID field (see Appendix II, Example 3, for illustration), the latter had to contain various kinds of crucial information without appearing confusing and/or causing unwanted overlaps. Hence, pertinent information in the first column in Excel was formatted to contain participant's name, narrcept's location, notation of the episode (A), and a unique signifier (e.g., Justin_Jordan-A-Hitfix-02–10–11-a7). The "unique signifier" was chosen to indicate (i) uniqueness of each entry due to consistent recurrence of user names and dates; and (ii) in order to tease out a more relational insight from the narrcepts taken as a whole. What is implied here is that the value of such denotation enabled to precisely circumscribe thematic chains of commentary internal to the web page (e.g., the "child-threads" of *Reddit* environment), or even going across multiple web pages simultaneously. These enabled to specifically characterize how the technical capabilities of said web pages guided and shaped ongoing conversations (i.e., successive responses to particular commentaries; second-level chains within these "child-threads," etc).

Owing to the usage of "unique signifier," it became possible to chronicle the inner workings of such internal commentary chains. For this, the "initiating" commentary of the second-level chain was specifically highlighted with its unique signifier disclosed in brackets at the end of the previously described format (e.g., Justin_Jordan-Hitfix-02-10-11-a7-a6 (a4)). Although present dissertation bracketed the suggested potentialities for future interrogations, it has to be noted that these specific data permit not only focused analysis outside

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[182] Note, though, that *Reddit*—due it being a community initiative—can also include discussion threads made specifically for "late-comers." However, the Pilot Analysis of this data revealed that the discussive themes were in accordance with those of the original thread and, as such, it was proven unnecessary to make largely overlapping collections.

of the purview of TAS4 software, but may also complement the latter, where possible.

The Pilot Analysis in its entirety consisted of 1009 commentary texts (as narrcepts) expanded over three episodes of *Breaking Bad*'s 4th season ("End Times," "Face-Off," and "Confessions,"). This data were collected and inserted into said Excel spreadsheet.

Next, Excel's two-column table, consisting of the ID-field with merged information, and the commentary text, was inserted into the TAS4 software. Here, an analysis consisting of two "cycles" (Saldana 2009:3ff.) or, phases, commenced. Within the *first* phase, TAS4 automatically mined the text for relevant, high-frequency single words or word phrases (e.g. *ricin*, *ricin cigarette*). As previously implied, in TAS4, this extracted data is synonymous with "terms" for they correlate with software's pre-made internal "type dictionaries." Dictionaries are mostly tailored towards marketing and customer satisfaction analyses, consisting of default libraries like Location, Organization, Person, Positive, Negative, etc. However, this framework is wholly customizable and writing one's own "libraries"—which is what present analysis opted for—is encouraged.

Initial mining, then, draws on linguistic algorithms and the default and custom resources and employs similarity measure to cluster terms into respective "concepts" (and "concept patterns") and "types" (and "type patterns.").[183] The latter stem directly from and echo these internal typologies, e.g., if a concept named *walt* is one of the extracted concepts, and if the Type Pattern view option is chosen, the concept can be seen to correspond to its parent typology, e.g., *narrative_person_WALTER* + <>. Here, "<>" correlates with *walt*, but also with both manual and default typologies, e.g., "Positive Opinion[184]."

Extracted concepts/terms helped to pinpoint precise focal points across all data considered. Hence, specific areas of interest in the reciprocal storytelling and communication of knowledge are revealed. Once all relevant insight was gleaned from this preliminary "First Cycle" (cf., Saldana 2009) extraction process, custom typologies (e.g., *narrative_person_WALTER*) were established and complemented with more matching terms to assure a fluent and data-specific approach (see, Appendix II).

3.3 Storyworlding a discourse world of *Breaking Bad*: Final navigational warnings

The initial step preceding the sample analysis was to highlight temporally simultaneous discussions across several blog/forum environments. To that end, TAS4's "relevance rank" (henceforth RR; see Appendix II, Example 3, for

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[183] Cf., IBM SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys User's Guide, pub. 2012, p. 79.
[184] This content was not relevant for present analysis.

illustration) was utilized. Consistent with theoretical underpinnings explored in chapter II, RR permitted the observation of temporal intersections in the discussions pertaining to the key episodes, i.e., "End Times" and "Face-Off" (broadcasted a week later). Through these observed "timelines," specific meaning "pockets," emerging in and as a response to the "anticipatory discourse" with regards to *Breaking Bad*—i.e., the "worlds"—were "shed light on," decomposed and composed by the **beacon** mechanism. Once more, then, the vocabulary of "worlds," as conceived in chapter II:

(1) a *storyworld* (SW). Envisioned as a subjective "calibration," enacted through narrcept—the expression of beacon's "reciprocal dimension"— and conveying narratively *situated* events and their (potential, revealed, and rejected) consequences "at the person level," thereby collapsing into itself, on the principle of non-hierarchal array, (2) and (3). In short: in SW, all the intentionally significant "persons" 'meet' for they are perceived to act for reasons. Hence, the minimalist "format" of such predisposition is established in narrcepts. The maximalist form, thereafter, formulates all SWs in the sampled "anticipatory discourse" to facilitate a *becoming* discourse world (4) (see, 2.3.1),

(2) (multitudes of) intend-worlds (IW). Although focusing on NPs, IWs also highlight emergent shared and distributed spaces which suggest intersecting "inter-party" relations, i.e., **twistory**. Moreover, for narrcepts communicate intending *from without*, they convey attempts to comprehend realitized NPs and their social relations. In doing so, former's sovereignty with their AW ("actual world") is recognized, kept intact and un-encroached (see, 2.3.2),

(3) a text makers' world (TMW). Emphasizing the narrceptive principle organizing SW, script writers and "creators" (such as Vince Gilligan) also become "actors," "doers," *viz.* reasoning agents. Their (potential) intentions necessitate elucidation in the format of criticism, evaluation and contesting (see, 2.3.3),

(4) last but obviously not the least, a discourse world (DW). DW characterizes the analyst consistently decomposing and composing the "worlds" in 1–3. The latter are developed in making sense of the NPs by taking given narrative (*Breaking Bad*) as former's "intentional field." Consequently, DW is the *becoming* of analyst's "narration of narrations," of the "running" circumscription of the joint venture of sensemaking and experiencing, hence subsuming and negotiating the labels of "popular" and "academic." Put differently, DW subscribes also the analyst with a necessarily editorial "narrativist" proclivity; one becomes subsequently a "worlder" for/of viewers' story(telling) (see, 2.3.4)

Note herewith that, as 1–3 imply, although participants opt for compatibility over discernment (i.e., unitary thinking), the categorical decomposition is ordinarily implied within. This implication is expressed by what in chapter II

was termed, and herewith is going to be exemplified—the seamless navigation, *viz*. **gliding**.

Now, in embarking on my analytical quest, I will navigate the commentaries focusing on the narrative motif of *CIGARETTE* in the discussions post-"End Times" and "Face-Off." Although under TAS4 categorization, "CIGARETTE" amounted to 124 commentary texts, the sample data affords a close reading to twenty nine[185] with the objective to produce a piecemeal interpretation of a potential, temporally situated, *discourse world*. Of major significance here are the connections engendered. These connections beget diverse alterations in different cases, and hence, underscore the necessity of substantial analytical scrutiny. Bluntly, here we speak of the combinations of meanings. These combinations frequently interweave a diversity of narrative motifs so that in speaking of one, indeed, several are encompassed at once (in addition to CIGARETTE also RICIN, POISONING, WALT's GUN, and more).

Narrative motifs, in turn, indicate prevailing narrative *gists*, operating within a particular "extract"—a temporal, "zig-zag" of linearity with intertwined commentaries *in succession*, in order to tease out processuality, the **narrativizing as an happening itself**. Therefore, any kind of "generalizations" can be considered to be not only of secondary importance, but to possibly introduce a reductive bias against the process at hand. In following these caveats, the cigarette (and its disappearance) begets three-fold gists:

(i) Walt's either directly involved in the poisoning, or—regardless of the responsibility for the poisoning—the latter's instrumental and clever ruse *orchestrated by him to manipulate with Jesse's wavering allegiance*,

(ii) the cigarette as a tool of child-like curiosity *leading Brock to accidentally poison himself*;

(iii) lastly, the cigarette "ploy" as if *spotted beforehand by Gus*[186] *and masterminded to sow discord* between Walt and Jesse with the distinct aim of conclusively rid himself of the former.

Although obviously not the *only* circumscribable gists, they nonetheless, and by a wide margin, spearhead the bulk of overall discussions throughout the categorized 124 texts and especially in the sample analyzed.

Incidentally, it is advisable to caution against taking these gists for isolated (or, isolating) entities. Participants mix them together without restraint due to their narrceptive thinking integrating all three within same individual commentary texts (as narrcepts). Nevertheless, singular commentaries could exhibit a negative "charge" *vis-a-vis* a particular gist, whereas acknowledging another through the construction of former's *negation*; that is, of elaborating on its

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[185] See, Appendix I, for more.
[186] Due to his tendency to install eavesdropping "bugs" everywhere.

incompatibility.[187] As demonstrated shortly, characteristic of gists is also to "branch out." That means, within a limited format of narrcept, participants draw within one gist other relevant NPs and significant events from the "social systems" of the NPs, producing a kind of "rootlet" within the original "root," as it were.

Hence, at the very outset we are to enquire, albeit paradoxically, into which kinds of proverbial rabbit holes does the beacon lead us? Let us take jump, alas.

3.4 Storyworldying the becoming of a potential Discourse World

Circumscribing a discourse world with Phailcakez'storyworld as a temporal 'anchor'

Following the approach outlined above, I will commence with—and build on— a narrcept from *Reddit*[188] (highest RR, *viz.* its focus is most entrenched in narrative motif CIGARETTE) amongst those concentrating on "End Times." My *first* objective is to complement the becoming of this particular SW with (i) other SWs—some established in parts, spanning several narrcepts from one participant over a particular interval—belonging to the same "distributed"[189] (or "child-") thread in the *Reddit* environment; as well as (ii) SWs from altogether other environments, suggesting thus temporal *collisions* in distributed narrceptive thinking. Note that though aforementioned dynamic is initially observed under the rubric of the first key episode, "End Times," it fluently "flows" to incorporate the consecutive, "Face-Off."

This, in turn, enforces the underlying understanding that discourse world as a *becoming* is not fixed, but forever "in transit." Hence, the temporal "lines" inherent to "Face-Off" are thereupon juxtaposed *in process*, as if collapsed onto those investigated of of "End Times." The underlying contention conveys such a course of action as the most effective and inclusive mode in revealing the *processual development of narrceptive thinking* and its subject- and locus-transcendent character, to boot. It not only evokes the "worlds," but suggests ultimately how these "worlds" consistently not only "feed into" each other, but also into an observant "macro" tendency—the discourse world writ large, *viz.* encompassing both key episodes of *Breaking Bad* "put together" to make sense by the analyst (for visualization, see, Schema 1 below).

Phailcakez' becoming SW (see, Schema 1, for illustration) has its vital undercurrent scaffolded on the narrceptive thinking circumscribing Walt's IW. Hence, it is professed that Walt—owing to potential threat to his life—could have had neither "*time* [n]*or motivation*" for the variety of antics involved in poisoning. Subsequently, this SW is orientated through the implicit acknow-

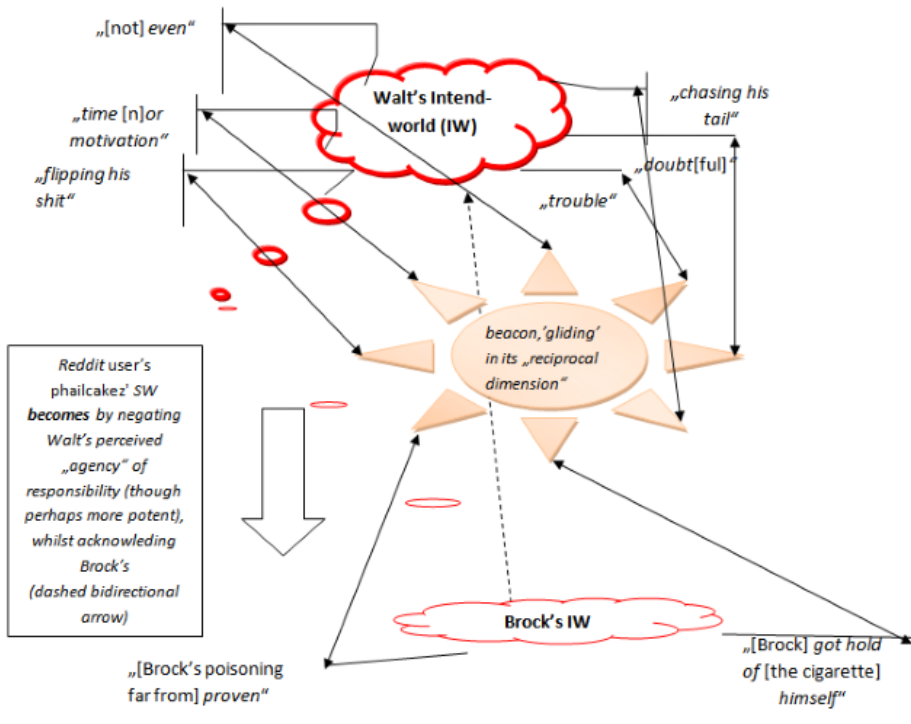---

[187] See 3.4 for examples and extended discussions on this particular distinction (esp. phailcakez, but also others henceforward).
[188] See, Appendix I, Example 1.
[189] See below for what I specifically mean by the utilization of this term.

ledgement that—aside "*flipping his shit*" and "*chasing his tail*"—Walt was also always only observed barricading his house—seemingly doing everything humanly possible *not to leave* (the crucial back garden moment notwithstanding). Consequently, contingent on the IW-specific auspices of a jeopardized life, Walt's direct involvement would've necessitated acquirement of additional knowledge and or suggested other intermediary steps. All the aforementioned, however, remain admittedly "*doubt*[ful]" for Walt already had (was in) enough "*trouble*" to start with. As such, phailcakez organizes the local coherence of their SW (*viz.* beacon 'gliding' in its "reciprocal dimension") by alleging Walt as (a) having had no knowledge of where both Brock and his mother live; and (b) not "*even*" knowing them, to boot. Significantly, however, both arguments are derived from a false 'footing,'[190] as it were, and phailcakez—either by inadvertent or strategically calculated (storytelling) omission—consolidates their SW by, instead, embracing the 2nd gist outlined above—i.e., Brock's accidental self-poisoning via Jesse's cigarette. Hence, there's seamless navigation, *viz.* 'gliding,' from Walt's IW to Brock's ("*he got hold of* [the cigarette] *himself*"). This involves switching the "agencies" of responsibility in order to preserve and organize the local consistency of the SW as narrceptivized. Meanwhile, latter's contingency is heavily wrought with the preliminary assumption regarding uncertainty of ricin poisoning having occurred in the first place. Although proposed hesitantly ("*I think*"), the aspect of poisoning being yet far from "*proven*" necessarily fits—if for nothing else than for the 'shifting' of blame. Hence, to a degree, perhaps, the presumed factor of culpability extends itself to cover "reasoning agents" on a one-to-many axis. Accordingly, phailcakez' situated SW post-"End Times" *becomes* by acknowledging 2nd gist through the distinct *negation* of the 1st. That is, by underscoring and crafting on two highly relevant IWs—Walt's and Brock's—whereas (perhaps by design) evoking a curious 'blind spot' (a 'mis-remembering' on Walt's knowledge—though very limited as availed by narrative—on Brock/his mother) insofar as other narrceptivized SWs, analyzed subsequently, are concerned.

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[190] Walt *had* visited Jesse just a few episodes ago and although Jesse didn't invite him in, Walt clearly threw a passing glance at both a pre-teen boy and a young woman sitting in the living room.

„[not] *even*"

Walt's Intend-world (IW)

„*chasing his tail*"

„*time* [n]*or motivation*"

„*doubt*[ful]"

„*flipping his shit*"

„*trouble*"

beacon,'gliding' in its „reciprocal dimension"

Reddit user's phailcakez' SW **becomes** by negating Walt's perceived „agency" of responsibility (though perhaps more potent), whilst acknowledging Brock's (dashed bidirectional arrow)

Brock's IW

„[Brock's poisoning far from] *proven*"

„[Brock] *got hold of* [the cigarette] himself"

Schema 1: *Reddit's* phailcakez' *becoming* SW. "Thought bubbles" are utilized to highlight the fluctuating centrality (stronger-to-less red) of two interwoven IWs of narrative persons (NP), indicated by the narrceptive thinking (*viz.* narrception) of phailcakez' narrcept; "callouts" ("[not] *even*," etc.) demarcate the precise 'shapings' of the IW in question via beacon's 'gliding' in its "reciprocal dimension," whereas latter is further emphasized by the two-way arrows as illustrative 'points of tangency,' as it were. Phailcakez' narrceptivized SW 'anchors' the entire **discourse world** presently unpacked in its *becoming* (see, Schema 3 *passim*).

Nevertheless, narrceptive thinking, *viz. narrception* of IreneInIdoho from *Hitfix*[191] (also see, Schema 2) is largely aligned with *Reddit*'s phailcakez', however the organization highlighted by her concise narrcept fine-tunes Walt's IW as narrceptivized by phailcakez (cf., Schema 3). Namely, Irene proclaims that even "*if*" it "truly" is (and I am intentionally re-engaging with phailcakez' phrasing here) Walt's doing, (usage of) "*Jesse's cigarette*" would've been unnecessary. Implication here, then, is that given Walt's high-grade chemist skills, "*he could just make more ricin.*" Hence, whilst forgoing the negation phailcakez utilized previously, IreneInIdoho makes sense of key events by emphatically *narrceptivizing* Walt's IW, whilst treating Brock's IW as more or less a generic afterthought ("*if... then either an accident..*"); as opposed to how phailcakez' narrception developed. The finalizing "*or*,"

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[191] See, Appendix I, Example 2.

though, ultimately proposes pregnancy of meaning by harboring a suggestion of 3rd gist—that of Gus' involvement, though left un-named and perhaps not even intended as such.
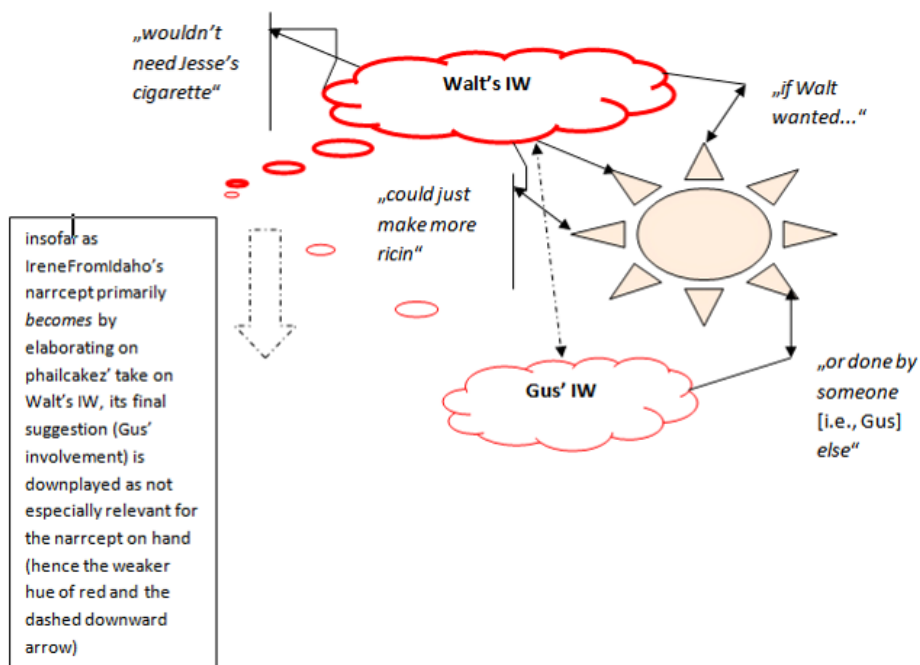
Schema 2: *Hitfix*'s `IrenefromIdaho` *becoming* SW, post-"End Times." For a depiction of 'dialogic' co-elaboration across different discussion environments (*Hitfix↔Reddit*) by way of Irene's and *Reddit*'s phailcakez' development of Walt's IW, see subsequent schema 3. Note how such initial layer of dialogue also outlines the basics for the *becoming* discourse world, writ large.

In the figure, labels around the diagram read:

„flipping his shit"

„doubt[ful]"

[not] even"

Walt's IW (*via* phailcakez)

Walt's IW (*via* IreneFromIdaho)

„could just make more ricin"

„time [n]or motivation"

„if Walt wanted…"

„chasing his tail"

„trouble"

„wouldn't need Jesse's cigarette"

Text box:

Shadow style circumscribing IreneFromIdaho's IW (cf., Schema 2) is meant to signify the 'blinking,' *viz.* dropping its 'light' on the narrcepts, e.g., succeeding phailcakez', of **beacon**'s "analytical-methodological dimension" (of character engagement). Dash-dot arrows suggest active loci-transcendent **co-elaboration**, 'shaping' toward a *becoming* discourse world, interwoven through these two narrcepts. In IreneFromIdaho's case, Walt's agency (of responsibility) is re-centered, whilst his ability to steal Jesse's cigarette (as well as latter's significance) is of secondary import. Promptly, where phailcakez focuses on the "seen," IreneFromIdaho draws benefit from the "known" (with regard to Walt's "intentional field" thus far accumulated).
Subsequent narrcepts could be placed here in parallel, depicted dynamics would necessarily expand whilst remaining consistent, however.

Schema 3: *Reddit'*s phailcakez' and *Hitfix*'s IreneFromIdaho's narrcepts in a base level indirect/asynchronous 'dialogue,' depicting 'base level' generalization on the co-elaborative *becoming* of a discourse world. Photo credit:http://1.bp.blogspot.com/--m9CG5hC_cY/Ti5OJXcNaGI/AAAAAAAAAKs/Mr5GVQL3VwE/s1600/6113beacon.jpg (Accessed: 26.07.2017).

Meanwhile, two narrcepts from wutisareddit[192] return us to *Reddit*—succeeding phailcakez'[193] by just a few narrcepts—and establish and elaborate on a very sophisticated SW, fine-tuning various details and nuances earlier contemplated. Firstly, the organization of wutisareddit's SW dispels cigarette's centrality.[194] Specifically, here cigarette's *functional*, not necessarily operational value *vis-à-vis* ricin is fore grounded. By such explanation, Walter's and Jesse's so-called "ricin ploy" required cigarette foremost as a depository, hiding the "*tube of it* [the ricin]." According to their plan, the poison had to be, in some opportune moment, "*dump*[ed] *out*," thus disposing of Gus. However, note here how wutisareddit's attentive reminiscence highlights the joint

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[192] See, Appendix I, Examples 3-4.

[193] 59a/63a *versus* 59a; see, 3.3 for the discussion on "unique signifiers."

[194] Technically speaking, this is corroborated by the narrcepts having a lower RR than previously.

vernacular with phailcakez's SW above.[195] Where the former 'maps' the "dumping" strictly on Walt's/Jesse's shared "social surroundings" the latter positioned it—let us recall—in the worldying of Walt's IW, thereby effectively discrediting him as Brock's poisoner (/potential murderer) ("*dumped ricin on the kids* [sic] *cheerios or whatever*"). Now, what wutisareddit narrceptivizes next serves exclusive scrutiny for it arguably initiates one of the examples of a kind of "branching out" *within* gists—presently the 1st. Namely, a question is broached whether Walt actually "*DID* [sic]" the poisoning with the explicit intent to shift blame onto Gus, and all this in order to "*get Jesse back on his side*" (note also: implicit negation of 3rd gist). Similarly to phailcakez and IreneInIdaho, wutisareddit articulates indetermination about whether and when "*he*," *viz.* Walt, "*could have done it*," but—and here's the crucial bottom line of differentiation—wutisareddit is fairly confident in "*writers doing this* [i.e., "make" Walt intend as such]." I will return to the later 'edit' of the same post shortly, but for starters, there's an awful lot to unpack presently. Firstly, through gliding into Walt's IW, the potentiality of him being the proverbial blunt instrument in the (at that point possibly) lethal gamble is entertained. However, there's an emphatic discernment insofar as Walt's, on the one hand, and writers', on the other, *intentions* are concerned. Wutisareddit is "*not sure*" whether Walt—as a sovereign "reasoning agent" *with* his actual world— "*could have done it*." By the same token, though, "*writers doing this*" organizes the local coherence of the *becoming* SW. How, though? By gliding into TMW, wutisareddit narrceptivizes the former through construing viewerly focus as being primarily tuned on "*Walt & Jesse vs. Gus*." That is, wutisareddit basically portends here how such a "*spring*[ing] *on* [viewers]" shall indeed occur.[196] Now, for *Reddit* (just as most of the forum environments I know of) allows one to amend original post, this particular narrcept from wutisareddit shows author's return to explicitly backtrack from the initial contention (Walt's to blame due to writers' plan). Herewith, the reasoning is that it "*would be unlikely*" because Walt visiting "*Jesse's house*"[197] pre-dates him being "*dragged out to the desert*" by Tyrus (Gus' hired hand). Wutisareddit commits here to the hesitant argument that Walt might not have "*thought of poisoning Brock before that*." Later[198], wutisareddit further reiterates having "*jumped the gun*" *vis-à-vis* posting such "*theory*," although finding some solace in the fact of being one of "*a lot of people*" having narrceptivized so. However, wutisareddit's "*theory*" also succumbs to a particular kind of omission. Namely, the visit and Walt being "*dragged out*" are explicitly linked—Tyrus electrifies Walt and pulls a bag over his head literally a few steps from Jesse's

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[195] Given how both narrcepts originate from the same "distributed" thread with regards to (narrceptive) content, *locus*, and *tempus*.
[196] I.e., the last revelatory moment from "Face-Off" where camera zooms in on the poisonous plant (Lily of the Valley) from Walt's back-garden.
[197] Recall phailcakez omitting this and hence wutisareddit can now be seen as elaborating on this, or perhaps rather, making an attempt at rectification.
[198] Cf., Example 4.

doorway. Hence, what wutisareddit conceives as disputation of the previous indeed ends up enforcing it. The utmost humiliation suffered in the desert (and also of being somewhat suspicious of Jesse being on Gus' "side") marks the spot where Walt's plan initially germinated. Having, prior to being attacked, born first-hand witness to Jesse having "*collateral damage*," as it were, Walt might have preyed on a possible manipulation angle.[199] Nevertheless, even in this later narrcept, wutisareddit further fine-tunes their "*jumped the gun*" argument by emphasizing the "*impossib*[ility]" of Walt's involvement—by necessarily shortly gliding into TMW to note viewers' potentially being withheld something—because, and hereby we next glide to Jesse's IW, Jesse saw "*the ricin in his pocket*" the morning "*episode takes place*."[200] This supplement, however, also feeds into wutisareddit's original omission. Namely, Jesse indeed did see *cigarettes* in his pocket, complete with one turned upside down (marking the one with ricin vial inside), but *he didn't explicitly check whether the vial's still inside.* (At this point, the pack was already swapped, more on this later.) Lastly, but doubtlessly not any less importantly, wutisareddit prefaces their later narrcept with an explicit recognition of how deeply ingrained the 2nd noted gist (note the capitalization meant to convey the intensity and multiplicity of such argument)—that of Brock smoking/poisoning himself accidentally—is in the overall *discourse world*, writ large. Wutisareddit's professed "*theory*," however, is its inversion, effectively *negating* what phailcakez initially opted for. Though relatively hesitant in subscribing to 1st, given various irregularities it entails, wutisareddit would nonetheless utilize it as a benchmark in assessing and organizing the local coherency of their SW, constructed in succession through two narrcepts.

Now, were we to move further yet more "branching out" within 1st gist would occur. Namely, the distrust in ricin's involvement steadily increases. Rather significantly, even one of the original bloggers—*Hollywood Reporter*'s Tim Goodman—would be pulled into the proverbial fray. Specifically, Brian Beeghly[201] went as far as promptly calling Goodman out ("*you might be jumping to conclusions*") for his distinctive stance on poisoning via ricin, as if he were one of the 'regular' discussion participants (which critics conceivably are, indeed). *Pace* Goodman—who, to be fair, gets literally paid for being "*obvious*"—Brian cautions against such explicit 'decelerations' for the narrceptive thinking "*at this point*" should not be as palpable. Herewith, Brian—succeeding phailcakez, although from a different locus—builds on the 1st gist by introducing and furthering the 'ruse' aspect, present already in the first of wutisareddit's narrcepts considered previously (i.e., getting Jesse (back) "*on his side*"). In fact, if to hotfoot ahead, similarly to wutisareddit, Brian, too—from this particular 'angle'—gets dangerously close in articulating "Face-Off"'s twist. As it comes to be known (but ultimately severely

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[199] We will return to fashioning these connotations in more nuance throughout, either as "potentialities" post-„End Times," or as "points of contention" post-„Face-Off."
[200] Here a kind of merger of IW and TMW occurs, herewith left un-termed.
[201] See, Appendix I, Example 5.

contested), Walt indeed did employ a "*more mild poison*." However, if ricin is suddenly deemed ineffectual in sense-making, where does it leave the cigarette? Here, the narrceptive glide into Walt's IW is central. If he "*masterminded the whole thing*," as Brian puts it, how did he supposedly manage it?

This inquiry is central for Brian in orienting his SW "*at this point*." First off, he glides into Walt's IW, directly implicating the latter, on the one hand; but, on the other, implying, "*perhaps*," Huell's (Walt's/Jesse's crooked advocate's Saul's bodyguard) involvement in getting the cigarette away from Jesse. However, it bears to emphasize here that Huell's involvement is considered entirely through Walt. It is as if—for Brian—Huell's IW doesn't merit any consideration. Instead, a remarkable, internal power relation is construed in between IWs. Whist Walt "*manage*[s] *to take*" cigarette from Jesse's pack, Huell appears merely as a proverbial arm extension[202], a 'depleted' agency on robust 'loan,' as it were. Going further, Brian acknowledges how "*other possibilities abound*" but doesn't necessarily dwell on them. It is however unnecessary to inquire "why" for this becomes clear once his narrception glides wholly into a TMW. Namely, he "*trusts*" these writers. He knows that *Breaking Bad* is yet to—whilst "*regularly stret*[ching] *plausibility*"—veer off-tracks, with "*writers* [pushing] *nonsense*." Put differently, clearly opposing e.g., Dave I[203] and many others, Brian forgoes worrying and enjoys the proverbial ride. Others, by contrast, would consider him uncritical, however; in part, perhaps, due to their own apparent inability to "*give* [the writers] *the benefit of the doubt*."

Therefore, further illuminations on how Walt's involvement (i.e., 1st gist) makes sense can be derived from Spent's[204] and Freddo's[205] narrceptive dialogue, but also from Eric's[206] narrcepts almost a week post-"End Times" and shortly after "Face-Off," respectively. All of these originate from commentary environments of *Hollywood Reporter* and *Hitfix*. Spent, though from another environment, builds on the previously considered narrception of IreneInIdaho, confirming and echoing (strikingly down to vernacular) latter's narrceptive thinking of how Walt could've achieved the poisoning even—receding herewith even further from narrative motif CIGARETTE as the 'centerpiece'—*without* the cigarette for "[Walt] *knows how to make ricin*." Thereafter, all the necessary 'pieces' are organized into a coherent linearity and hypothesized with salient exactitude. Though not being upfront—or, perhaps, remaining intentionally vague—on the exact plant[207], Spent surmises that the gun conferring upon "*his* [Walt's] *backyard garden*" is sufficient to contend that

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[202] Which also lends a "literal" connotation for it is, after all, the magician-like skillful work of *hands*—Huell's hands as an allegedly experienced pickpocket—that swap cigarette pack for a new one, *sans* the "*ricin cig*."

[203] See, one-participant centered *discourse world-within-discourse world* considered in 3.5.

[204] See, Appendix I, Example 6.

[205] See, Appendix I, Example 7.

[206] See, Appendix I, Examples 8-9.

[207] Where other participants went as far as photographing/screencaping the plant, thereafter 'scouraging' for precise information (plant's name, etc.) on it from Wikipedia and elsewhere.

there exists some (non-descript) plant and "*ricin is derived from* [its] *seeds*." Specifically, Spent lends credence to such claim by recalling "*same plants*" were utilized for the production of ricin "*a couple seasons ago*." (Here we tersely impinge on the TMW, in the limited sense of acknowledging "*seasons*"; "terse" because similarly it is also retrospective of NPs' 'histories.'). By itself, notably, the latter claim is essentially fraudulent for disposing of Gus indeed wasn't even on the "agenda" those "*couple seasons ago*." However, this appears seemingly—one would, at least, presume—as one of those "white lies" (momentary yields in proving one's "point") to further solidify the claim's footing, *viz.* Spent's SW. That is, Spent's SW *becomes* ever more lucid from the deep focal vigor enacted on Walt's IW. It is his "*very pensive look*," his "*formulat*[ion] [of] *a plan*." *His.* All this organizes, necessarily, the very foundation onto which Spent's SW is built. In fact, the two latent "worlds" can be perceived as collapsing onto a naturally mono-semantic, convoluted unity; an intertwinement from which "story" and "actors" ever more intricately elicit. The latter suggestion is minutely corroborated by Spent's profound probing into Walt's (still only passively) violent 'history.' Hence, Spent practically scolds any "doubters," because Walt definitively has arrived at—if not altogether gone beyond—being "*capable*." After all, Spent recalls with aplomb, wasn't Walt the one who "*watched an innocent girl* [Jesse's girlfriend] *drown in her own vomit* [overdosing]," all for the singular sake of her being "*in his way*." (Namely, here, too, Jesse was central; for, taken from Walt's IW, she became an "encumbrance," pulling Jesse "down" to addiction.) Herewith it can be argued that Spent's narrcept resonates with phailcakez' and others' in evoking a similar "*get Jesse* [back] *on his side*" 'out-branched' sub-gist. Last, but not least, however, the conclusion proper of Spent's narrcept is the tie-in—remaining deep in Walt's IW—with latter being afraid, not necessarily for his life, but most certainly for the lives of his family. Hence, in a way elaborating on phailcakez' take on the "*threat*," Spent observes here "*the extra incentive*" indispensable in thrusting Walt "*to the dark side*," of perhaps permanently substituting the meek milquetoast husband variety to his *alter ego*, the merciless Heisenberg.

Herewith we can also observe how Nooyawk[208] from *AV Club*, having first dispensed with the 2nd gist (see below), aligns with Spent's angle of investigation, likewise arguing for the potentiality of 1st gist (specifically over the 3rd). For this, s/he glides into Walt's IW, following Spent in that, after all, Walt "*in essence* [did] *kil*[l] *Jesse's former girlfriend* [Jane]." Herewith a comparison proceeds with 3rd gist (i.e., Gus' involvement) which is effectively negated and instead narrceptivized that wouldn't it be "bit more logical" for Walt having done *this* deed than, say, Gus—even though the latter had his own history of evil-doing.[209] This assumption is further reinforced for nooyawk by two equally significant observations: (1) Walt's claim of never being able to "*kill a*

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[208] See, Appendix I, Example 11.
[209] As participants recall many a time from past 'histories,' Gus had Brock's mother Andrea's brother murdered for an unconnected reason.

kid" having "*rung hollow*" (and can, thus, facilitate doubts concerning his sincerity on the matter); and (2) that Walt could've had deployed his knowledge of Gus' related history to calculatedly bait Jesse. Consequently, Gus' involvement becomes discredited through the temporal interlacing of the IWs of either men, and, more specifically, through—as just highlighted—the "negation" of one *through* the other. For nooyawk, then, it just does "*seem … a bit more logical*" to corroborate the 1st gist, whereas the utilization of Walt's knowledge of Gus' murderous past further *becomes* on the sub-gist of Walt's calculated manipulation, the "ruse," on Jesse (a "*precedent*" to be used "*with Jesse against Gus*."). Contrastively, dygitalninja's[210]—many comments down the road from the same "distributed" thread as nooyawk—approach on Walt is not nearly as "soft." Dygitalninja is adamant in maintaining Walt having "*killed dozens of children through the drugs he makes in mass*" and having watched "*Jesse's girlfriend be killed*." Still, "*Gus and the Cartel*" are held complicit in the similarly horrid crimes. However, even so, s/he'd be "*shocked*" if Walt, the "*NOT a 'good' person*," would've indeed plotted to *murder* the boy. Hence a distinction emerges: it is either the deadly poisoning (which would amount to some—note the intertextual connotation carrying a kind of genre-specific knowledge developed as twistory—"*Tony Soprano level sociopath*" antics) or "*slipping the kid something to make him sick* [temporarily]."

However, let us shortly return to why Brock having succumbed to some self-induced accident doesn't accord with nooyawk, however. In fact, 2nd gist is disregarded, though with an emphatically hesitant, capitalized "*IF*," specifically by the overt reliance on what had been conveyed "*according to a previous episode*." Here the issues on hand are broached through a kind of "impersonal" TMW built on two points: (i) impossibility for Brock "*hav*[ing] *gotten his hands on the cigarettes*," (ii) and in conjunction with (i), not having gotten indisposed earlier, if information conveyed by the narrative is to believe (i.e., "*just touching it* [the vialed cigarette] *within 24 hours could have made him sick*").[211]

Meanwhile, Freddo's response to Spent—wherein explicit addressing instigates what I would term 'narrceptive dialogue'—worked up more specifically from his preceding short narrcept[212]—(1) returns to Brian's narrcept[213],

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[210] See, Appendix I, Example 12.

[211] The theories of Brock (by his own accord) getting sick through either touching the cigarette, or stealthily having a smoke and "inhaling" ricin were popular—and indeed, convenient—up to the point where more precise information, such as ricin poisoning only possible through ingestion, started to emerge. Accordingly, both the cigarette as well as the *vialled* ricin lost in focality.

[212] See, Appendix I, Example 10.

[213] Which makes sense for Brian's one of the first (4th to Freddo's 27th) participants in one of *Hollywood Reporter*'s "distributed" thread. To give a generic definition, I would argue a "distributed thread" being a loose collection of narrcepts where one of the gists is prevalent. These kinds of loose "collaborations" within one particular *locus* also frequently overlie with and correspond to the "technical" meaning of the term: i.e., a singular commentary, accompanied with direct responses, developing into "sub-thread"—"child-thread" in *Reddit*'s parlance—that is, an "aside" from "primary" commentaries.

building on latter's focus on Huell (or, rather, on Walt *through* Huell), but, *pace* Brian, Freddo strongly enforces Huell's IW; and (2), elaborates in a more minute detail what his 'dialogue interlocutor' left unsaid—namely, the *exact* placement and name of the plant supposedly applied by Walt in producing a poison capable to induce ricin-like symptoms. Now, for (1), Freddo glides into TMW$_a$ (subscript *a* denoting 'extra-narrative' reflexion wherein experience's "artificiality" is acknowledged insofar as the latter being re-producible via technical aids.) Subsequently drawing on the possibility of re-"*watch*," then, Freddo implores (and indeed, many a participant do) to closely observe the "*frisking* [*scene*]," for—in organizing his SW now through TMW$_a$ gliding into Huell's IW—"*the big dude definitely*" pockets something. The (2) observation, however, Freddo considers the "*most important*[t]," and indeed it can be, were we to, for a moment, think in terms of the overarching, *becoming* DW. Where Spent narrceptivized of non-descript plants, Freddo, contrariwise, doesn't withhold. He directly connects Walt "*spin*[ing] *the gun*" with the latter on its "*third try*" pointing to somewhere very specific. Namely, "*to a flowering potted plant*." And either through his own above average knowledge of botany (cf., twistory), or due to this precise information having been mentioned previously by others, Freddo doesn't shy away from being as exact as possible—"[i]*t is Lilly of the Valley, a poisonous plant! Case closed!*"

Indeed, such unperturbed conclusion at the time might have satisfied Freddo—and confirmed his suspicions the week later, to boot—but for his co-participants, gaps and contradictions in actions and events weren't depleted and were, indeed, revisited post-"Face-Off." Hence, Eric from *Hitfix*, whilst fully acknowledging Huell's involvement, remains wary in other areas. Although embracing the "*swa*[p] *out*" of Jesse's cigarette back as "*the easy part*," and thus tying his observation of Huell having frisked "*so roughly and ostenta- tiously*" with Freddo's clarification of Huell having "*put something in his pocket with his left hand*," both participants ultimately corroborate on the 'out- branched' sub of the 1st gist—i.e., cigarette as "ruse"—on the one hand; whereas, on the other, for Eric—even *after* "official" reveal—the "*poisoning*" itself persists as "*bigger question mark*." Now, even after the plant widely speculated about being explicitly disclosed as poison's source, participants nevertheless reverted to this key "*scene*" of "*swapping*," for they couldn't comprehend how someone like Huell (ordinarily observable as a slow, sleepy, big-boned guy) could've managed it; or, for that matter, how could've *Walt* had done it—for, as we recall—already phailcakez emphasized the house arrest imposed on him. Hence, in both of his narrcepts (9/10, 10/10), straight after "Face-Off" had aired, Eric soothes (or, rather, aims to convince?) any "doubters" by arguing—at length in his second narrcept the next day—, having now "*re-watch*[ed] *the scene*," for Huell's "*clear*" complicity. What is of special interest here is how Eric organizes his SW by gliding in between TMW$_a$ (and perhaps even TMW proper) and Huell's IW. On the one hand, it is Huell who "*appears to reach*," with his "*left hand*" whilst "*right hand was clearly empty*"; Huell who "*palm*[ed] *something*" and thereafter "*clearly pu*[t] *that same left*

hand in his pocket." On the other, however, it is "*the actor* [who was] *instructed*" (glide into TMW proper as consisting of "makers" enforcing their "intentions") to "*leave options open, at the very least,*"; actor who "*makes a semi-lunge*." Similarly, there are also notations on editing and filming, observed to evince deliberate 'rhythms of deception,' as it were, not in the sense of narrative's "artifice," to be sure, but rather in putting implicit accents on the *intentional* trickery of the "textmakers." Nevertheless, ultimately the conclusion recalls E r i c 's prior (then still hypothetical) "[C]*ase closed*!" We are back to Huell's IW, him having "*picked Jesse's pocket*" and in the process, "*swapped out the pack*." Indeed, it organizes as a rather coherent SW and across these two successive narrcepts, it might have cohered *for E r i c*.

However it has to be noted that earlier participants, post-"End Times," have found Huell, suddenly having "*made the A team*," as "*untenable*," closely evaluated key events fixated on Huell's agency and his IW under scrutiny, notwithstanding. B e a u l i n g p i n[214] from *Reddit* construes Huell as a "*bumbler*," with predisposed incapability in "*manag*[ing] *to take*" the pack, let alone (i) "*identifying the ricin cigarette*," (ii) "*replacing*" it. Moreover, to do all this without—and here we glide into Jesse's IW—latter "*noticing*," of him being totally oblivious whilst "*directly watching Huell and Huell's hands*" and being absolutely cognizant of the significance the pack entailed. Hence, by distinctly focusing on Huell's IW (and Jesse's, for good measure), b e a u l i n g p i n goes to "prove" the seeming nonsensicalness of Huell's involvement *vis-à-vis* a complex string of carefully monitored events and organizes it all together with the summary judgment of Huell being a "*bumbler*," not even worth theorizing about; of indeed, only enabling an "*untenable* [*theory*]," to boot.

P o t a t o g u n[215], from an earlier time point of the same "distributed" thread from *Reddit*, elaborates on b e a u l i n g p i n 's construed omission of Huell's involvement by noting that—implying latter's size and him being slow in motion—Huell lacks "*dexterity to do it cleanly*." P o t a t o g u n 's narrcept corresponds to b e a u l i n g p i n 's also in reducing the ambivalence *vis-à-vis* "*identifying the ricin cigarette*" and "*replacing*" the pack. P o t a t o g u n effectively omits the former, suggesting instead that—at best—Huell could've managed "*switch*[ing] *the whole pack*."

B e a u l i n g p i n 's narrcept is also seconded by two narrcepts by n o i n t e r n a l - c e n s o r[216], shortly following former's. Same participant also preceded p o t a t o g u n 's narrceptive thinking (see below[217]). Given the widest span, however, n o i n t e r n a l c e n s o r 's narrcepts conveying a "distributed" thread with b e a u l i n g p i n 's belong in addition (or "primarily") to a protracted thread traced back to p a u k e r.[218] Now, were we to take *closest* C e n s o r 's narrcept in relation

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[214] See, Appendix I, Example 13.

[215] See, Appendix I, Example 14.

[216] See, Appendix I, Examples 22-23.

[217] See, Appendix I, Examples 31-32.

[218] Not elaborated on here, but see, Appendix I, Example 24. Cf., Examples 25-26 (s i n i s t e r s i l k m e r c h a n t); Example 27 (S h a p p i e); Example 28 (S u p r e m e F u z z l e r);

to beaulingpin's, i.e., its consecutive twice over, we could observe that even though, strictly speaking, responding *within* pauker's thread, Censor also fine-tunes beaulingpin's criticism *vis-à-vis* Huell abruptly being "*made* [one of] *the A team*." The core the argument organizing Censor's SW across the two narrcepts, then, becomes articulated as a tremendously tense inquiry: "*Wouldn't huel* [sic] *have to have xray vision in order to swipe the single ricin containg* [sic] *cig out of the pack, even if he was capable of being that smooth in the first place*?" Whilst concurring with beaulingpin's doubt of "*untenab*[ility]," Censor further complements it with veering into fantasy genre (which in turn can again be treated as a 'terse' gliding into TMW$_a$), suggesting slim possibility of any of the above having happened unless Huell possesses "*xray vision*." And indeed, latter notwithstanding, what about Huell's "*smooth*[ness]" in the act, given what a "*bumbler*" he was? Incidentally, this accentuation of "*smooth*" is something Censor reverts to, given its centrality also in their earlier narrcept that preceded potatogun's. Similarly to the latter's reliance on the emphasis on Huell's lack of dexterity which ultimately, at best, granted him the "*capability*" to get as far as "*switch*[ing] *the whole pack*," Censor is highly doubtful—gliding here into Jesse's IW—whether it is possible to "*pull* [it] *off without Jesse noticing*." Hence, Censor notes both the enormously calibrated juggler's[219] act of removing "*a cigarette*" and reinstating the pack "*back into the pocket*" as well as the very tight time window Huell had to actually do so. Now, in switching back to Censor's elaboration on beaulingpin's SW, an articulation commences to also tie Walt's IW to the matters on hand (something beaulingpin's SW didn't explicitly do). Even if Huell somehow did it—that is, were we to assume they (*viz.*, Walt/Saul/Huell) had some sort of elaborate plan hatched beforehand—how indeed "*did he* [Walt] *manage to slip the poison to the kid?*" As can be seen, and as occurred many a time throughout, sooner or later this impediment of becoming 'locked in' at the complicated 1st gist takes precedent (but see below). Now, Censor's later narrcept is, perhaps, the most fascinating. In fact, it becomes apparent that s/he had just viewed the then circled clip (which begot diverse "formats" by way of screen captures, decelerated video, and zoom-ins, to boot) re-playing the *precise* moment when the alleged "swap" occurred. Whilst having previously opted for rather clear-cut skepticism with regards to Huell's involvement in her/is narrcept, now, after an apparent frame-by-frame scrutinizing, Censor might be getting back around to actually—*pace* beaulingpin and potatogun—to actually embrace the *reverse* position. "*Might*" though, is indeed the operative word for Censor doesn't take anything for granted and postscripts their later narrcept by, in effect, professing of doubting their own eyes. This absolutely seamless merger of Huell's IW and TMW$_a$, however, has to be highlighted in how skillfully

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Example 29 (deleted*); and, Example 30 (deleted). *- In *Reddit*, when users delete their account, posts remain, though unassigned, as it were.

[219] Or a "magician's act," given how Huell's potentially beyond advanced pickpocketing skill was entertained by some of the participants.

Censor organizes their merger into a rather coherently perceived SW, building towards such aim throughout all three of her/is narrcepts.

Nevertheless, even if we were to grant, post-"End-Times," that everything indeed happened due to Huell's extremely proficient actions, wouldn't perhaps intractable discrepancies *vis-à-vis* Jesse's IW appear to propose further ambivalence? For one, how couldn't Jesse later *tell* he's carrying a completely different pack? After all, Huell/Walt/Saul couldn't have known in advance how *many* cigarettes Jesse had left? In fact, it is these irregularities that give precedent to participants' twistories for they start to convey their own experience with (excessive) smoking, which had necessitated—during those periods—*exact* knowledge how many cigarettes they currently had left. All this, justifiably, turns question back to Jesse—wouldn't he?

Post-"Face-Off," Sean[220] from *Hitfix* broached this predicament by initiating narrceptive dialogues with Ronaldo[221], and by corroborating and elaborating on Jill Chin's[222] narrcept in the previous commentary (without explicit addressing and/or quoting, as with Ronaldo, however).[223] (In turn, Anonymous picked up Sean's "distributed" thinking a little less than thirty comments down the road, see below.) As far as Jill goes, latter doesn't share *Reddit*'s beaulingpin's harsh criticisms on the "[un]tenability" of Huell's "*theory*." In fact, relying on Jesse's IW, she proposes a "*simple explanation*" of how "*bumbl*[ing]" Huell could've "*manage*[d]" it. Namely, all it could've taken was "*lift*[ing] *the pack during the 'frisk'*," extracting "*the ricin cig*" thereafter. Now, once Jesse parted company with Saul and Huell, he indeed was noticeably distraught, "*preoccupied*[,] *carrying a heavy bag of money*," as Jill puts it drawing on Ronaldo's preceding narrcept. Consequently, it "*would have been easy*" for Huell to "*slip*" the <u>SAME</u> pack "*back into Jesse's pocket*" (sans the "*ricin cig*"); and indeed, it does make sense for this act to go unnoticed, were we to consider Jesse's mental state at the time. Though short and concise, then, Jill's narrcept manages in a graceful and nuanced, yet powerful fashion to overturn many 'dogmas' persisting throughout post-"End-Times" discussions and continuing to have significant appeal post-"Face-Off" also, as we will see.

At first, Sean goes directly to elaborate on Jill's SW. However, it can articulated as such only insofar as Sean emphatically corroborates ("[e]*specially if*") Jill's SW *vis-à-vis* Huell's "*theory*," retaining implicitly the assumption of the "*same pack*." In effect, the latter's a necessary particle (or, indeed, an

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[220] See, Appendix I, Example 15.
[221] See, Appendix I, Example 16.
[222] See, Appendix I, Example 17.
[223] It serves here to note as a perhaps useful refresher that inter-participant relations within one "site of engagement" (SoE) are tracked with "unique signifiers" (see previous subchapter), whereas cigarette's (as narrative motif) relevance corresponds to TAS4 "relevance rank" (RR) and transcends any one locus, i.e., is a value non-exclusive to any one SoE. Where the former is locus-situated, the latter is situated in "distributed" thought, producing in union a more or less "technical" illustration for beacon's dialectic nature. Accordingly, then, Jill's focus on cigarette is considerably more emphatic than Sean's and Ronaldo's, a fact reflected in RR—98 versus 22/9, respectively.

instigating force) for Sean's becoming SW to organize coherently, to "make sense." Hence, Sean goes deep into Jesse's IW, and, in the process, also hints at a kind of twistory. Namely, what is at central issue here for Sean is Jesse's smoking habits juxtaposed with those of "real life" smokers. But let's unpack. Sean first maintains that, given how "*incredibly nervous and fidgety and likely to smoke a lot*" Jesse already was in the *interim* period after frisking, but prior to Andrea's phone call (noting Brock being in the hospital with a suspicion of having been poisoned). From here follows, going by Sean's SW, that it would've made sense for Jesse to definitely spot something being askew with the pack, had it, in fact, been—to re-utilize Jill's sentiment, the opposite of "*same*." To further fine-tune his contentions for the becoming SW, Sean next capitalizes on *Ronaldo*'s quote, who—ahead of both the former and Jill— suggested that had the pack been left "*anywhere near three quarters full*," Jesse wouldn't have "*questioned how many smokes he has left*." Sean's criticisms to such (naïve?) line of thinking, however, are plentiful. He opens with a question: how could they've have known "*when he bought his latest pack*"? Sean's implication is that absent such key knowledge, it is impossible to surmise the "state," as it were, of Jesse's pack, even if all of these three NPs (Saul, Huell, Walt) indeed had been diligently observant over Jesse's smoking habits. Sean does grant that if, indeed, Jesse "*had a roughly ¾ of a pack left*" and got one that "*was ¾ full*," the disparity—for him—would be negligible, pure semantics, as upheld by Sean's phrasing of choice. *However*, the meaningfulness of such "*plan*" rests, Sean insists, on its potentiality *irrespective of* Jesse's cigarette count. Sean's underlying point is—hereby elaborating on and solidifying Jill's SW—that the "pack swap" makes <u>no sense</u>, for—being "*a nicotine addict*"— Jesse would know "*exactly how many* [cigarettes] *he had left*," down to precise numerals. Where does Sean's adamant confidence about this particular issue spring from, however? This is revealed by his concluding statement noting a correlation between the paucity of the cigarettes and "*smoker's exac*[t]" knowledge of "*how many he has*." Put differently, Sean, as finalizing organizing 'step' for his SW, glides into "real life" 'knowledge frames' and construes therewith a twistory with Jesse, further substantiated by the pronoun of "*he*" which would implicitly denote Sean himself—or someone he knows, etc.— whereas explicitly serving as the "twi" (*viz.* twine) in the twistory affiliating Jesse's IW and that of the participant's (Sean's) own. To now attempt to collapse Sean's (and Jill's) SWs onto the *becoming* DW (*discourse world*), it can be argued that both acknowledge the "authorial" solution *but* only insofar as Jesse's pack of cigarettes having focal bearing contravenes on latter's "swap," which, in the final analysis, is estimated as nonsensical. To put afore-described in a more prosaic jargon—especially allowing for Ronaldo's approach below—Sean and Jill might have managed to "de-cheat" the "sanctioned" conclusion.

Ronaldo, meanwhile—the major brunt of Sean's previous criticism— doesn't "*feel cheated*" at all. Accepting, on face value, the principal assumption that the "*only way*" subsequent string of events was "*possible*" was "*Huell's*

swap of the pack," he doesn't appear to contest it nearly as much as others and, indeed, calls to mind Brian from *Hollywood Reporter* from above in doing so. Nonetheless, even Ronaldo is not devoid of justification on what, in particular, founds his "lax" stance, itself a reversal on the narrceptive thinking of majority of his co-participants. He goes about it, interestingly, by concentrating on Jesse's IW and capitalizing on his "*mind* [being] *occupied*." From here, Ronaldo construes a conjecture that, after all, Jesse had to "*switch the Ricin* [sic] *out of all his packs*" every other time he had procured a fresh one, and thus—as was quoted by Sean—he is far less likely to jump into conclusions, being "*occupied*," on the one hand; and it having become a kind of "automated," going through the motion act to begin with, on the other. Now, it is here that Ronaldo's SW gains prominence because it basically implies Jesse's deteriorating state of mind—another of those 'branched out' sub-gists participants were keen on. As Opie[224] from *Hollywood Reporter* succinctly put it back post-"End Times"—whilst staying thereby firmly in the course of 2nd gist (i.e., Brock's accidental self-poisoning)—"*Jesse is too upset to really know for sure the last time he saw it* [the vialed cigarette] *in his pack, even though he thinks it was that morning*."

Now, what occurs down the road in the "distributed" thread of narrceptive thinking in *Hitfix*, as shared by Sean, Jill Chin and Ronaldo, is Anonymous's response, addressed to Sean (*viz.* narrceptive dialogue). Anonymous goes to fine-tune Sean's SW in very significant ways whilst, in process, developing he/is own and remaining firmly in the "*still dumb and a cheat*" camp, to boot. Specifically, Anon is ironclad in postulating Saul's involvement. The method of how Huell "*stole Jesse's cigarettes*" notwithstanding (Anon doesn't appear exactly partial to either camp previously examined), a deep glide into Saul's IW occurs and latter's utilized to make maximum sense of the most pressing issues even subsequent to the "sanctioned" solution, as proposed in "Face-Off." As insisted on by Anon, Saul "*had to have been the one*," the *actual* perpetrator, and also "*only one who could've gotten away with it.*" On the one hand, it was well-known (and constantly observed) how Saul mediated Jesse's funds to Andrea, and, following this, it wouldn't be far-fetched to presume that in one of those visitations, Saul also had "*got a snack* [for Brock]." However, Anon argues, there persists the problem of "*Walt knowing who Brock is and* [Walt] *knowing Saul knew him* [Brock]." Consequently we finally glide into TMW for Anon is hopeful for "*some flashback*" where Saul-Walt prior plotting could be circumscribed, even if later on, during *Breaking Bad*'s final season.[225] Otherwise, though, as noted, Anon remains unimpressed. Ironically, Anon concludes by neglecting perhaps the leading disparity. When it indeed was a previously hatched plan by Walt and Saul with the latter bearing the brunt of agency, how does the final shot of the Lily of the Valley match, for does it not completely dismantle any such "*theory*" as articulated above?

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[224] See, Appendix I, Example 18.
[225] Nothing exactly like this ever realizes, although in 5th season's episode "Confessions," the much-discussed "pack swap" incident gets resolved through Jesse's IW.

By the looks of it, we therefore cannot escape building on one crucial, finalizing "detail": how did *Walt* "slip" Brock the poison—or, alternatively, were we to take ricin cigarette "stealing" or "pack swapping" as an elaborate ruse, how precisely does Walt's agency play into all this? Hence we are circling back to the 1st gist and echoing Freddo's inquiry for the *poisoning*, by and large, being the "*bigger question mark*."

Herewith, *Reddit*'s Puddy1's[226] narrcept—building on a narrceptive dialogue with Velveteenmage—might prove instructive. First off, Puddy1's yet "*undecided*" whether s/he opts to interlocutor's "*theory*" (one accentuating the 3rd gist; see below). Conversely, Puddy1 expounds on a "*counter theory*" of his/er own. Thus, in organizing his/her SW, Puddy1 goes for 1st gist, although by rather unconventional means. Arguably, Walt had "*descended into madness*" and "*snapped*," however with the caveat (and one we can recall also from previous discussions that whatever else, Walt would still, "*at any cost*," strive to shield his family from any potential harm. How would he do it, though? Here Puddy1, by gliding from Walt's IW to Saul's IW further fine-tunes Saul's involvement *vis-à-vis* what we've considered thus far, by contending that Walt "*got*" him "*call in Jesse*," with Huell subsequently "*pick-pocket*[ing] *the cigarette*" for (echoing others) "[y]*ou can see*" him "*pocket*[ing]" something. It is a revealingly organized SW indeed, as it (i) also suggests auxiliary fine-tuning for the previous contention (and sub-gist, one can say) of how <u>no</u> "pack swapping" occurred, only "*stealing*," "*pickpocket*[ing]" the *singular* (key) cigarette (or, then, alternatively: the snapping the of pack, the taking of the cigarette; and "*slip*[ing]" the pack back into Jesse's pocket once he leaves, "*preoccupied*"); and (ii) how it can be readily acknowledged by staying firm on Huell's IW without having to fall back to TMW$_a$ measures considered beforehand (cf., "scene *re-plays*" *versus* "[y]*ou can see Huell...*").

What kind of insights can be drawn from Velveteenmage's[227] narrcept, however? To grasp the acute implications it presents on a wider scale of narrceptive thought, it is—I would contend—necessary to backtrack some hundred commentaries within the same "distributed" thread on *Reddit* and pick up on NeededANewName's[228] narrcept. Specifically, the terminus of Needed's narrcept grows out of the precondition of Gus having had "*bugs*" Jesse's house. Here the narrcept becomes by interleaving the IWs of all three primary NPs. Not only does Gus eavesdrop, Needed argues building on Gus' IW, but he could've also installed a "*hidden camera*," hence possessing real-time video/audio footage of the so-called cigarette ploy as it unfolded ("*talk*[s]," "*checking*[s]".) This construal of Gus' IW also links with and elaborates on the overarching perception pertaining to his distrustful nature. Needed's reminder of Walt's words—gliding here into latter's IW—"*Gus always* [being] *10 steps ahead of him*," also resonate here with antecedent knowledge—Walt's, specifically—of how Gus has "*had houses bug*[ed] *before on the show*," namely

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226 See, Appendix I, Example 19.
227 See, Appendix I, Example 20.
228 See, Appendix I, Example 21.

in Walt's own house, as planted by Gus' (and Saul's) loyal goon, Mike. Here we subsequently have not least but three "worlds" being organized into a meaning-ful merger to scaffold the eventual collapse into SW: (i) Gus' IW—ordering his enforcer-type of subordinates to "*bug*" 'workers'; (ii) Walt's IW—evoking his one-to-one with Mike several episodes ago in his home; and ultimately, (iii) TMW$_a$/TMW fusion—one the one hand, conveying hesitancy whether "*they've* [writers] *acknowledged it* [Gus having more wherewithal than Walt]"; and, on the other, turning latter's *un*certainty into (at least more coherent) certainty by, again, drawing on Gus' IW: "[he] *has had*," even though "*on the show*" (in order to retain the TMW$_a$ association as uninterrupted).

Now, Velveteenmage, for his/her part, preserves Needed's firm belief of Gus' complicity (*viz.*, 3rd gist). However, the crux of Mage's SW—an extre-mely direct, *physical* agency subscribed to Gus—makes it stand out amongst peers. That is to say, Mage goes as far as attaching "*pretty obvious*" to a seemingly unearthly idea that it was "*indeed, Gus*" who "*lift*[ed]" the "*ricin cigarette*" from Jesse's jacket (hanging near the door), when he was on the ground floor cooking meth. For Mage, this is the "*if anything*" option, to boot. Moreover, both Jesse's and Walt's IWs "*ti*[e] *in with*"—to adapt Mage's vocabulary—Gus' IW very thoroughly indeed. Firstly, Jesse had said he had just swapped the cigarette into a "*new pack the morning the episode takes place*" (here also a snappy swerve into TMW$_a$), increasing the potentiality of Gus having "*lifted*" the key cigarette insofar as Jesse later not bothering to re-check (also latent here, again, the sub-gist of Jesse being "*preoccupied*" at the time). Secondly, Mage all but paraphrases phailcakez' stance from the beginning of present analysis, noting that—as opposed to Gus' ability to actively roam around apparently—the former "*ha*[d] *been at home awaiting imminent doom all day*." Consequently, Walt would've been incapable of doing anything. It has to be noted, at this point, however, that bulk of Mage's SW builds towards a very deep-going *negation* of the 1st gist, that is, by construing a countenance to "*the argument* [as if] *Walter would* [e]*ver poison a child even for the sake of his own family, who is under DEA protection and is overall safe*." Although the point about Walt's family being protected and relatively beyond harm (though it was never wholly certain) is well made, as Mage's co-participants—post-"End Times" (as Mage writes) and post-"Face-Off," respectively—have made relatively clear, Walt would've definitely (and ultimately did) go to *exactly* such lengths to keep his family safe. Put differently, then, Mage's narrcept con-cludes by "hitching" their SW nevertheless the 'positive' take on 1st gist, by going a considerable length to beforehand negate the 3rd, which has to be treated as a secondary 'theme' of this SW due to being utilized as means to an end, the "*all in all*" towards which Mage's each carefully nuanced storytelling 'step' ultimately aspires. Analytically speaking we should not, in good conscience, omit these proverbial steps, however. Hence, let's return to observe how Mage necessarily 'spreads out' their SW. The focal center for Mage's narrceptive thinking is one of the most popular subs of the 3rd gist, namely how to make sense of Gus not returning to his vehicle once he had visited Jesse at the

hospital. What made Gus stop mere steps prior to opening his car door? What made him turn back and entertain some other exit strategy? All this, of course, is concurrently predicated on Walt, observing Gus' actions from neighboring roof top, waiting for the former to sit into the car which Walt had rigged with explosives whilst Gus conversed with Jesse.[229] Now, with this it also becomes clearer what "*tie in with*" precisely means; that is, Gus being the original perpetrator who "*lifted*" the cigarette but was then 'figured out' and made 'transparent' (by Walt, to Jesse). This is not only the primary way to excuse Walt's blame but also to, in a fittingly complementary fashion, to make sense of (to make coherent) one very telling, but altogether ambivalent gesture of Gus— him somehow "[knowing] *the car* [being] *not safe*." In other words, "*had his plan worked*," that is, had Jesse being promptly suspecting of Walt having been the culprit, Jesse would have told Gus not only that Walt murdered Brock, but that he had killed him for it, to boot. (And we have to grant Mage, that this, indeed, was Jesse's first impulse as observed in the narrative.) However, Mage contends, Jesse's articulation of the events (doctors, poisoning, *sans* Walter) "*led Gus to suspect*" the former "*ha*[ving] *formed an alliance*" against him. On the one hand, as Mage maintains, Gus' is a "[*warranted*] *suspicion*" for all Gus' prior attempts (rather friendly and "homey" gestures, even) had been for naught—Jesse nevertheless remained steadfast to Walt. On the other, Mage sees their core argument corroborated by Jesse articulating "*unwillingness to work*" in his dialogue with Gus, leading, in turn, the latter to think that "*get*[ing] *him to the Hospital* [sic]" was a "ploy" for—crucially—Walt would then also know of him being there (cf. suspicion about the car.) Last but definitely not the least, conceivably drawing in part on preceding narrcept by NeededANew-Name, Mage also builds on the sub-gist of "Gus had bugs installed every-where," as it were, associating this directly with how he would *know* Jesse-Walt being after him. As such, as is revealed by the final analysis, Mage's SW once fully *become* is not so much a negation of 3rd gist, but one thoroughly *discrediting* it. In other words, for Mage, *neither* 1st *nor* 3rd gist are acceptable, leaving the unfortunately unanswered question whether the middle option (2nd gist, i.e., Brock's self-poisoning) is embraced *implicitly*, or whether the eliminations—as given—just didn't portend any "deeper meaning" by themselves.

3.5 Participant Dave I's co-elaborative sense-making from "End Times" to "Face-Off" as a discourse world-within-discourse world

Meanwhile, a fascinating individual "case study" precisely in returning to 3rd gist can be observed by the multiple narrcept spread by participant Dave I from *Hitfix*. Due to its concisely specified nature, I think such case should be

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[229] You see, that was their "last ditch" plan to get rid of him, being as Walt convinces Jesse that it was *Gus* who was behind the poisoning.

examined more thoroughly.[230] In his 1st of six commentary texts (*viz.* narrcepts), D a v e I begins by quoting another participant's, J u s t i n 's [231], question implying a "*mistake*" being at the core of all these horrid events (see, Schema 4). D a v e I seemingly buys into this idea of "accidental poisoning," but maintains—by gliding into TMW—it being the likeliest "*scenario*" *because* "*they* [the writers]" having had "*thr*[own] *in*" suspicions with regards to Walt/Gus. The participation of either men, though, is deemed incomprehensible in any "*obvious*" fashion. By D a v e I's evaluation, such a "*convoluted plan*" for poisoning must've required thorough elaboration (which is something neither men really had lots of opportunities for at the time). However, D a v e I doesn't leave 2nd gist entirely off the hook either. Hence he further argues that though Brock's involvement is "*most likely*," one can also put forth "*two reasons*" why the boy's focality in the unfolding events might not have been the "*logical choice*."
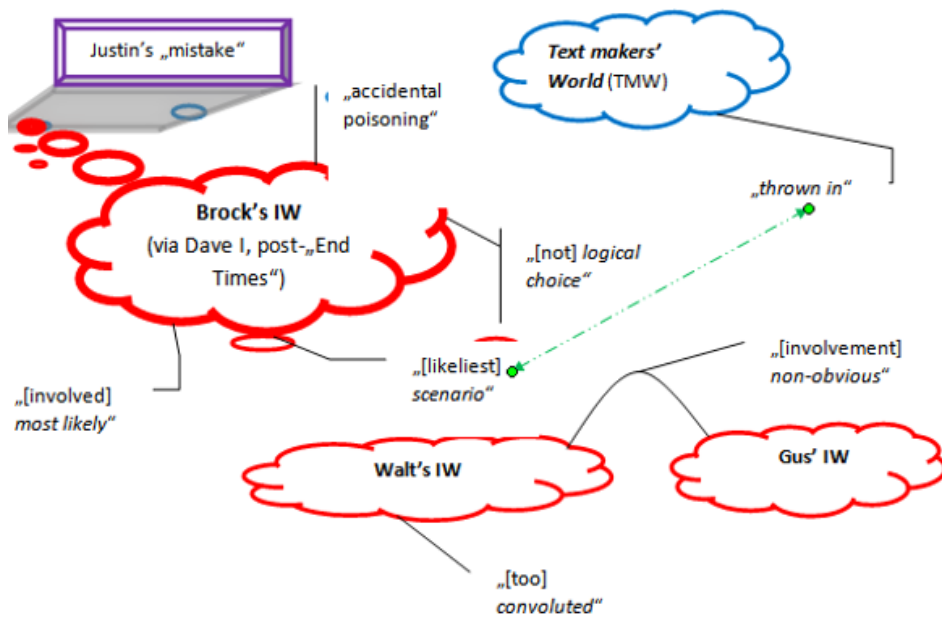
Schema 4: *Hitfix*'s D a v e I (3.10.11, 1st). Following schema 3, "shadow" emanating from the "Justin" image is supposed to convey how the **beacon** 'glides' between two discourse participants, with its 'blinking' thus circumscribing the co-elaborative development of common sense. For Brock's IW and the TMW take clear precedent over others, respective "thought bubbles," they are marked with stronger outlines. With both discharging into (or, simultaneously, originating from) J u s t i n 's "mistake," the green long dash dot dot arrow highlights the explicit narrceptive content linking the two.

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[230] See, Appendix I, Examples 33-38 (3.10.11, 4.10.11; 5.10.11 – 10.10.11x3).
[231] See, Appendix I, Example 39.

A bit later, at the dawn of a new day (4.10.11), Dave I moves to reinforce the accentuation of the TMW. "*The writers left* [the poisoning] *ambiguous for a reason*," he writes. He concludes that while apparently no absolutes exist in these matters, all the thus far introduced possibilities could be "*equally plausible*." Finally, two days later (5.10.11)—while still on the subject of "End Times"—Dave I builds on a kind of soft disagreement with a participant Fred[232] (*via* narrceptive dialogue) and focuses in more detail on three inter-related elements:
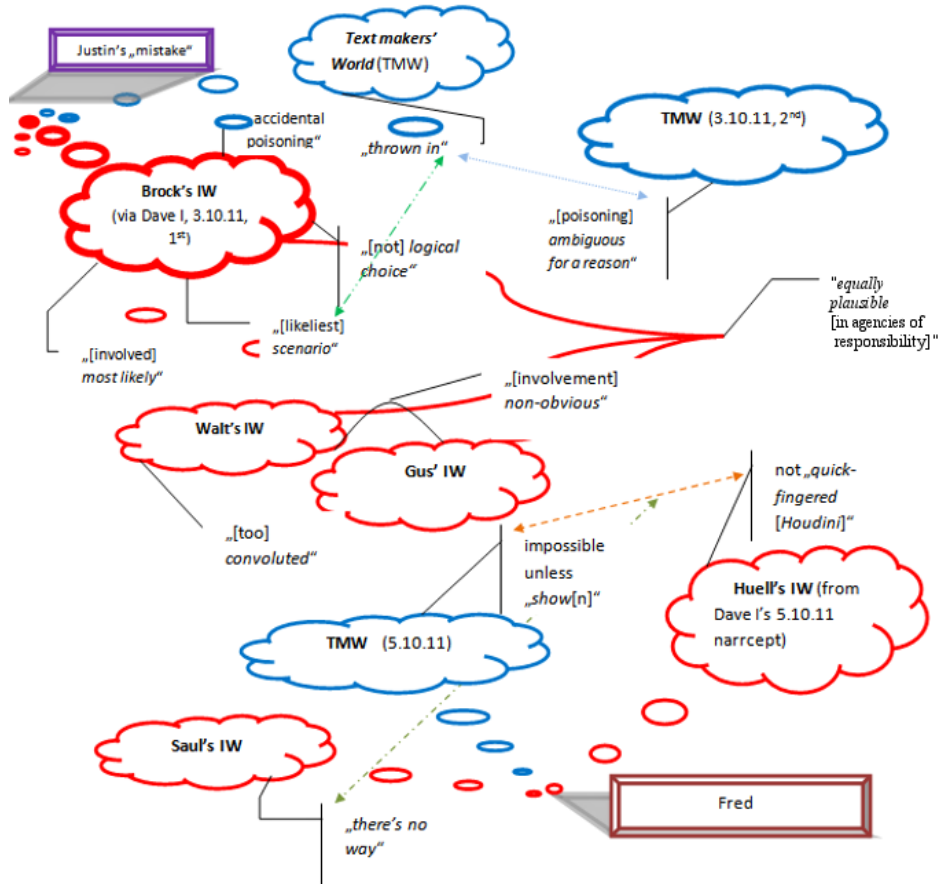
(a) his utter disbelief in Huell's capacity to pass as a Houdini-like "quick-fingered" pickpocket (Huell's IW) (cf., the narrcepts as being organizing in 3.4),

(b) even if (a) is revealed as having indeed occurred, Dave I considers it utterly impossible *unless* "they [the writers] *show how it was possible*" (i.e., glide into TMW),

and finally (c) Dave I sees it fit to also introduce—as did Puddy1 and others in 3.4—Saul's IW into the proceedings at hand, maintaining the scheme wouldn't (1) work without latter's knowledge, and (2) that "*there's no way*" he'd agree to participate (see, Schema 5, for the visual summary). Speaking of Saul's IW, however, a fascinating and presently beneficially supplementary read is proposed by participant sinistersilkmerchant over two narrcepts following a "distributed" thread initiated by pauker[233] (see, 3.4). Namely, Sinister asserts that—given Saul's exigency to take flight[234]—Walt could've "*come up with a lie*," coaxing Saul to play his part (and, by extension, arranging Huell to deploy his skill).

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[232] See, Appendix I, Example 40.
[233] Cf., Examples 25-26; Also see, Appendix I, Example 24.
[234] He assumed Gus would take revenge on him given his close work relationship with Walt/Jesse.

Justin's „mistake"

Text makers' World (TMW)

TMW (3.10.11, 2nd)

„accidental poisoning"

„thrown in"

Brock's IW (via Dave I, 3.10.11, 1st)

„[poisoning] ambiguous for a reason"

„[not] logical choice"

"equally plausible [in agencies of responsibility]"

„[likeliest] scenario"

„[involved] most likely"

„[involvement] non-obvious"

Walt's IW

Gus' IW

not „quick-fingered [Houdini]"

„[too] convoluted"

impossible unless „show[n]"

Huell's IW (from Dave I's 5.10.11 narrcept)

TMW (5.10.11)

Saul's IW

Fred

„there's no way"

Schema 5: The development of Dave I's narrception throughout the post-"End Times" period, i.e., 3.10.11–5.10.11 (3.10, 1st reduced for reasons of size), off of the engagement with the narrcepts by Justin and Fred, thus introducing a kind of discourse-within-a-discourse world (based on *one* episode; see, Schema 6, for second, "Face-Off." Conceivably, both schemas could thereafter also be 'overlaid' in order to highlight distributed aspects, becoming co-elaborated over the two-week stretch.).

From here, we should navigate to Dave I's comments post-"Face-Off," the revelatory season's finale that aired a week later. In the first—and very lengthy—of the three texts posted (10/10/11), Dave I again narrceptivizes by co-elaborating the observations of his co-participants. This time, it is Adam[235] and Tizzielish[236] (see, Schema 6 for illustration). Evidently, the swap did occur, thus necessitating the inquiry as to *how* it transpired. Hence, Adam had just emphasized how the swap of the cigarette packs could've gone "*un-noticed*," based on similarities in packs' outward appearance. Simultaneously,

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[235] See, Appendix I, Example 41. Also see, Example 42 (Sean).
[236] See, Appendix I, Example 43.

Adam shakes off the potential significance of the *number* of cigarettes inside, based on his "real world" belief that prolonged smokers "rarely kn[ow]" the quantity by heart. (Note how Adam's suggestion runs in *total* counter to what other such twistories have previously maintained) Meanwhile, Dave I quotes Tizzielish's observation that "real life" pickpockets can be "*unbelievably skilled*." Significantly, here Tizzielish's understanding of Huell's IW 'splits,' former's own "real life" experience flows in and thus, yet another twistory emerges.

In principle, Dave I agrees with his sense-making compatriots. On the one hand, he reckons, Walt could've known what brand Jesse smokes; and on the other, Huell being an extremely skilled pickpocket in disguise may "*sort of make sense*."

Dave I is not without his own subjective quibbles, however. On the first issue, he's willing to take a non-committal position by gliding into the TMW and "*suspecting*" that these matters shall be revisited. The second issue, however, is more laborious to make peace with. While, as noted, Dave I does *in principle* acquiesce to Tizzielish's read, his primary point is that—yet again, gliding into the TMW—should it indeed be so (i.e., Huell as an "unbelievably skilled" pickpocket), writers had "*brought it out of nowhere*." Consequently, this is why such portrayal doesn't "*gel with* [Huell's] *character* [in a particular kind of person sense]" thus far presented. In such an analysis, heavy on TMW, and penetrating the examination of Huell's IW deeper than "End Times"' narrative ever afforded, Dave I argues that the participation in this key event makes Huell's IW (and even Huell as NP) incoherent—someone hitherto seemingly ineffective, a frequently sleeping-while-at-work "*hunk*" is, as if by *deus ex machina*, depicted as a "*masterful pickpocket*." However, even here Dave I ultimately accedes. What remains to bug him (and not only him as we now well know), though, is the fact that for the entirety of the pat-down, Jesse was aware and actively attending to Huell's actions. Thus, Dave I concludes that whilst the "*lifting a single cigarette*" theory is without merit full stop, even a swap of *packs*, due to this seemingly unnoticeable narrative information, spells at least for him a "*bit harder* [of] *a sell*." Essentially, it is the long way of gliding back to the TMW and confirming what many a user felt after the final scene of "Face-Off" aired—the feeling of being "cheated."

In his second commentary for "Face-Off," Dave I further elaborates on this assumption of "*cheat*," whilst also opening up yet more interrelated aspects. First, drawing on his previous narrcepts, he grants having been "*full-on riding on the fence*," i.e., vacillating between, as we recall him noting, "*equally plausible*" options. By his view, though, the "authorial" solution didn't exactly restore the equanimity for—even post-"fact,"—every possibility, the one actually proposed (by the script-writers) *included*, "*seem*[s] *like a stretch*." Consequently, he concurs with participant Lionel Mandrake[237], quoting the latter

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[237] See, Appendix I, Examples 44–45.

maintaining two significant and closely interrelated assumptions which both link with 1st gist:

(1) Lionel is quoted as challenging the rather widespread belief as if the swap of the cigarette packs is some kind of high degree magician's act,
(2) Lionel draws attention to the fact that Walt's being (literally) occupied in his home doesn't equal attentive viewing participants actually knowing what he could've been up to *during* these "*several hours*."

Now, Dave I leaves (2) untouched, whilst, in turn, challenging (1). In doing so, he ends up further developing two points he had introduced previously: (i) Jesse's attention at the time and (i) the "*convenience*" of such a useful, sudden "*trait*" in Huell appearing at the most "*critical point*." In essence, then, what Dave I manages here is juggling the active construction of two (or perhaps even three) IWs (Huell's/Walt's/Jesse's) not only in sync, but in a rather carefully orchestrated fashion. On top of all that, Dave I appears to glide *for* such a result in and out of the TMW, asserting that even for a clever show like *Breaking Bad*, this "*twist*" was tad too "*contrived*."

It is indeed specifically the TMW thus far developed that Dave I ultimately revisits in his last narrcept for "Face-Off," again co-elaborating Lionel's previous thoughts. Namely, Dave I argues that the choices inculcated upon the show by the creator/showrunner Vince Gilligan go against the grain of elementary writing "*norms*." Yet, though Dave I even glides to his likely 'personal IW' (hence developing a rudimentary twistory to get his point across), "*in the grand scheme of things*" he rather takes pack-swapping issue as "*minor*." What he actually tries to get at, then, is that all of these events—*taken together*—are too much of a "*stretch*" to be plausible. The main focality here lies obviously on Huell. Why was this NP, thus far billed only as Saul's hunky/ sleepy bodyguard, now suddenly permitted such a key skill? And, even if one attempts to make peace with such an 'incoherent' portrayal, how come, then, was he able to make the swap all the while Jesse being aware of it?

These are the questions that give Dave I no peace whatsoever. He admits that the "*pieces fit*," but his argument is that everything seemingly unravels at the seams. The job of the seamster, as it were, could've be done with far more finesse, and with "*only a little more effort*" by, e.g., revealing flashbacks (cf., some participants from 3.4) either revealing Huell's background or focusing on Walt plotting with Saul. Ultimately, Dave I's bottom line is that ***details matter***. Especially in a show like *Breaking Bad* where previous adherences to "*details*" established acute expectations going forward.
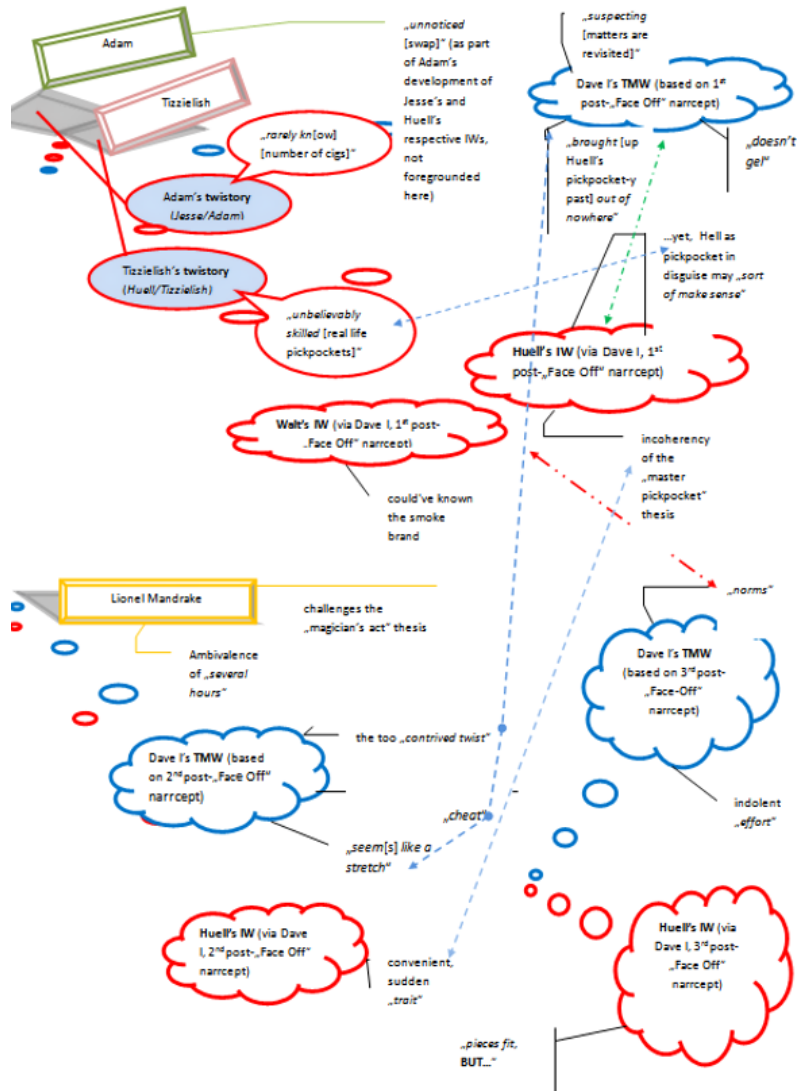
Schema 6 (reduced to fit): The successive co-elaboration of D a v e I's narrception following the authorial revelations in *Breaking Bad*'s 4th season finale "Face Off," off of A d a m 's, T i z z i e l i s h 's and L i o n e l M a n d r a k e 's. Dashed and dash-dotted arrows of varying weigh illustrate the more explicit links between three variations of D a v e I's *becoming* **storyworld**, itself (by co-elaborating on the SWs and IWs of other participants) demarcating a kind of discourse world within a discourse world (esp. when taken in tandem with developments depicted and analyzed previously, cf., schema 5). For the clarification of the visual "shadow" metaphor, cf., schema 4.

CONCLUSION

> "The hypothesis I mean, is, [t]hat nothing is perceived but what is in the mind which perceives it: [t]hat we do not really perceive things that are external, but only certain images and pictures of them imprinted upon the mind, which are called *impressions and ideas*.
>
> If this be true; supposing certain impressions and ideas to exist in my mind, I cannot, from their existence, infer the existence of any thing else: my impressions and ideas are the only existences of which I can have any knowledge or conception; and they are such fleeting and transitory beings, that they can have no existence at all, any longer than I am conscious of them. So that, upon this hypothesis, the whole universe around me, bodies and spirits, sun, moon, stars, and earth, friends and relations, all things without exception, which I imagined to have a permanent existence, whether I thought of them or not, vanish at once […] I THOUGHT it [such hypothesis] unreasonable[.]"
> – Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense* (1819), pp. xiii–ix; emphasis and capitalization in original

"*Everyone* reads it," I was once insisted upon with regard to conclusions, stressing their indisputable paramouncy. Such a statement left me somewhat aghast and on the fence. Not necessarily the reading part—in an ideal world, "everyone" would read *everything*. Rather, I am hesitant to treat the act of concluding as a closure, full stop. Intuitively, at least, such approach appears counterproductive, at best, and reductionist, at worst. It is far more reasonable to presume that ends should write new beginnings, no? Paradoxically, though, for that to happen, some standing issues nevertheless have to be "wrapped up." The question is how to go about it?

The other day, whilst scrolling my Tumblr feed I spotted a poetic rhetorical so haunting that it is tempting to pull it out of its context for the present discussion's sake: "Do I harvest all of my beginnings?" Indeed, at least some of what was instigated has to be allowed to mature, to gain further depth, and others still permitted to germinate more wholesomely, perhaps; whereas in either case, this can only occur through future projects I am going to sketch later on (see, vii). However, as the subtitled quotation implies, there are still polemics the Introduction promised the Conclusion shall persist on. Note, however, that given quotation serves as an illustration of a symptom only and the intent of the present Conclusion, and, to be fair, of the entire preceding work thus far, has not been to delve emphatically into the grand *philosophical* debates, but rather use these disagreements as potentially fruitful "devices" to further underscore the core points the present work gesticulates at, but to do so perhaps within the wider scale of scholarly thinking. Hence, building on the original terminology established throughout chapters 1 and 2, this "concluding" persistence shall be my final objective.

v Cross-section of potential criticisms and common interests

TheTVDB blurbs a Japanese anime serial, airing on Tokyo MX network, as follows:

> Humans have created many stories. Joy, sadness, anger, deep emotion. Stories shake our emotions, and fascinate us. However, these are only the thoughts of *bystanders*. But what if the characters in the story have "intentions"? To them, are we god-like existences for bringing *their story* into the world? Our world is changed. Mete out punishment upon the realm of gods. In Re:CREATORS [*sic*], everyone becomes a Creator.[238] (emphases added)

Yet, although "complex narratives" do insist upon "their stor[ies]," and although, as illustrated above, even storytelling *itself* appears to start insisting upon this point, as Introduction intimated, it is fairly complicated to change the models of thinking. In fact, even humble modifications can ruffle feathers. Clearly, then, one dissertation is insufficient to revolutionize… anything, really. After all, recalling the wise words of a professor whose "academic writing" course I once frequented: all the "bright ideas" are better left explored in the future. What I have tried to establish, then, is merely an outline, an invitational prolegomenon for a potentially rewarding theoretical framework. Indeed, propositions entertained and clarified throughout this work, finding their ultimate, though *illustrative*—and, by design, *unfinished*, "running"—appliance in the Analysis, have just recently received an almost surprising quantitative backing (see, Alderson-Day and Bernini and Fernyhough 2017). This, in its turn, suggests—though presently a different kind of data pertaining to another medium has been investigated—that a boldly (direct) realist model of character engagement is not a mere academical folly, but, at least to some extent, qualifiable not only by establishing "alternative" theoretical frameworks, but *even* by conventional quantitative means. After all, 77 cases (19%) surveyed by Alderson-Day and colleagues perceived of their experientiality *vis-à-vis* narrative characters (note: *literary* characters) as the latter enacting an "*experiential crossing* of voices" into readers' life, of them "*continu*[ing] [their] *life between bouts of reading*" (*ibid.*:105; emphases in original). Now, it has to be noted for clarity that Alderson-Day *et al.*'s findings seemingly foreground psychopathological leanings (the "hearing of voices").

However, it nonetheless remains a significant quantifiable backdrop—an assumption at least partially vindicated by overlapping literature utilized in the latter case, e.g., the Vygotskyian paradigm—especially if transposed into tele-*visual* audiences where given effects, taken broadly, could conceivably even increase, given a more "direct," long-term interactional engagement.

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[238] http://thetvdb.com/?tab=series&id=321869&lid=7 (Accessed: 20.04.2017). Also cf., HBO's *Westworld* (2016–...).

Hence, it may appear as if almost unproblematic to argue, as the present dissertation vehemently has, that in our "engagement with characters," too, the commonsensical, "everyday" approach, emerging by way of our ordinary language use (frequently, if not always, with materialist underpinnings) is extremely subtle and substantial, and, as such, a far cry from the pigeonholing "naiveté" doctrine.

Were we to consider John L. Caughey's propositions in *Imaginary Social Worlds. A Cultural Approach*, what is at stake here are communal assemblages of "extensive information," obtained through "intimate involve[ment]" with "media figures" (Caughey 1984:32–33), e.g., *Breaking Bad's* narrative persons. Now, if the proverbial skeleton key unlocking such tangibility paradox lies in the paramounce of *social relationships* (*ibid.*:40) that endure in both variations of "the real" ("pseudo" or objective notwithstanding), question nonetheless remains how *actual* people *naturally express* the experience of such relationship (especially if longitudinal conversations, e.g., in blog commentary sections or forums threads, are taken in contradistinction to results extrapolated from tests in lab settings).

Therefore, the Introduction of the present dissertation outlined how the significance of language's socializing quality—its "power" to realitize, to develop an active "crossing of [sovereign] experiences" (cf., Alderson-Day *et al.* 2017)—i.e., the *creative vernacular*, increases in relevance. Creative vernacular, then, in my treatment, has been seen throughout communicating, imparting agency (cf., see, 1.4, 1.5.1). Following Craig Batty's observation, the centrality of character, of actively "experiencing someone's story" (Batty 2014:36) can indeed also operate bidirectionally. In the final analysis, then, it is the strength of *stories*, and moreover, *how* viewers weave their own variations off of initial authorial narratives, that ends up flattening the objective gradation insisting on *Breaking Bad*'s Walter White being somehow less of a person than, say, *Trading Spouses*' Marguerite Perrin.

Hence, the present work can be looked at as a contribution shining doubt at (i) the "naiveté" doctrine, as well as objecting to (ii) the "mentalistic" conception of representation in the context observed. As for (i), reading Margrit Schreier's quantitative study, drawing on the responses to *The Blair Witch Project* (an infamous "pseudodocumentary," spawning later television iterations of "docu-*reality shows*"); and especially her notation of how "[r]elating 'fact' and 'fiction' is … perfectly ordinary part of the reception process," one is left with a sense that "those recipients … who actually confused the two by forming search parties for the fictional characters who had gone missing" end up treated as "unfit," as the extraordinaries on the margins (Schreier 2004:307). Furthermore, Schreier's later discussion anticipates Murray Smith's (see, 1.6 for discussion; Smith 2011; Sorokin n.d.) in arguing that, *vis-à-vis* "fiction," recipients' everyday "fact convention is suspended" and displaced by specific instructions pertaining to some "literary-aesthetic system" (Schreier 2004:309–310).

It has proven complicated, however, to exactly correlate these types of theorizing accounts with the "creative vernacular" of *Breaking Bad*'s discussants. For quite clearly both "everyday" and "narrative" conventions are on display and drawn upon *simultaneously*. If anything, as I have argued, the 'folding' of *correspondence* of multiple agencies introduces a 'leveling' quality. What is meant here is that not only what I have been referencing as **narrative persons** are "carrying over" as discussive *Klatch-Objekte*, but real life authors and television script writers become scrutinized by measures *in kind* to those afforded for formally "fictive" persons. Hence, my contention has been that in explicating narrative experience (like permitted by, but not exclusive to, *Breaking Bad*) the commonsense reasoning becomes sought after. Here, the logical upshot is that "common sense" becomes *communalized*, that is, sense making 'produces' popular insight, predicated on "vernacular creativity" of a particular sort. Insofar as **narrative persons** are concerned, aforementioned ideas gain relevance in counterpoising our conventional mysticism in becoming "absorbed" *in* "characters" with becoming absorbed *by* them; that is, by developing a third-person perspective *about* them (as potentially other people) (cf., Sorokin 2016b, 2017a, b).

As observed in the Introduction, however, this presupposed fact/fiction binary echoes far and wide. Hence, in turning to (ii), we are both told that our experientiality of narrative is actually our "mental construct" that we "run" (Oatley 1994, 1999) as well as that *imaginative* experience ends up "transporting" us (Gerrig), or that we somehow "get lost" in it (Nell), or "hypnotized" and led into a "trance" even (cf., Oatley 2002:41,50). In speaking of what he calls "literary emotions" with regard to such mythical phantasmagoria, then, literary psychologist Keith Oatley adapts Bruner's and Bartlett's work in arguing strictly that although the proposition of "narrative as a mode [to] understand the *actions of people*" is fitting for our experience of narrative (and the people presented therewith), the contrast with "*paradigmatic* mode … used to reason about scientific and technical matters" is evidently as clear-cut as the "fact" that, allowing the argument, there are emotions "proper" and "literary emotions" (*ibid.*:39–40,65; emphases added). Likewise, here, too, a contradiction transpires. Namely, if "narrative" can be utilized to understand why "protagonists" act the way they do (i.e., the foundational necessity implicated in the present dissertation), how can it also be that "as we assimilate a story, our emotions are *our own*, *not those of the character*,"; and that we, as Oatley later puts it, "become one with the character in a story," i.e., we self-identify (*ibid.*:43,61ff.; emphasis added)? Justified question arises thus: what is it, *really*, that we are are supposed to "understand" with the help of the narrative mode? Is it always, already and only ourselves?

Seemingly implied in Oatley's treatment is the latter, for he conceives of a spectrum: "transportation" on one side, "transformation" on another (*ibid.*:43; cf., Polichak and Gerrig 2002:89ff.). You "plunge" in and, if luck has it, disengage as a changed person. Indeed, the thesis of "self-implication" with regard to media consumption, on the one hand (e.g., Kuiken *et al.* 2004), and with

regard to human development (Vygotsky's dictums "through others we become ourselves" and "art is the social within us"), on the other, is certainly persuasive enough. However, presently at issue is that Oatley's radical constructivist account, building upon Machian tradition of Piaget and von Glaserfeld, appears to hereby wholesale foreclose observable "Others" acting for *their own* sovereign intentions (regardless of, and notwithstanding the existence with(in), any medium) as *perceived* during such evidently "transformative" (fictional) experience. Again, then, such self-perspective (the "first personal") postulates schematic processing of *re*-presentations—the Dennettian "Cartesian Theatre"— where, ultimately, the author and the narrative are largely taken as a unison entity with potential existences posited as nothing but mere flights of receptual fancy, as "materials offered by the story" (Oatley 2002:43); merely populating the "space in between" that relates the "real author" with the "real reader" (cf., Oatley 2002:47ff.,64; cf., Introduction). Yet, it could be argued, at least to some degree, that this is an "ego-centered element ... atypical of our experience of fiction" (Meskin and Weinberg 2003:18)

To be fair, some potential openings and common ground in overcoming the views described above, insofar as psychological literature suggests, are implicated, though still from the mentalistic-representationalist "information processing" angle, such as Polichak's and Gerrig's account of viewers (or readers) as "side-participants." However, their approach to these matters also happens to be indebted to research on *real life* conversational interactions (see, Polichak and Gerrig 2002:72ff.). Nonetheless though, key characters whose life events are "side-participated" still remain all but readerly "mental representations" (*ibid.*:78), devoid of any sovereignity as **narrative persons** with lived lives, and the viewer or the reader as a *onlooker* (Zillmann) in third person trying to make sense of, to *explain directly*, as opposed to utilizing *re*-presented 'mental figurines' as proxy.

This controversy is not unfamiliar for the field of narratology, either. Hence, responding to Alan Palmer's thesis of "social mind," Manfred Jahn is quick to distinguish between "real other minds" and "fictional other minds" (Jahn 2011: 249; see also, e.g., Margolin 1990; Eder 2010; Caracciolo 2014, and critical discussion, in chapter I, 1.5.3). (I will revisit Palmer's ideas noted in the Introduction shortly in the present sub-section.) And although at first glance sympathetic to the core arguments presented in current dissertation, literary-theoretical approaches also, e.g., Lars-Åke Skalin's fascinating article in the edited volume *Disputable Core Concepts of Narrative Theory*, also revert to the conventional wisdom that "[characters] are not existents, i.e., particulars, in a world. In character-talk there is no knowing the dancer from the dance" (Skalin 2012:127–128). Would the field of folkloristics perhaps suggest diverging views or some valid compromises, at least? Perhaps seemingly so, though not, unfortunately, wholesomely.

In his examination of oral tellings of folk legends, relying hereby (not insignificantly for the present work) on archived legend collections, exhibiting the "dual quality of being at the same time collective and individual," Ulf

Palmenfelt sketches out an intriguing notion of "identificand." Betokening an extratextual relation, it is "understood as an agreement between narrator and audience in the course of narration" (Palmenfelt 1993:143,157,166). That is, listeners are 'contracted' for role-presumption where they "identify with," say, story's named character (possibly distraught, hence requiring attention) *pace* "an impersonal crowd … [an] army." Furthermore, once so positioned, listeners "enter the universe of the legend" and utilize character's eyes, as it were, to "watch" the events unfold (*ibid.*). Bracketing the qualms *vis-à-vis* listeners supposedly preemptively taking on the "role" of nobility (as in the present case), instead of, more logically, "identifying" themselves with the masses of farmers, Palmenfelt's notion can provide some reasonable correctives, though straightforward reliance to it remains questionable, at best. Most significant, I would say, is that this notion of "identificand" readily acknowledges the *inversion* of the character-recipient (power) relation. Put differently, the former ceases to be a mere vehicle for latter's "I." Instead, a storytelling occasion affords this named character to operate as sovereign guide *with* the presented world (*contra* "in"). This allows the consideration of a third personal perspective whereby such character becomes a "reasoning agent," acknowledged distinctly separate of listener's "I," yet crucial *par excellence* for how listeners experience the tale. For it is his potential explanations that have to be followed for accurate bearings—something not intervened with, but being routed by, as opposed to settling "in" simulatively, i.e., as part of "make-belief" (for there's nothing *imaginary* for *this king* to be frightful over persecution, as it were).

Consequently, the role of the "identificand," conceived of as such, bequeaths the very impossibility to do *any* "model" off of oneself (especially given the *context* of listening and the social conditioning of the listeners, the former of which might have consisted of real life *farmers*, instead of "noblemen," or unlikeliest of all, of "kings"). In fact, a further argument can also be advanced to delineate clear distinction on the author/character axis; a differential, indeed, explicitly denoted by storyteller her/himself. Reading "identificand" as 'inverting' conventional view of approaching how real people engage with "fictional" ones could be a strenuous assertion to undertake, to be sure, but, one would think, quite insightful at present. Moreover, Palmenfelt's own interpretation seemingly vindicates prior assumptions: "[i]n the Gotlandic legends, the *farmer* [as a 'textual' role—S.S.] often equals 'the man, the Gotlander … [the] I̲" (see, *ibid.*:148–149; emphasis in original, underlining added). That is, for argument's sake, Palmenfelt appears to imply that listeners intuitively opt for "roles" unlike themselves; which, obviously, doesn't exclude cases where it would be more urgent to "watch" with farmer's "eyes"—the underlying point being: no "vicarious" living of the "self" *through* the "Other" occurs here, but a sort of distanced and impartial "transportation," shall we say; one acknowledging the latter for it is the only way the storytelling would function.

Now, lastly, though Palmenfelt omits inspiration for his notion, its origin presumably dates to early developmental literature (of the "effects theory" variety). Eleanor E. Maccoby, in her "Effects of the Mass Media" (*Review of*

Child Development Research, Vol 1, 1964[1974]), writes: "[w]e assume that in stories which present more than one leading character, a viewer makes a choice of a character who will be his primary "identificand," and experiences the actions vicariously through this character" (Maccoby 1964[1974]:326). Evidently, although correlating in spirit with Palmenfelt's elaboration, modified dynamic here is of critical import. The focality of Maccoby's "identificand" lies elsewhere, in how characters *affect*, say, adolescent boys. As such, obviously the quality of *inversion* cleverly eked out by Palmenfelt disappears at once and is yet again replaced with "fictional" persons as being mere means to an end. More over, it has to be clarified that Maccoby's and others' early ideas on the significance of "leading character" cut against contemporary ideas concerning media "effects," strongly critical of the still prevalent single "measure" strategy (see, Giles 2010:447; chaper 1, 1.4).

Now, having established a baseline with regard to criticism *vis-à-vis* the prevailing mental-representationalist (*viz.* internalist) models of character engagement, it is imperative—prior to summarizing the terminological framework the present dissertation established and proposing some potential advances forward—to speak of studies in narrative research (taken broadly) perhaps more explicitly sympathetic to current work or, at the very least, enlarging on partially the same literature presently utilized. In his *Social Minds in the Novel*, narratologist Alan Palmer go to maintain:

> [Statements foregrounding characters' immediate consciousness] often fulfill a pivotal role in guiding the direction of the narrative by showing that a particular mental event is a manifestation of a disposition and that the disposition is a causal factor in the event ... It is by interpreting episodes of consciousness within a context of dispositions that the reader builds up a convincing and coherent sense of character. (Palmer 2010:28;27–34)

Without necessarily delving here into the intricacies concerning notion of "disposition" (and its psychological connotations), the important proviso worth preserving from Palmer's inspiring "externalist perspective on the mind" thesis (Palmer 2014) is that what literary narratives ordinarily "do" in writing, visual art forms (e.g., televisual narrative; but also narrative art, cf., Skalin from above, and Casebier, from chapter 1) generally achieve with subtle hints by way of actors' body language and/or fleeting phrases, both of which might not mean much to casual viewers (i.e., in the case of serialized narratives); as well as through the cueing of various filmic ('narrational') devices (close-ups, pans, shot/reverse-shot editing, etc.). Note herewith my intentional exclusion of the device of voice-over for it essentially violates the "show, don't tell!" rule complex narratives are so famous for.

Given such storytelling tendencies, one can claim that "dispositions" in televisual narrative wholly insist on a particular kind of sense-making exigency of the viewer, predicated on the "creative vernacular" and grounded on the tacit acknowledgement of **realitization** (see below, for overview discussion on terminology and illustrative Table 1).

In order to further emphasize the key point that the present Conclusion aims to flesh out, however, it is useful to contrast here Palmer's examination of *Middlemarch* with one done by literature philosopher Gregory Currie. Currie—though acknowledging narrative's "intention-driven coherence" (Currie 2009:64)—reveals concisely and early on the kind of widespread, chiasmic way of thinking Palmer observes at the very outset of his work. As Currie puts it, "George Eliot's interventions allow us to read off [character's] Character traits for the people in Middlemarch." As such, Currie further amplifies the ideas of the addressees of previous criticisms. That is, both for Currie and them, characters can be intentional persons only insofar as the (presupposed) reasons of an "overarching intelligence," as Currie puts it, make them so (viz., a "real" authorial mind); and even so, they are "fixed" within the representation (Currie 2009:63–66; see also, Oatley 2011). In other words, as James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz put it in *Narrative Theory Core Concepts and Critical Debates*, "the art of realistic fiction consists of conveying the illusion that *characters are acting autonomously even as their actions serve the implied author's overall purpose*" (Phelan and Rabinowitz 2012:113; emphasis added).

Brilliantly contrasting with the discussion thus far is David Herman's position of characters as "members of the category of 'persons' … a special class of entities" (Herman 2012:125; cf., chapter 2). Although Herman preserves some constructivist underpinnings, he nonetheless goes to maintain that "[o]ther minds are not a problem to be solved but instead built into the very concept of a person. Hence the idea of person … *entails* that mental predicates will be self-ascribable in one's own case and other-ascribable in the case of others ... readers make sense of .. characters' minds insofar as they situate those individuals in the domain of persons" (*op. cit.*:126; emphasis in original, underlining added). Or, if to put similar ideas with additional clarity, it is worth to reiterate film theorist Michael Z. Newman's succinct observation: "[c]haracters are not real people, granted, but this does not mean that they are not people ... their traits are not them; they are descriptions of them" (Newman 2006b:53). Scathing summary criticism is echoed in literary theorist Richard Walsh, however, noting that above criticized approaches tend to "devalue involvement in proportion as they devalue fictional being" (Walsh 2007:154).

To wit, I would assert that taken in unison, (i) Alderson-Day's and colleagues brand new quantitative findings, (ii) Herman's, Palmer's, and others' path breaking narratological work on the literary medium and "social mind," and, last but not least, (iii) Palmenfelt's fascinating treatment of the notion of "identificand" in relation to storytelling in folk legends, serve as an extremely fruitful, if perhaps overtly general, *inter*disciplinary "springboard" for the *trans-disciplinary* terminological framework the present work foregrounded. More over, the ideas of the noted scholars, if not always in agreement with my own, nonetheless validate, if to borrow the phrasing of renowned television critic Alan Sepinwall, the re-consideration of especially televisual character engagement as predicated on onlooking to them as "lived-in human beings" (Sepinwall 2015), i.e., quite simply characters who are experientially *humanly*. Incidentally,

here the word choice of "lived-in" can, under the auspices of the present dissertation, also be taken to doubly connote such familiarity aspect—they are **narrative persons** in their own right, *but* they also *become* so by long-term interactional engagement, i.e., through the *interaction-in-development*. Consequently, I believe that previous rough outline of criticisms and potential sympathies bodes reasonably well in moving on to summarize the terminological contributions the present work proposes (for the visualization, see Table 1 below) as well as what has to be, or at the very least, what can be done, going forward.

vi Synopsis of the dissertation's theoretical(-analytical) contributive value

Schema 1
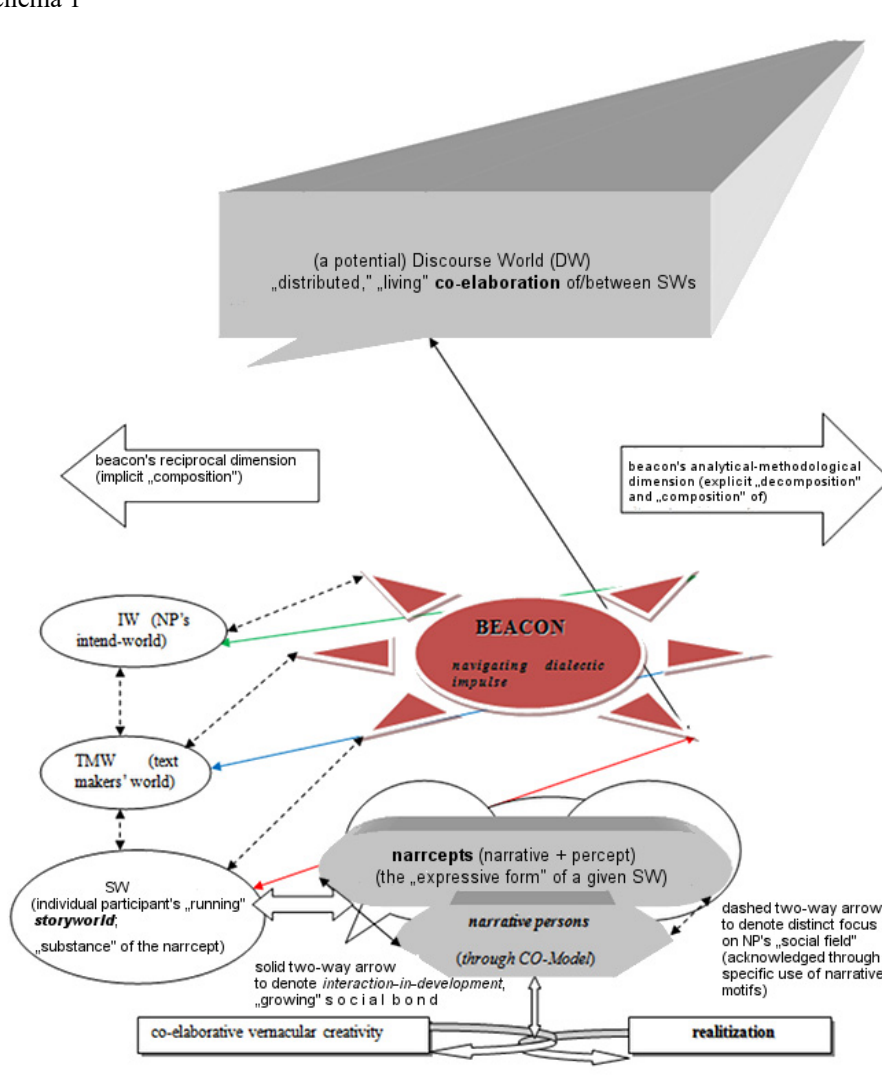
The theoretical framework expounded upon in the present dissertation was designed to (i) introduce necessary original notions, (ii) introduce derivations seen as appropriate for the occasion, and (iii) to fine-tune and re-incorporate eminent terms with a cross-disciplinary pedigree. For brevity's sake, the subsequent concluding synopsis is largely grounded on the Table 1 presented above, illustrating the noted principles. As such, we can commence with the interlocked notions of **co-elaboration** (as the 'motor' for **vernacular creativity**) and **realitization**, reproduced as Table 1's bottom-most layer, as it were. The quality of such relationship is conveyed through two entangled arrows pointing back onto themselves with 'entanglement' discerning the interlock. On the one hand, co-elaboration signifies socio-individualism and eschews the primacy of collectivisms and individualisms. For its shared objective (viz. getting **narrative persons'** life-reasonings "just right") is always already being non-reducible to some collectively created "product." On the other, co-elaborative activity is *distributed*, that is, analyst's narrativist-editorial role can highlight individual storyworlds (indicated by SW in Table 1, also see below) interconnected and 'chained' together by altering, challenging and disputing each other not only in, but, crucially, *across* simultaneous discussional environments. Put differently, the inherently relational quality betokens 'living stories' which can be seen as advancing beyond the subject/loci axis. At the same time, however, co-elaboration also implies the defying of "the canon"—such as *Breaking Bad*'s "official" narrative—thus providing insight into 'interstices of narrations" that carve out a particular "history of a community" (Smorti 2008: 231), scaffolded on narrative experientiality.

The notion of **realitization**, for its part, is inspired by an English neologism explained as an act of bringing someone to the 'state' of "reality." My work built upon it by maintaining that co-elaborative vernacular creativity rests on the tacit act of realitization of narrative characters. I insisted upon a contingency of the *social bond* viewers cultivate with **narrative persons** (NPs), being underpinned by *interaction-in-development* and so conveyed through common-sensical, everyday pithiness of practical language use in circumscribing specific spheres of interest (the tangible "thinking of" and "talking about" another) (aforementioned ideas are illustrated in the Schema 1 by the solid two-way arrow, leading from narrcepts to NPs and back; see also brief clarification added).

To wit, as per the contention that the present dissertation entertained, such 'pithiness' expresses a 'secondary materiality,' bolstered by participants' direct-perceptional proclivities, hence in effect consolidating real social interaction and the engagement with "fictive characters" (but also with real authors) into an "alternative" mode of thinking scaffolded on time exhibition of popular sense-making attested to by overlapping discussion archives. Furthermore, suggested by the dashed two-way arrow in the Table 1, this becoming of a social bond can arguably be validated by 'guided' practice concerning the uptake of narrative information. Hence, the significance of **narrative motifs** was seen to correlate with the perception of the relevance they might have had on/for the NPs. Hence,

in contraposition to wide-spread views, these "elementary units" in "authorial storytelling" were taken to specifically scaffold the *acknowledgement* of NPs as "reasoning agents," i.e., of them being *with* their world ('inhabitating' it as sovereign potential persons), *pace* being "in" it (cf., see the *with/in scale*, from chapter I). (Note: "inhabitate," derived from "inhabitance," was chosen to counter the ordinary etymology of "inhabit" and reinforcing the claims *vis-à-vis* NPs' sovereignty (the principle of *with* over the principle of (passive) *in*), whilst simultaneously opposing the viewerly-interventionalist "transportation into.").

Consequently, the conventional envisioning of "transportation" was henceforth inverted by the "carry over" model, *viz.* CO-Model/COM, wherein the act of realitization was consigned a base-level operating principle (cf., Table 1, the thick two-way arrow pointing from interlocked base-level upwards). COM established that narrative characters—by example of the televisual serial *Breaking Bad*—"carry over" (on)to discussional participants' experiential plane for the discursive act "levels" the ontological disparity. Such a transposition arguably (i) imbues NPs with idiomatic sovereignty and individuality within the confines of the co-elaborative space of creative vernacular, whilst also (ii) preserving the high relevance of narrative "proper" as the 'inhabitat' for them. More over, due to the assumption of the "carry over," the present dissertation saw fit to also distinguish the notion of **twistory**. Twistory (entwining+story) is meant to convey such moments where viewer/participants' real world experiences/memories 'collide' with certain aspects from the NPs' "social field," in making sense of the latter. Though absent from the Table 1 clarity's sake, it can be argued that, dependant on individual narrcept, twistory may become a key ingredient in making sense of NP's intend-world (IW, also see below; cf., chapter 1, for twistory, chapter 2, for IW).

In an attempt to compress aforementioned dynamics into a maximally comprehensive concept, the original notion of **narrcept** was proposed in order to bridge popular vernacular's inherent narrativist impulses (the "*narr*" of the narrative), on the one hand, and the leanings toward commonsensical "direct perception," on the other (the "*cept*" of the percept). For the notion of narrcept is conceptualized as conveying strictly Other-related sense-making, it differentiates itself from (though, perhaps to a degree, enabling to further specify) comparable terms in the field of narrative research, taken broadly, e.g., Internet scholar Ananda Mitra's notion of "narbs."

Whereas previous notions and their contribution to the overall framework was the focus of chapter 1, chapter 2 enlarged upon this by proposing another original notion, that of the **beacon**. Beacon was argued to have necessary 'mobility,' abstractly speaking, to distinguish "worlds" latent in narrcepts, *viz.* in narrceptive thinking. That is, the beacon decomposes (differentiates into fluid "pockets" of experiential sense-making) and composes (into storyworld, manifested "in process" as an individual narrcept, viz. commentary text). Hence, in the Table 1 above, the beacon's sun-like image is obviously intentional. Envisioned as a dialectical mechanism with multiple stress points, it engages with processes of and within "popular" and "academic" interpretations; that is, it

"blinks at," "throws light at" for both the *reciprocal dimension*—i.e., intend-world (IW) 'feeding' into text makers' world (TMW) 'feeding' into storyworld (SW)—suggesting it being an "implicit" composition, an 'unsolicited' effect accompanying the storyworld composition; as well as for the *methodological-analytical dimension* (see chapter 2, 2.0, for further reference). This unstated quality scaffolding the fluid development of narrcepts with storyworlds as their "substance" is conveyed in the Table 1 by dashed two-way arrows connecting "worlds" with the reciprocal 'branches' of the beacon, as it were. For an interim summary, aforementioned "worlds" specified as follows:

- intend-worlds (IW): IWs primarily focus on NPs, but also highlight emergent shared and distributed spaces which suggest intersecting "inter-party" relations such as the case of twistory. More over, for narrcepts necessarily communicate intending *from without* (i.e., third personal perspective), they convey attempts to comprehend realitized NPs and their "social field." Hence, former's sovereignty with their AW ("actual world") is recognized, kept intact and un-encroached (see, chapter 2, 2.3.1),

- text makers' world (TMW): emphasizing the narrceptive principle undergirding the organization of SW, script writers and "creators" (such as *Breaking Bad*'s Vince Gilligan) also become "actors," "doers," viz. "reasoning agents." Their (potential) intentions necessitate elucidation in the format of criticism, evaluation and contesting (see, chapter 2, 2.3.1),

- *storyworld* (SW): envisioned as a subjective "calibration" (with socio-individual undertones) which becomes enacted through narrcept—the "expressive form" of beacon's "reciprocal dimension"—and conveying narratively situated events and their (potential, revealed, and rejected) consequences "at the person level," thereby collapsing into itself, on the principle of non-hierarchal array any potential IWs and or TMWs. In other words, in SW, all the intentionally significant "persons" 'meet' for they are perceived to act for reasons. Hence, the minimalist "format" of such predisposition is established in by (individual) narrcepts. The maximalist form, thereafter, formulates all SWs in the sampled "anticipatory" and "distributed" discourse to facilitate a *becoming* discourse world (*ibid.*),

- discourse world (DW): characterizes the analyst consistently decomposing and composing the aforementioned "worlds." The latter are developed in making sense of the NPs by taking given narrative (Breaking Bad) as former's "intentional field." Consequently, DW is the becoming of analyst's "narration of narrations," of the "running" circumscription of the joint venture of sense-making and experiencing, hence subsuming and negotiating the labels of "popular" and "academic." Put differently, DW subscribes the analyst also with a necessarily editorial "narrativist" proclivity; one becomes subsequently a "worlder" for/of viewers' story(telling) (see, 2.3.2).

As the last bullet point stresses, then, beacon also critically subsumes into itself the "academical," i.e., the *analytical-methodological dimension* (becoming hence the applied method for analysis). This dimension expounds on the "macro" tendency of storytelling, the co-elaborative vernacular creativity writ large. Hereby, scholar's analytical methodology preserves similar kind of contextualizing and interpretative impulse because the **discourse world** is *becoming* from the moment beacon is considered in practical terms—as the dialectical "structurer" of (for) the macro-level. Thus, the objective of the beacon's analytical-methodological dimension is, as chapter 2 asserted, to distinguish these *covert* reciprocal "pockets" as *overt* "worlds," *viz.* ingredients of the overall 'story matter' for the narrceptive storyworlds. Hence, by way of the beacon, it becomes possible, on the one hand, to observe how NPs' and NP's-participants' intend-worlds and twistories and or the text makers' worlds are all ultimately the general storyworld 'consistence' expressed as a singular narrcept. On the other hand, the beacon affords the proposition of a discourse world—as a *becoming* of storyworlds at large through analyst's narrativist editorial agency—but only one *potential* and necessarily incomplete construal of such. Consequently, in beacon's *analytical-methodological dimension*, the "decomposition" and "composition" are interleaved: an analyst at once decomposes many a narrceptive "worlds" (*viz.* makes sense of them in an "overt" fashion), whilst, simultaneously, composing them *anew* from the perspective of the "running" discourse world, latter being the distributed "macro" tendency characteristic to the co-elaborative vernacular creativity utilized by the viewers/ participants *across* several digital discussion environments and frequently, though not exclusively, in simultaneous fashion. For its part, (a potential) discourse world, so conceived, can possess "parameters" one can restrict or widen (e.g., narrowing or expanding the data quantity), but which is quintessentially impossible to be comprehended as "complete(d)." For it is a *becoming*, a 'living eventness.' Thereby, some other scholar, having analyzed currently examined material for their part, and, perhaps, holding an in-depth knowledge on *Breaking Bad*, might develop their own explanatory "narratives," henceforth disputing and or querying the proficiency of my framework. However, that wouldn't in any way alter the probability of the latter for it never professes to be anything *other* than one of the potentialities out of unremitting movement and influx. In fact, it might be appropriate to 'close' with Charles H. Kahn's evocation in *The art and thought of Heraclitus*: "[i]f we do not deliberately construct or select our own interpretive framework, we become unconscious and hence uncritical prisoners of whatever hermeneutical assumptions happen to be 'in the air'" (Kahn 1979[2001]:88). Even decades later, I would consider it a strikingly honest assessment on the measure and limits of scholarship and have attempted to, for good and for ill, to 'carve out' my own "ecological niche," as it were.

vii What is to be done next

As I vaguely hinted in the previous sub-section, the fascinating notion of "narb," coined and developed by Ananda Mitra (Mitra 2010, 2013; Mitra and Mamani 2014), integrating the fields of narrative research and technical affordances of "data mining," is characteristically all-encompassing, an umbrella term for essentially any digital 'breadcrumb' one leaves behind in social media underwriting our age. I would suggest that my coinage of **narrcept** would potentially provide a necessary restraint by turning its investigative 'power' on a seemingly very commonplace, prosaic practice—that of *how people talk about other people.* Keeping that specification in mind, the potential contribution of narrcept wouldn't at all be exclusively in the research area of "character engagement" with regard to "fictional" narratives. If we would allow that the central issue is the development of reality *through* language, or, to put the same point differently, the "leakage" (Grishakova and Sorokin 2016) of the multiplicity of discourses of the material reality into the experientiality of "fiction," then, one could for instance argue that the rise of online misogynist "discourse" directed to *Breaking Bad*'s Anna Gunn (phenomenon I have passingly referenced as "contestable slices in 'social realities'" in chapter 1) conveys an interdependency—potentially further clarified through narrcepts and less on the real/unreal axis, as Gunn herself points out (see, Gunn 2013)—with prejudicial 'configurations of sentiment' in real life. On top of concentrating on such 'slices' with regard to popular engagement with "fictional chararcters," a prospective enlargement—implicit in the core characteristics of narrcept—can be conceived of with regard to volatile and "controversial" subjects covering variety of issues and also making increasing headway in the sphere of digitalized discussions. Although by no means an uncharted territory across a number of disciplines, the conceptual weight carried by the notion of narrcept could reveal re-calibrated 'fenestrations' into approaching wrought topics of control, empowerment, oppression, and subaltern "Othering" (cf., e.g., Said 1978[2001]; Gramsci 1985; Fuchs and Dyer-Witheford 2013; Dyer-Witheford 2015; Galloway 2004).

However, this is not to say as if the notion of the narrcept and the established framework as a whole couldn't further contribute to nor be additionally fine-tuned in the process of investigating the engagement with **narrative persons** more thoroughly. Herewith I am not only speaking of a critical revisit of previous argumentation and analysis on a greater scale vis-a-vis *Breaking Bad* (note the available data set consisting of 1009 texts across three interconnected episodes over a two year period), but also—crucially—the *comparative* aspect, that is, by rebuttals, challenges, or modifications to the existing framework through, e.g., a consideration of a similarly sized data set for one very different serial narrative, that of *Lost* (cf., Sorokin 2013a, 2015). Consequently, such comparative tactic can, in its turn, also be expanded further, to include preliminary data collection and later three-way comparative analysis which would

include, say, digital discussions focusing on feature film franchises (the *Harry Potter* series, *et al.*) on *Internet Movie Database* forums, and elsewhere.

It goes without saying all the aforementioned suggestions carry necessary 'germs' that would enable to flesh out even further what I believe is an important distinction of *distributed* co-elaborative narrative practices on the Internet, in general, and what I have coined as *narrceptive* expression (and thinking), in particular.

Appendix I: Sample Commentary Texts (*unedited*)

Example 1
I think Walt was too busy in the last few days to do something like that. He has spent his time basically flipping his shit and chasing his own tail. I doubt he went through the trouble to find out where those people lived (who he didn't even know), took Jesse's cigarette and dumped ricin on the kids cheerios or whatever. If the kid is poisoned with ricin (which still has not been 100% proven), I think it's because he got hold of it himself, not because of Walt. I truly don't think Walt had the time or motivation to poison Brock with ricin.
phailcakez (Reddit, "End Times[239]," 3.10.11, 03:10:09UTC), 56a–55a

Example 2
If Walt wanted to poison Brock with ricin, he wouldn't need Jesse's cigarette – he could just make more ricin. So if Brock did get sick from the ricin in the cig, it must have been either an accident or done by someone else.
IreneInIdaho (Uproxx/Hitfix, *ibid.*[240], 3.10.11, 7:20PM), b49

Example 3
Two things about this episode: 1.) Brock didn't have to smoke the Ricin to get poisoned by it. That wasn't how they were going to poison Gus. The cigarette was just used to hold the ricin in for safe keeping. In reality there was just a tube of it inside the cigarette Jesse could dump out into Gus' food or something. 2.) Does anyone think it's possible that Walt actually DID poison Brock so that he could blame Gus to get Jesse back on his side? I'm not sure when he could have done it. But I could see the writers doing this. We'llwill be so focused on Walt & Jesse vs. Gus and at the end of the episode, they'll spring it on us. If anyone has mentioned these two things, I apologize. It's hard to scroll through 450 comments. Meaning that people probably won't see this...but oh well. EDIT: I actually just realized that #2 would be unlikely because Walt went to Jesse's house BEFORE being dragged out to the desert by Tyrus. I'm not sure if Walt would have thought of poisoning Brock before that.
wutisareddit (Reddit, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 03:09:25UTC), 59a

Example 4
I see a bunch of people on here saying "BROCK SMOKES?!??!" which is why I mentioned it. And another note about my theory is that it's impossible (unless there's something we don't know) due to the fact that Jesse saw the ricin in his pocket the morning of the day this episode takes place. Kind of jumped the gun on posting that theory, although I see a lot of people have it.
wutisareddit (Reddit, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 03:22:37UTC), 63a–59a

Example 5
You might be jumping to conclusions that Brock was poisoned by ricin, Tim. That's not at all obvious at this point.   It's also possible that Walt masterminded the whole thing,

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[239] https://www.reddit.com/r/breakingbad/comments/kyw1d/episode_discussion_s04e12_end_times_spoilers/?sort=old (Accessed: 18.08.2014).
[240] http://uproxx.com/sepinwall/breaking-bad-end-times-an-appropriate-reponse/ (Accessed: 21.08.2014).

but used a more mild poison than ricin...he just managed to take the ricin cigarette from Jesse's pack, perhaps via Huell, in order to get Jesse on his side? Other possibilities abound as well...hopefully we'll find out next week. I trust these writers. It's a pulpy, genre-busting, surrealist show that regularly stretches plausibility...but these writers have never pushed nonsense in the past. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt this time.

Brian Beeghly (The Hollywood Reporter, *ibid.*[241], 3.10.11, 23:40:58), 4c

Example 6
I firmly believe that we will find out that Walt poisoned the kid. Remember that Walt doesn't even need to get the cigarette. He knows how to make ricin. I just keep rewatching the scene with Walt by the pool with the gun. He spins it three times. Twice it points to him, but on third points to his backyard garden. Ricin is derived from plant seeds. The same plants he used to make the ricin a couple seasons ago. When the gun points at the plants, Walt gets a very pensive look on his face. Like he's formulating a plan. Long story, short. I'm thinking it was Walt. As far as him "not being there yet". This is a guy who watched an innocent girl drown in her own vomit. Simply because she was getting in his way. I do not think it is anywhere outside of the ballpark to believe Walt capable of poisoning the kid to get Jesse on his side. His family is being threatened after all. If anything would give him the extra incentive to turn even further to the dark side it would be that.

Spent (The Hollywood Reporter, *ibid.*, 4.10.11, 01:41:47), 23c

Example 7
Watch the scene where Jesse gets frisked very closely. The big dude puts something in his pocket with his left hand.

Freddo (The Hollywood Reporter, *ibid.*, 6.10.11, 04:15:37), 27c

Example 8
The cigarette is the easy part - Huell swapped out Jesse's pack when he was patting him down so roughly and ostentatiously. The poisoning is the bigger question mark.

Eric (Uproxx/Hitfix, "Face-Off[242]," 10.10.11, 3:38AM), a12

Example 9
Re-watching the scene, I think it's clear that Huell made the switch (or that they instructed the actor to do some things to leave their options open, at the very least). Watch it here: http://cliqueclack.com/tv/2011/10/07/who-took-jesses-cigarette/ There are a few key points of interest in this scene, to my mind:
– Huell appears to reach for something with his left hand right as Jesse walks in. Maybe a replacement pack of cigarettes sitting on a table? The actor makes a semi-lunge to his left just as the scene starts. - As the patdown occurs, we don't see Huell's left hand for at least the first half of it. It is deliberately kept low and out of frame. There's no telling if he was empty-handed on the left, though his right hand was clearly empty. When his left hand does appear in the shot, you only see the back of it – if he was palming something it would be hidden from the camera.– And finally, just after he steps away from Jesse,

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[241] https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/bastard-machine/breaking-bad-spoiled-bastard-ep-243218#comment-325950910 (Accessed: 23.08.2014).
[242] http://uproxx.com/sepinwall/breaking-bad-face-off-say-uncle/ (Accessed: 8.09.2014)

he clearly puts that same left hand in his pocket. Ta da: Huell picked Jesse's pocket and swapped out the pack for a different one.
Eric (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 10.10.11, 2:14PM), b13

Example 10
Spent, you are spot on. First, if you watch the scene where Jesse gets frisked, the big dude definitely puts something in his pocket with his left hand. Second, and most importantly, Walt spins the gun in the backyard and the third time it points to a flowering potted plant. What is that plant? It is Lilly of the Valley, a poisonous plant! Case Closed!
Freddo (The Hollywood Reporter, "End Times," 6.10.11, 03:15:48), 27c

Example 11
IF it is impossible for the kid to have gotten his hands on the cigarettes (and just touching it at some point within 24 hours could have made him sick according to a previous episode), then it seems like Walt is more likely to have poisoned the kid than Gus. Most people seem to have forgotten that Walt in essence killed Jesse's former girlfriend, so when he claims he was not the sort of person to 'kill a kid', that rung somewhat hollow. His knowledge that Gus killed a kid in the past was a precedent that Walt could use with Jesse against Gus. Not that Gus is a 'nice guy', but it seems to me its a bit more logical for Walt to have poisoned the kid than Gus.
Nooyawk (The A. V. Club, *ibid.*[243], 4.10.11, 2:57am), 15b

Example 12
I'm pretty sure Walt has killed dozens of children through the drugs he makes in mass. His actions have lined the pockets of Gus and the Cartel which have no problem killing kids (he fucking watched Jesse's girlfriend be killed). That said, I'd be shocked to see him really be behind the poisoning. I could see him slipping the kid something to make him sick to later turn Jesse to his side, but not actually murdering the kid. Walt is NOT a "good" person (he crossed the line at the EXACT moment he decided selling drugs was a good idea) but he hasn't become a Tony Soprano level sociopath yet.
Dygitalninja (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 11:48am), 44b

Example 13
so, Huell managed to take the pack of cigarettes, identify the ricin cigarette, and replace the pack of cigarettes in Jesse's pocket, without Jesse noticing? And all of this while Jesse was directly watching Huell and Huell's hands? And while Jesse knew his smokes carried important cargo? Also, Huell? That bumbler? I don't know how that guy made the A team. Pardon me if I reject this theory as untenable.
Beaulingpin (Reddit, *ibid.*, n.d./~2 years ago (based on live timestamp, accessed: 18.08.2014[244]), 84a

Example 14
I don't think Huell has the dexterity to do it cleanly. Unless it just switched the whole pack...
Potatogun (Reddit, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 05:45:16UTC), 15a

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[243]   https://tv.avclub.com/breaking-bad-end-times-1798169832 (Accessed: 25.08.2014).
[244]   Appears deleted (Accessed: 6.01.2018).

Example 15
Especially if his mind is occupied. It isn't that he would think of it in the moment when he saw the ricin cigarette was gone when he was already freaking out. It's that he would notice in the time between being frisked and when Andrea called him, when he was incredibly nervous and fidgety and likely to smoke a lot. "I assume if you leave it anywhere near three quarters full Pinkman isn't questioning how many smokes he has left." But how would they know when he bought his latest pack? If Jesse had roughly 3/4 of a pack left, and got a pack that was 3/4 full, I agree, he wouldn't notice the difference. But, for the plan to make sense, it has to be possible no matter how many cigarettes Jesse had – if Jesse had, say, five cigarettes left, he'd know exactly how many he had left, 'cause he's a nicotine addict. The less cigarettes in the pack, the more likely the smoker knows exactly how many he has.
Sean (Uproxx/Hitfix, "Face Off," 10.10.11, 5:42AM), b6

Example 16
Don't feal cheated. Assuming the only way this is possible is Huell's swap of the pack. Who cares how many are left in the pack? He'd have to switch the Ricin out of all his packs each time he gets a new one. I assume if you leave it anywhere near three quarters full Pinkman isn't questioning how many smokes he has left. Especially if his mind is occupied.
Ronaldo (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 10.10.11, 5:14AM), b4

Example 17
There is a simple explanation for how Huell got the ricin cig. He lifted the pack during the 'frisk', took out the ricin cig and when Jesse left Saul's office preoccupied and carrying a heavy bag of money, it would have been easy for Huell to slip the same pack back into Jesse's pocket.
Jill Chin (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 10.10.11, 5:34AM), b5

Example 18
Exactly. I didn't think Walt or Gus had anything to do with it, it just doesn't make sense. It's more likely that Brock lifted the cigarette (if it is ricin poisoning) and Jesse is too upset to really know for sure the last time he saw it in his pack, even though he thinks it was that morning. Realizing he is to blame for this might be more than he could take, so he jumped on Walt.
Opie (The Hollywood Reporter, "End Times," n.d., n.d.), 12c

Example 19
I'm undecided if I agree with your theory or not. The counter theory I have is that, at the end of last episode Walt snapped and descended into madness. He still wishes to protect his family, at any cost. He gets Saul to call in Jesse into his office and have Huell frisk Jesse and pickpocket the cigarette. You can see Huell possibly putting something in his pocket.
Puddy1 (Reddit, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 05:36:53UTC), 178a-177a

Example 20
Honestly it seems pretty obvious to me that it was, indeed, Gus who lifted the ricin cigarette from Jesse at the lab if anything. Jesse says he put it in a new pack the morning the episode takes place, Walter has been at home awaiting imminent doom all day. This ties in with how Gus knew that the car was not safe. Had his plan worked, Jesse would

have told him that he killed Walter for poisoning Brock. Instead, Jesse said the Doctors said it was poison and yet nothing about Walter. This led Gus to suspect that the two had formed an alliance. This suspicion is warranted by how loyal Jesse has been to Walter despite Gus trying to turn Jesse against Walter. Hence Gus figures out that Jesse's unwillingness to work was a ploy to get him to the Hospital, where Walter knew he would be. Since Gus now knows about the ricin, he knows Jesse has been trying to kill him with Walt's help. All in all, this is to support the argument that Walter would never poison a child even for the sake of his own family, who is under DEA protection and is overall safe.
Velveteenmage (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 04:46:06UTC), 177a

Example 21
Bugs in Jesses house. There's no way Gus let him go around being as reckless as he was without knowing what's going on inside that house, and Jesse and Walt have talked about it in there (not directly, but I think in ways obvious enough to clue him in to investigate further.. and if there's a hidden camera they'd have seen him check that cigarette countless times). I don't think they've acknowledged it in the show directly, but as Walt said this episode Gus is always 10 steps ahead of him. Plus Gus has had Mike bug houses before on the show (Walt's a while back).
NeededANewName (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 03:33:40UTC), 51a-49a

Example 22
Wouldn't huel have to have xray vision in order to swipe the single ricin containg cig out of the pack, even if he was capable of being that smooth in the first place? Even if Walt is guilty of it, how did he manage to slip the poison to the kid?
Nointernalcensor (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 04:25:26UTC), 86a-79a

Example 23
I'veI have gotta check this out! edit: whoa, he definitely put his left hand in his pocket immediately after he is done frisking Jesse. a couple of frames it even looks like there might be a cigarette pack shaped black box there. I might just be trying to see things that aren't there though.
Nointernalcensor (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 22:42:07UTC), 93a-79a

Example 24
but HOW? jesse had the cigarette that morning when he went to work. he did not encounter walt until after he had discovered that brock was poisoned. walt did not have an opportunity to get the cigarette. sure, he could have poisoned brock with a new batch of ricin, but the missing cigarette is the crucial piece of evidence.
Pauker (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 03:30:45UTC), 79a

Example 25
Huel did it during the patdown. Saul's purpose in calling Jesse so urgently (6 times!), of insisting he get to his office, was really to get the cigarettes. Walt could have told Saul any old story of why it was important for him to swap the pack out and Saul would have gone along with it. I mean, why else introduce Jesse into Saul's exit scene? Having a character like Saul Goodman decide to 'disappear' leaves so much potential for creative comic relief, but instead we got this silly patdown (why invite Jesse over if you are scared he's coming to kill you?), and a mundane conversation ("here, er... let me give

you all your cash...") Clearly, the scene happened the way it did so later we can all realize Walt paid Saul to swap Jesse's cigs.
Sinistersilkmerchant (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 04:08:45UTC), 85a-79a

Example 26
No, he swapped one pack for another. Why is it so hard to imagine this happening? Magicians perform slight-of-hand tricks that are way more complicated in front of audiences who are actually looking and expecting it. Pick-pocketers have similar skill. And as we know, Saul Goodman likes to employ people of diverse and practical talents. And while on the subject of Huel, I doubt Saul Goodman's "bodyguard" is an idiot. I think Saul finds Huel extremely useful exactly because people underestimate the guy. He seems dimwitted, clumsy and lethargic. In reality, he's probably none of those things. Also, as a plot device it was unnecessary for Saul to bring Jesse "up to speed." Jesse received Walt's side of the story in detail when he went over to his house to kill him.
Sinistersilkmerchant (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 04:35:18UTC), 96a-79a

Example 27
I just pulled up that scene and rewatched it a couple times. He definitely put something in his pocket right at the end of him frisking Jesse..
Shappie (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 07:21:20UTC), 92a-79a

Example 28
If the packs were switched at Walt's order he would have made sure there was an upside down cig. Jesse by now has gotten used to avoiding that one like the poison it is, so it's not too hard to believe that he wouldn't have noticed. And his first action upon suspecting the ricin was missing was to shred all his cigarettes looking for it, so it's not like he was taking the time to count them then. I just went through and rewatched the Huel scene and the scene where Jesse first learns about Brock's poisoning. At first I thought it was impossible that Walt could have done it, because I misheard Jesse's girlfriend say that he got sick in the morning. On second viewing, she clearly says he was fine in the morning. Several hours elapsed between Jesse's patdown (during which Huel's hands go off-frame and after which he definitely puts a hand in his pocket as if to stash something) and Brock's symptoms. So it is possible Walt could have orchestrated everything, and we've learned by now that he'll do pretty much anything to save his own ass. When Walt spun the gun for the third time and it didn't point to him, you could see a look of determination, as if it had occurred to him that he might be able to do something about his situation after all, to take some offensive action. But when we see him later he's got the door braced with a table and is hiding in the darkness, waiting to die. If there was some offensive move it happened off-camera and there's really only one thing it could have been. I'm holding out hope that Walt didn't actually give the kid ricin, but another non-fatal poison that would trigger Jesse's suspicion without killing a kid. This fucking show. <shiver>
SupremeFuzzler (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 12:01:23UTC), 89a-79a

Example 29
How would he steal a single cigarette out of a pack and put it back within that ten second search? I see exactly what you're saying, but it's very, very far-fetched. Saul wasn't scared Jesse was trying to kill him. Huel searched Jesse because Huel's an idiot.

That whole scene just set-up Saul leaving and also allowed Saul to bring Jesse up to speed in terms of what is going on
(deleted) (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 04:29:20UTC), 95a-79a

Example 30
Swapping them is possible. However, he's definitely a pretty big guy...swapping a pack of smokes like that would be pretty tricky. Anyway, good point...never thought of the possibility of swapping packs.
(deleted) (*ibid.*, *ibid.. ibid.*, 04:36:51UTC), 97a-79a

Example 31
I don't think Huell is smooth enough to pull that off without Jesse noticing. Taking something out of a pocket is one thing, but removing a cigarette from the pack, and putting it back in the pocket in the brief period he was frisking him..
Nointernalcensor (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 04:18:58UTC), 10a

Example 32
Well, shit. That makes sense. I still don't think Huell is capable of it. I think Saul was just being paranoid about him wearing a wire.
Nointernalcensor (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 04:32:50UTC), 11a

Example 33
Justin "Is it possible that this whole thing could be a mistake?" Yep. That was my first thought (it being an accidental poisoning) until they threw in it being a likely poisoning by Gus or Walt. And that almost seems like the most likely scenario. The more I think about it, the more I question Gus poisoning Brock. It seems like too much would have to happen in a short for that to be the case. Walt had no realistic way to get at both the ricin AND Brock either. Either way, I'm just not totally buying either Gus OR Walt being able to work such a seemingly convoluted plan, although you could certainly think of scenarios that would fit (e.g. somebody poisons Brock with SOMETHING, and then steals the cigarette so Jesse thinks it was ricin when it was something else, or who knows). The two reasons why Brock smoking the cigarette might NOT be a logical choice would be that first, Brock would have to find the cigarette AND smoke it (one would hope somebody might notice that, but it's not impossible), and second if it fit into the timeframe (would Brock and the cigarette have been in the same room between the time Jesse last saw his "lucky cigarette" and when he realized it was missing outside the hospital?). Those seemed to indicate it was NOT Brock mimicing Jesse and smoking one of his cigarettes (with presumably the upside down one standing out and being the reason he'd grab that one).
Dave I (Uproxx/Hitfix, *ibid.*, 3.10.11, 3:07PM), b46

Example 34
First, I don't think anything is absolute. The writers left if ambiguous for a reason. Second, there was no obvious way for ANYBODY to get the cigarette. Does anybody think Huell is REALLY that dextrous to have snatched the cigarette from Jesse (somehow grabbing the one upside-down poisonous cigarette yet leaving the rest of the pack) during that fumbling 5-second pat down? I don't. There is also no obvious way for Gus to have known about the cigarette, much less have gotten it from Jesse and to Brock. Nor was there any obvious way for Walt to have gotten the cigarette from Jesse and then to Brock. I think that's the point. We'll find out, but at this point either or

neither could have done it and almost any of the basic theories contained in those possibilities are equally plausible. I think that is kind of the point
Dave I (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 4.10.11, 1:04AM), b54

Example 35
Fred, maybe you're right. As of now though, until/unless they show how it was possible, I'm not buying Huell was able to dig out the ricin cigarette, and either NOT take the whole pack or take it and somehow slip it back into Jesse's pocket without him noticing. That would be a pretty neat trick for Houdini. The "A-Team" is flat-out NOT that capable. Plus, there's no way Saul would do that. At least not if he knew the plan, and I'm reasonably sure he'd ask questions before agreeing to a pickpocket pat-down for when Jesse came to get his money. Saul's already jumping ship. Is he really going to risk getting Gus upset with him either by trying to steal from his main cook OR much less by taking part in a plan to ultimately coerce Jesse into being complicit in killing Gus? His main priority is survival. Even the indirect things he's done just to help Walt & Jesse stay alive have put him on edge. No, if Walt did this, I have to believe it was without Saul and I definitely do not believe Huell was quick-fingered enough to slip one upside down cigarette out of Jesse's pocket in that haphazard pat down
Dave I (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 5.10.11, 5:35PM), c2

Example 36
– Adam "As someone who smoked for years, I rarely knew how many I had in a pack. I always smoked the same kind. Any swap of packs would have been un-noticed if they were at all similar (IE One out vs 18 out)" I suppose I could buy them switching packs, as Walt would probably know what kind of cigarettes Jesse showed. However . . .* – Tizzielish "But I don't think it's a cheat, not if we believe Huell once was an expert pickpocket. Pickpockets can be unbelievably skilled: it's not just a movie/fiction fantasy that pickpockets can be very good. [snip] I did not feel a thing. So if Huell was an expert picker . ." O.k., that sort of makes sense. However . . .** * First, the cigarettes. Yeah, they could have swapped the packs if they knew what Jesse smoked. Really, Jesse was eventually going to figure out the cigarette was gone and that a switch had occurred. I suspect that element will pop up next season (he may have some lingering suspicions about Walt). All that a similar brand a/o # of cigarettes gains the cigarette-snatcher is time between when they lift the cigarettes and when Jesse notices.** Good point. There is no reason to suspect Huell ISN'T a skilled pickpocket. The main problem I have is they just brought that out of nowhere. It just does not gel with their character portrayal. Not that they can't change Huell from bumbling strong-arm of the "A-Team" or anything. However, it feels like a bit of a cheat to just show him largely ineffective other than to look tough, only to have him be a masterful pickpocket. Even that I would not have had a problem with if he hadn't pulled that off while Jesse was watching him pat him down during a half-mauling search. Slipping a wallet when you know what you are doing while somebody is not paying attention or otherwise distracted? Sure. Swapping packs of cigarettes (because I REALLY don't buy him lifting the single upside-down cigarette) while somebody is actively aware of you patting them down and half-fighting you off? That seems a bit harder of a sell.
Dave I (*ibid.*, "Face Off," 10.10.11, 1:48PM), b11

Example 37
Hey, at least you took a side. I was full-on riding the fence. I'm pretty much on-board with Filaphresh's assessment. Every possibility seemed (and still does seem) like a

stretch. Including what actually happened. And Lionel . . . "I've seen sleight of hand far more impressive than what would be required to switch out a pack of cigarettes, and we had no idea what Walt was doing for several hours of the previous episode, leaving him ample time to devise some means of delivering the poison to Brock." True. And I suppose you could argue the mauling of Jesse was intentional to take his attention away from the switch. It just seems like a cheat since they never really showed that side of Huell, and it's terribly convenient to have that trait just happen to show up at that particular critical point in the story. It's just not their most believable twist. I still love the show, however it all seems a bit too contrived

Dave I (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 2:03PM), b21

Example 38

Hey Lionel Mandrake, sure that all makes sense. From a writing standpoint, I tend to think it's usually the norm to clue readers (and in TV/movies, viewers) into your characters' pasts & skills before throwing stuff like that out there. That is something an undergrad Creative Writing Prof. literally used in a story where it was first person omniscient and then for a brief time went to first-person limited so he could slip in the twist, and he admitted it was a bit of a cheat. Still, it's pretty minor in the grand scheme of things. What still bothers me is how much of a stretch the whole plan was. First, Huell has this skill none of the viewers knew about. In fact, NOTHING much has been established about Huell's character except he's one of Saul's employees and has been used as the tough-looking guy on some of his jobs. Second, he had to execute it while Jesse was aware of the pat down. I suppose the pieces all fit, it just seems like they could have been made to fit a lot more seamlessly with only a little more effort. Something as simple as a flashback showing Huell's background and a bit more depth, or Walt discussing the plan with Saul to both swipe the cigarette (perhaps mentioning although he might not look it Huell is a slight-of-hand/pickpocket type) AND somehow poison Brock with non-lethal berries. Then it's just a bit of a long-shot that Jesse doesn't blame Walt and shoot him, I guess, but you can still makes much more sense to me. Maybe it's petty, but those sort of details matter to me, and I can't help but think that expectation has been set by the past attention to details this show has had.

Dave I (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 2:59PM), b23

Example 39

Is it possible that this whole thing could be a mistake? What if the kid went into Jesse's pocket and smoked the cigarette, and Walt, noticing Jesse's irrational state, used that to turn him back on his side (similar to the way he's got Jesse to go along with his plans in the past). I'll need to listen to Jesse talking about how he kept track of the ricin (that part seemed a little confusing), but that was my initial takeaway.

Justin (*ibid.*, "End Times," 3.10.11, 3:27AM), a22

Example 40

I think that it was Walt that poisoned Brock. Not directly but through Saul. When Huell inspects Jesse or something Saul could have access to the cigarette. Saul visits him every week or so and he is in the middle of the hell too, and wants to go out of it. In the beginning, in the pistol scene, the last thing it points is a plant and I think Walt tried to reach Jesse through Brock to turn him against Gus (as Gus did with Jesse). I don't know if Saul (or the "A-Team" is capable of such a thing). And how Gus spoke with Jesse in the hospital... it seems that he hasn't nothing to do with it. Maybe Walt (remembering the gun pointing to the plant) created a new poison out of it that is not fatal, the ricin is

still in the cigarette but as of now we don't know where it is. Thus leading to make Jesse believe that Walter poisoned Brock (that was Walt's intention) and then explaining that wasn't him but Gus. But we only know in the next episode (if it reveals something)..
Fred (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 5.10.11, 2:20 PM), c1

Example 41
As someone who smoked for years, I rarely knew how many I had in a pack. I always smoked the same kind. Any swap of packs would have been un-noticed if they were at all similar (IE One out vs 18 out)
Adam (*ibid.*, "Face Off," 10.10.11, 3:38AM), a4

Example 42
Yeah, I don't know much Adam used to smoke, but I always know how many I have, and I don't smoke as much as Jesse does. When he checked for the ricin cigarette, he had half a pack left -- hours after it was lifted. This would put it at about 3/4 of a pack when Huell took it [if we're assuming he smokes roughly the same amount over the course of a day].
Sean (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 10.10.11, 3:52AM), a6

Example 43
I understand the skepticism about Huell switching cigarette packs. I re-watched the scene with Huell frisking Jesse repeating to see if I could see Huell do it, just in case it was Huell who took the ricin cig. . . . I couldn't see it. But I don't think it's a cheat, not if we believe Huell once was an expert pickpocket. Pickpockets can be unbelievably skilled: it's not just a movie/fiction fantasy that pickpockets can be very good. I lived in Bogota, Colombia for one year in 1973–74. AT the time, it was said every city in the world has a school of pickpockets trained in Bogota. I have had pickpockets slide their hand into my tight college girl jeans -- and not feel them but just once I happened to glance down and see the guy sliding something out of my pocket. I did not feel a thing. So if Huell was an expert picker . . .
Tizzielish (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, 10.10.11, 7:32AM), b8

Example 44
I've seen sleight of hand far more impressive than what would be required to switch out a pack of cigarettes, and we had no idea what Walt was doing for several hours of the previous episode, leaving him ample time to devise some means of delivering the poison to Brock.
**Lionel Mandrake** (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 4:40AM), b18

Example 45
No, pickpocketing is not something that's been established in Huell's character, but he's not exactly someone with whom we've spent a great deal of time. Presumably, there's a lot we don't know about Huell, and pickpocketing is not such a rare skill. Bearing those things in mind, it didn't feel like a cheat to me.
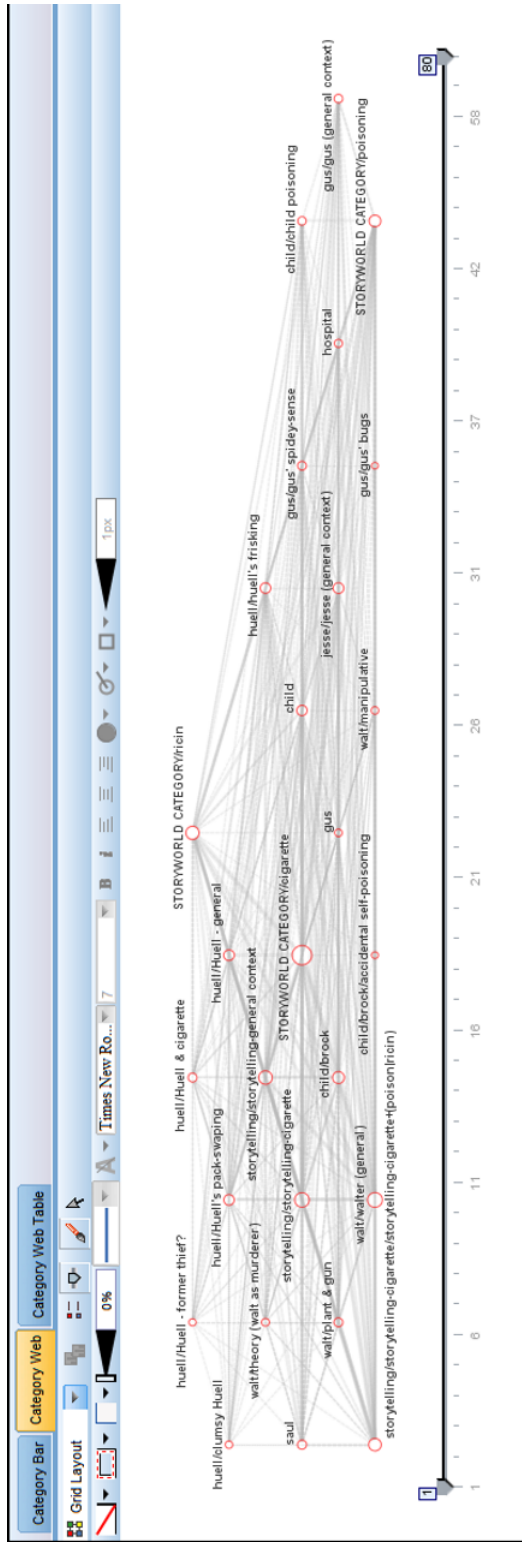**Lionel Mandrake** (*ibid.*, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, 2:39PM), b22

Appendix II: Relevant illustrations with clarifications from TAS4 software

Example 1
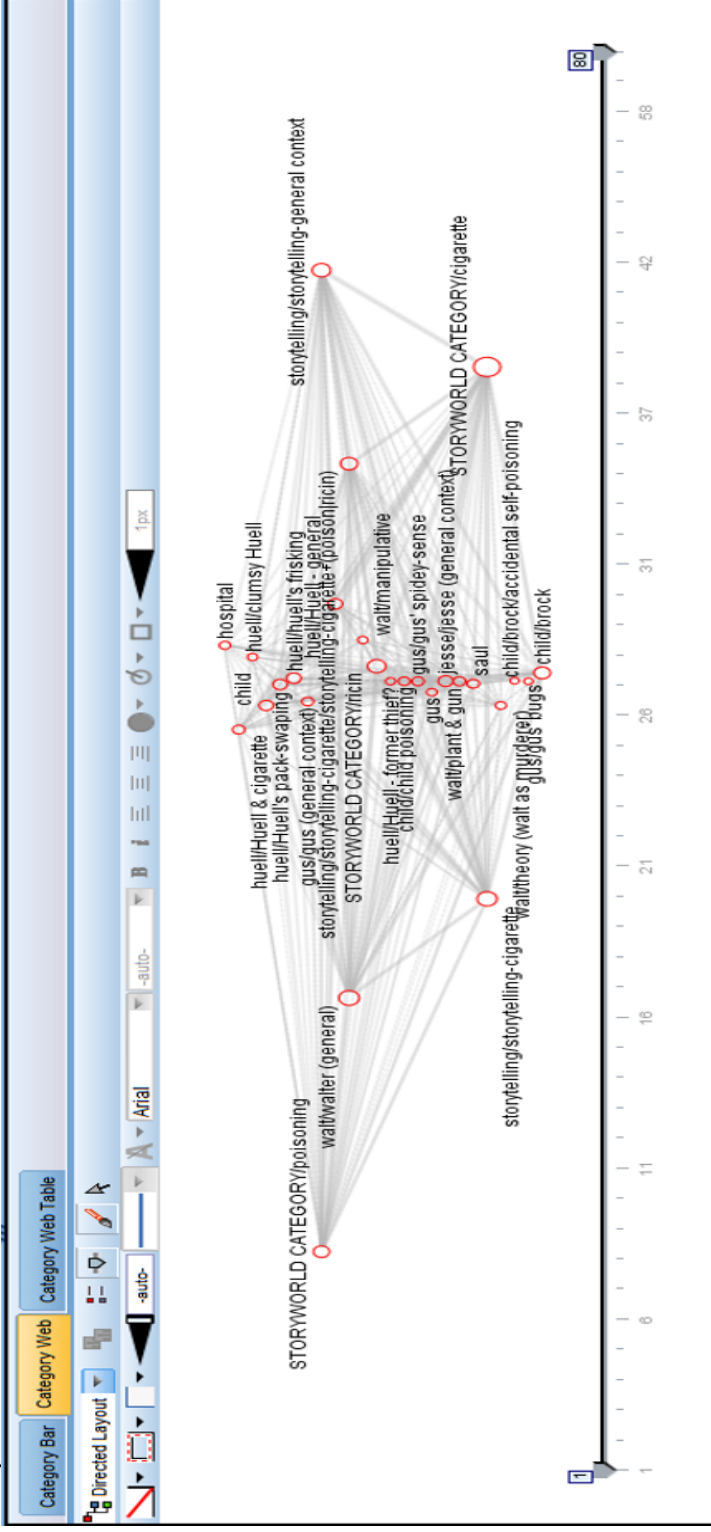
Directed Layout option

Network Layout option

Grid Layout option

Circle Layout option

Example 2 (Category Web Table)

Count ▼	Category 1	Category 2
80	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	walt/walter (general)(621)
59	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)
58	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)
56	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)
56	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)
50	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/poisoning(163)
49	walt/walter (general)(621)	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)
47	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)
47	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)
42	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)
42	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)
41	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	jesse/Jesse (general context)(139)
41	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	walt/walter (general)(621)
41	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)	walt/walter (general)(621)
41	walt/walter (general)(621)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/poisoning(163)
40	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	huel/Huell - general(84)
39	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)
38	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	huel/Huell's pack-swaping(51)
38	huel/huell's frisking(68)	huel/Huell's pack-swaping(51)
37	huel/huell's frisking(68)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)
37	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)	child/brock(260)
37	walt/walter (general)(621)	jesse/Jesse (general context)(139)
36	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	child(444)
35	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/poisoning(163)
35	child/brock(260)	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)
33	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)	walt/walter (general)(621)
32	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	child/brock(260)
32	child/brock(260)	walt/walter (general)(621)
32	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)	jesse/Jesse (general context)(139)
32	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)	child/brock(260)
31	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)
31	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)	jesse/Jesse (general context)(139)
30	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)
30	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	child/brock(260)
29	walt/walter (general)(621)	child(444)
28	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/poisoning(163)	child(444)
27	huel/huell's frisking(68)	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)
27	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)	huel/Huell - general(84)
26	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette(96)	child(444)
26	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)	jesse/Jesse (general context)(139)
25	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	saul(143)
25	huel/huell's frisking(68)	huel/Huell - general(84)
25	storytelling/storytelling-general context(270)	child(444)
24	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	jesse/Jesse (general context)(139)
24	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette(124)	huel/Huell's pack-swaping(51)
24	huel/huell's frisking(68)	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)
24	storytelling/storytelling-cigarette/storytelling-cigarette+(poison/ricin)(67)	child(444)
23	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/poisoning(163)	jesse/Jesse (general context)(139)
23	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin(109)	child(444)
23	huel/huell's frisking(68)	huel/huell & cigarette(25)

Category Web Table enables to observe the "shared responses" (viz. distributed and co-elaborated narrcepts) count based on "category pairs," e.g., if focusing on "walt," one can distinguish all the other categories (and sub-categories) that overlap with the category of "walt."

Example 3 (The general data field)

	Id	Response	Categories	Relevance Rank
98	phallcakez-Reddit-EndTimes-2years ago 56a-55a	I think Walt was too busy in the last few days to do something like that. He has spent his time basically flipping his shit and chasing his own tail. I doubt he went through the trouble to find out where those people lived (who he didn't even know), took Jesse's cigarette and dumped ricin on the kids cheerios or whatever. If the kid is poisoned with ricin (which still has not been 100% proven), I think it's because he got hold of it himself, not because of Walt. I truly don't think Walt had the time or motivation to poison Brock with ricin.	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/poisoning STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin child/child poisoning walt/walter (general) STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette child child/brock walt/manipulative	123
99	Brian-Beeghly-HollyRep-3 years ago 4c	You might be jumping to conclusions that Brock was poisoned by ricin, Tim. That's not at all obvious at this point. It's also possible that Walt masterminded the whole thing, but used a more mild poison than ricin...he just managed to take the ricin cigarette from Jesse's pack, perhaps via Huell, in order to get Jesse on his side? Other possibilities abound as well...hopefully we'll find out next week. I trust these writers. It's a pulpy, genre-busting, surrealist show that regularly stretches plausibility...but these writers have never pushed nonsense in the past. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt this time..	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/poisoning STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette storytelling/storytelling-general context child/brock huell/Huell - general walt/walter (general)	121=
100	The-UMD-AVClub-FaceOff-3years ago 87d-86d (84d)	Jesse has seen Walt make ricin before. It's not easy and it takes a long time. Stealing the cigarette is easier. It also sends a clear message to Jesse that Walt did it, if he was indeed trying to hurt him; if Walt theoretically wanted to crush Jesse and believed he was about to be dead anyway, that would assuredly work better than just about anything else.	STORYWORLD CATEGORY/ricin STORYWORLD CATEGORY/cigarette walt/walter (general)	121=

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Karakteritega suhestumine ja digikogukondlik praktika:
"Halvale teele" multidistsiplinaarne uurimus

> Pean silmas hüpoteesi, et tajutav [*perceptible*] on üksnes see, mis asub meeles, mis tajutavat tajub: et tegelikult ei taju me väliseid asju, vaid üksnes meelele jäljendunud [*imprinted upon the mind*] kujutisi ja pilte, mida kutsutakse *muljenditeks* [*impression*] ja *ideedeks*.
>
> Kui see tõsi oleks: eeldusel, et teatavad muljendid ja ideed mu meeles eksisteerivad, ei saa ma nende olemasolu põhjal järeldada mitte ühtegi muud asja [*any thing else*]: minu muljendid ja ideed on ainsateks eksistentsideks, millest minul on teadmine ja kontseptsioon: ja nad on säärased põgusad ja ajutised olemasolud, et neil ei saa olemasolu ollagi, kuna nad püsivad ainult senikaua, kuniks mina neist teadlik olen. Seega, sellise hüpoteesi kohaselt, kogu universum minu ümber, kehad ja hinged, päike, kuu, tähed, ja maa, sõbrad ja tuttavad, eranditult kõik, mille eeldasin olevat alaliseselt olemasoleva, mõelgu ma siis neist või mitte, haihtuvad jalamaid […] Ma ARVASIN, et [selline hüpotees] on mõistusevastane[.]
> – Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense* (1819), pp. xiii–ix; rõhutused ja suurtähestus originaalis; minu tõlge

> Inimesed on loonud palju lugusid. [Lugusid] rõõmust, kurbusest, vihast, sügavatest tunnetest. Lood raputavad meid emotsionaalselt, need paeluvad meid. Kuid ometi on lood üksnes *kõrvalseisjate* mõtted. Mis oleks siis, kui tegelaskujud loos omaksid "kavatsusi"? Oleksime me nende jaoks jumalalaadsed olendid, kes *nende lugu* maailmale näitavad? Meie maailm on muutunud. Mõõda välja karistust jumalateilma vastu. Taas:Loojates [*sic*] saab igaühest Looja.
> – Televisiooniportaal *TheTVDB*, reklaam Jaapani telekanalil Tokio MX näidatavale animeseriaalile; rõhutused lisatud; minu tõlge

Kaasaegse kunsti filosoof Nöel Carroll kirjeldab oma artiklis "Sympathy for the Devil" (Carroll 2004) Ameerika teleseriaali "Sopranod" (*The Sopranos*) peategelase, julma maffiapealiku Tony Soprano teraapiaseanssi järgnevalt: "Tony poolt algatatavad kavatsusliku hämamise kihistused, alateadlikud enesepettused, meioosid, keerdsõlmed, silmakirjalikkus, ja eksitavad kirjeldused mõjuvad järjekindlalt haaravalt; sa võrdled alatasa seda, *mida ta ütleb ja millest ta teadlik on, tema tegeliku olukorraga (nii nagu [sa] tead seda olevat)* (*ibid.*:89–90; rõhutus lisatud). Keskendudes aga päriselulisele Teise-mõistmisele, märgib teadvusfilosoof Shaun Gallagher: "ainult sel juhul, kui ma selgitan välja tema loo [*story*], olen ma võimeline liikuma empaatilise mõistmise tasandile ... lugu, narratiiv, aitab [tema] olukorras lünki täita, ja empaatilist laadi mõistmine [*understanding*] nõuab olukorra mõistmist (Gallagher 2012b:17). Käesolevas doktoritöös käsitasin vaataja suhestumist narratiivse karakteriga digitaalses kogukondlikus suhtlusruumis välja eenduvate pikaajaliste väljendusprotsesside näitel, eesmärgiga osundada, et vaataja mina-keskne (s.o. esimeses isikus kirjel-

datav) karakterimõistmine ei pruugi alati ja igas olukorras (nt kogukondlik vest-lus internetis) olla optimaalseimaks lahendiks. Teisisõnu, saaksime siinkohal küsida üheskoos Shaun Gallagheriga: "kuidas võimaldaks teadmine, mida meie teeks, aidata meil mõista, mida keegi teine teeks?" (Gallagher 2012a:363). Sellele vaatamata on käsitlused narratiivse tegelaskujuga "samastumisest" ja narratiivsesse maailma "sukeldumisest" ning "transporteerumisest" mõjukad niihästi kirjandusteaduses, folkloristikas, narratoloogias, psühholoogias ja meediauuringutes laiemaltki. Antud doktorikirja eesmärgiks oli tagasihoidlik polemiseerimine nimetatud akadeemiliste käibetõdedega ja siit tõukuv "alternatiividele" osundamine.

Ehkki kaasaegse televisioonikultuuri "keerukad narratiivid" küll näikse rõhutavat kavatsuslikult toimivate tegelaskujude "lugusid"; ja kuigi—nagu teine ülaltoodud tsitaatidest ka näitlikustab—isegi jutuvestmine *kui selline* justkui asuks sellist seisukohta kinnitama, võib välja kujunenud mõtlemismallide muutmine osutuda esialgu loodetust keerulisemaks. Tõepoolest, isegi tagasihoidlikud teisendused ja muudatused süsteemis võivad, figuratiivselt, takistustega silmitsi seista. Mööndavasti ongi doktoridissertatsiooni formaat sellisel juhul millegi tegelikuks "revolutsioneerimiseks" üldse ebapiisav. Kohased oleksid siinkohal ühe elukogenud professori sõnad "akadeemilise kirjutamise" kursuselt: kõik "kirkad ideed" jäetagu parem tulevikku, keskne olgu õpiülesanne, teatava etapi läbimine. Tuleb tõdeda, et kuigi käesolev väitekiri ei järginud seda nõuannet sõna-sõnalt, oleks ehk paslik, kui lugeja näeks tehtud töös eeskätt kutset arutelu avamiseks. Sai ju etableeritud üksnes potentsiaalselt väärtusliku teoreetilise raamistu kontuur. Teisalt, vahest on äsjanimetatud hirmud hoopis ülemäära ennatlikud. Tuleks ju märkida, et dissertatsiooni jooksul käsitletud ja selgitatud väited, leidnuna oma viimse, olgugi et *illustratiivse* ja ettekavatsetult *lõpetamata*, "jooksva," praktilise seadistuse töö analüüsiosas (vt peatükk 3, 3.4–3.5), leidsid alles äsja peaaegu et üllatavat kvantitatiivset toetust (vt Alderson-Day, Bernini, Fernyhough 2017). Ehkki Alderson-Day ja kolleegide uurimus tegeles empiirilise materjaliga teisest meediumist (s.o. kirjanduskogemus), näikse autorite leiud toestavat väidet, et otseselt realistliku (*direct realist*) tegelaskujuga suhestumise mudeli välja töötamine ehk poleks kipelk akadeemiline sõge liialdus, mille laeks on üksnes "alternatiivse" mõistevõrgustiku loomine, vaid peegeldub tagasi, vähemalt mõningal määral, ka tavapärastest kvantitatiivsetest küsitlusvalimitest.

Üheksateistkümnel protsendil Alderson-Day ja kolleegide poolt dokumenteeritud koguvalimit, s.o. seitsmekümneseitsmel juhul, väljendus kogemuslik suhestumus narratiivsete (käesoleval juhul kirjanduslike) karakteritega järgmiselt: lugejad tajusid karakterite hääli "*kogemuslikult*" nende eludesse "*üle tulevat* [*crossing*]" ja nii omi elusid lugejate elude "sees," "*lugemispuhangute vahepeal*," otsekui jätkavat (ibid.:105; rõhutused originaalis). Ometi tasub siinkohal selguse huvides märkida, et Alderson-Day ja kolleegide leiud näikse vähemalt pealnäha esile tõstvat "normist" eristuvaid psühhopatoloogilisi kalduvusi (s.o. "häälte kuulmine"). Sellegipoolest pakub antud uurimus käesolevale doktoriväitekirjale märkimisväärset kvantitatiivset fooni, kuna (a) tuleb möönda kattuvust kasutatud teaduskirjanduses (iseäranis tuleks välja tuua Alderson-Day ja kolleegide rõhuasetust Võgotskiaanlikule paradigmale); ja (b) kui antud

uurimus hüpoteetiliselt tele*visuaalse* publiku sfääri ümber paigutada, võiks eeldada dokumenteeritud tajueffektide suurenemist, kuna tegemist oleks "otsesema," ja eeskätt just pikajalisema interaktsioonilise suhestumisega.

Käesoleva väitekirja kandvaks väiteks on niisiis olnud, et, sarnaselt igapäevaeluga, tõukub vastuvõtja ka "tegelaskujuga suhestudes" argimõistuslikust lähenemisest, mille üheks kvalitatiivseks "mõõdikuks" võiks olla ülimalt peenekoeline, detailiküllane ja paljuski materialistlik tavakeelekasutus, mis jääb sellisena üpris kaugele kitsast "naiivse vastuvõtja" doktriinist. Kui lähtuda John L. Caughey soovitustest raamatus *Imaginary Social Worlds. A Cultural Approach* (Caughey 1984), on kaalul kogukondlikud "ulatusliku informatsiooni" assamblaažid, milleni on jõutud läbi "lähedase seotuse [*intimate involvement*]" "meediafiguuridega" (ibid.:32–33), s.o. käesolevalt uuritud juhul, **narratiivsete persoonidega** (*narrative persons*) teleseriaalist *Halvale Teele*. Kui aga eeldada, et niiöelda võluvõtmeks selliselt väljenduvale "kombatavuse" paradoksile just ongi keskendatus sotsiaalsetele suhetele (ibid.:40), mis on kestvad mõlemas "tõelisuse" variatsioonis (olenemata "pseudo-" ja/või objektiivsest reaalsusest), kinnistub küsimus: kuidas *tegelikud* inimesed sellise suhtestatusega kaasnevat kogemust *loomulikult väljendavad* (iseäranis juhtudel, kus pikaajalised vestlused, s.o. blogide kommentaariumites ja foorumilõimudes, on vastandavalt kõrvutatavad tulemustele, mida tavapäraselt saavutatakse "kinnise" eksperimentaallabori tingimustes).

Eelöeldut silmas pidades piiritlesin käesoleva väitekirja sissejuhatuses keele sotsialiseeriva kvaliteedi tähtsuse—keele "potentsi" **pärisustada**, **realitiseerida,** s.t. arendada välja aktiivne "suveräänsete [*sovereign*] kogemuste ületulemine" (vrd Alderson-Day jt 2017)—või teisisõnu: *loomingulise rahvakeele* [*creative vernacular*] osatähtsuse tõus 'fiktsionaalsete' tegelaskujudega suhestumise artikulatsiooniprotsessi juures. Seega, loominguline rahvakeel, minu käesolevas käsitluses, võimaldab suveräännsete toimijate kui selliste avaldumist (vrd. vt. 1.4, 1.5.1). Järgides Craig Batty tähelepanukut võib siinkohal karakterikesksus, ehk siis "kellegi teise loo kogemine" (Batty 2014:36), rakenduda ka kahesuunaliselt. Lõppkokkuvõttes oleks siinkohal objektiivse gradatsiooni "lamendamisel" kandvateks teguriteks (i) *lugude* potents, või täpsemini, (ii) see, *kuidas* vaatajad-kommenteerijad algsetest autorinarratiividest omi variatsioone "punuvad" (vrd nt Grinder 1981). Järelikult, niihästi küllastumus lugudest kui ka lugu kui *tööriist* seavad kahtluse alla vaikimisi nõude, nagu oleks *Breaking Bad*'i Walter White justkui "vähem" persoon kui, ütleme, nn reality-šõu *Trading Spouses*'i Marguerite Perrin (Batty ibid.).

Niisiis võiks seniöeldule tuginedes öelda, et käesolev väitekiri on käsitletav ühelt poolt (i) ülalmainitud "naiivse vastuvõtja" doktriini kriitikana, teisalt aga (ii) laiendatud vastuväitena representatsiooni kui sellise "mentalistlikule" kontseptualiseerimisele, eeskätt mis puutub uuritavat konteksti kõige laiemalt võetuna, s.o. tegelaskujuga suhestumist (*character engagement*). Margrit Schreieri kvantitatiivne uurimus *The Blair Witch Project*'i onlain vaatajareaktsioonidest (kurikuulus "pseudodokumentaal" ja tänaste "doku-*reality*" telesarjade inspiratsioon) võtab ehk kõige konkreetsemalt kokku "naiivse vastuvõtja" doktriini

peamise iva. Schreier küll möönab, et "'fakti' ja 'fiktsiooni' suhestamine on … täiesti tavapärane osa retseptsiooniprotsessist," ent kasvõi implitsiitselt jääb kajama mõte, et "ne[id] retsipien[te] … kes tõepoolest need kaks ['fakt' ja 'fiktsioon'] omavahel segamini ajavad ja moodustavad kaduma läinud fiktsionaalsetele tegelaskujudele otsingurühmi" käsitletakse "ebasobivaina," kui marginaaliasse paigutuvate "tavatutena" (Schreier 2004:307). Veel enamgi, Schreieri arutelu sekundeerib filmiteoreetik Murray Smithi põhiväidetele (diskussiooniks vt 1.6; Smith 2011; Sorokin n.d.), sh arendades edasi viimase üht peamist argumenti sellest, et "fiktsooni" kogedes on retsipientide igapäevane "faktikonventsioon ajutiselt peatatud." Seda asendavat spetsiifilised juhised, mis tõukuvad teatavast "kirjanduslik-esteetilisest [*literary-aesthetic*] süsteemist" (Schreier 2004:309–310).

Oleks siis üldse võimalik korrelatsioon äsja osundatud teoreetiliste selgituste ning teleseriaali *Halvale teele* diskussantide "loomingulise rahvakeele" vahel? Kui tõukuda käesolevas väitekirjas pakutud illustratiivsest lähianalüüsist, mis hõlmab kogukondlikku tähendusloomet kahe järjestikuse nädala lõikes, näib olevat ilmne, et esil on niihästi "igapäevased" kui ka "narratiivsed" konventsioonid. Mis veelgi olulisem—diskussandid rakendavad mõlemat väidetavat "äärmust" *üheaegselt*. Vahest kõige paremini karakteriseerib nimetatud väidet väitekirja üks argumentidest, et paljude erinevate toimijalikkuste *kooskõla*, (omavaheliste) *vastavuste* (*correspondence*) 'kokkuvolditavus' (*folding*) evib nivelleerivat kvaliteeti. S.t., sugugi mitte üksnes narratiivsed persoonid ei "kandu üle" diskussiooni keskendavate nö klatšiobjektidena, vaid et samaväärselt toimub see ka päriseluliste autorite ja telestsenaristidega. Ka viimaste loomingulist tegevust (s.o. kirjutatud episoodiliste stsenaariumite koherentsust pikemas perspektiivis; kavatsuslikke valikuid seoses süžeepööretega jms) hakatakse üksikasjalikult uurima, ja 'mõõdupuu' selleks on sealjuures sarnastatav sellega, mida rakendatakse formaalselt "fiktiivsete" persoonide (elu)tegevuse mõtestamiseks. Niisiis saab võimalikuks väita, et narratiivse kogemuse lahti seletamise juures (nagu seda lubab teleseriaal *Halvale teele*, välistamata sealjuures teisigi samalaadseid) muutub argimõistuslik (*commonsense*) arutlemine fundamentaalseks komponendiks. Loogiliseks lõpptulemuseks on siinkohal, et argine, jagatud tähendusloome (*common sense* vs *commonsense*) muutub *kogukondlikuks* (*communalized*); s.t. tähendusloome hakkab 'produtseerima' rahvapärast kaemust, mille predikaadiks on teatavat laadi "rahvakeelne loomingulisus." Mis puutub narratiivsetesse persoonidesse, siis eelnevalt visandatud ideede relevantsus võimendub momendil kui meie konventsionaalne müstitsism "karakterist haaratud" olemisest saab tasakaalustatud väitega olla haaratud nende *poolt* (*by* them vs *in*); s.t. arendades välja kolmandas isikus perspektiivi nende *kohta*; ehk siis, neist kui potentsiaalselt teistest inimestest (vrd Sorokin 2016b, 2017a, b).

Kui nüüd aga liikuda punkti (ii) juurde, tuleb märkida, nagu käesoleva väitekirja sissejuhatuses ka tegin, et vaikimisi eeldatava "fakti" ja "fiktsiooni" binaarsuse kaja võib kohata laialdaselt. Seega saab kokkuvõtlikult osundada ja käsitada vaid valitud näiteid. Nii öeldakse meile, et meie narratiivne kogemus-

likkus on tegelikult 'mentaalne konstrukt,' mida me "jooksutame" (*run*) (Oatley 1994, 1999); et *kujuteldav* kogemus "transporteerib" meid (Gerrig); et me minevat kuidagimoodi selle kogemuse "sees kaotsi" (*lost in*) (Nell); või et meid "hüponotiseeritakse" ja viiakse lausa "transsi" (vrd Oatley 2002:41,50). Pidades silmas just selliseid müstifitseerivaid miraaže, räägib kirjanduspsühholoog Keith Oatley "kirjanduslikest emotsioonidest" (*literary emotions*) ning tõukudes Brunerist ja Bartlettist väidab rangelt: ehkki küll propositsioon "narratiivist kui *inimeste tegevuse* mõistmise laadist" sobituvat sellega, kuidas me narratiivi ja selles esitatud inimesi kogeme, on olemas selge kontrast "paradigmaatilise laadiga [mida] kasutatakse teaduslike ja tehniliste küsimuste üle arutlemiseks"; et see eristus olla samavõrd ühemõtteline nagu "fakt," et olemas olevat "tõe-lised" ja "kirjanduslikud" emotsioonid (ibid.:39–40,65; rõhutused lisatud). Kuid siingi ilmneb vasturääkivus. Nimelt, kui "narratiivi" on võimalik utiliseerida, mõistmaks, mispärast "protagonistid" just teataval moel käituvad (s.o. alus-vajadus, millest käesolev väitekiri juhindub), siis kuidas saab ühtlasi olla nii, et "lugu assimileerides on *meie emotsioonid meie eneste*, *mitte tegelaskujude omad*"; ja et me "saame tegelaskujuga loos üheks"; s.t. me identifitseerime end temaga (ibid.:43,61jj.; rõhutused lisatud)? Seega tõstatub õigustatud küsimus: mis see *tegelikult* on, mida me narratiivse laadi abiga "mõistma" peaksime? Aiva, juba, ja ainult meid endid?

Oatley käsitlusest oleks võimalik välja lugeda viimast. Sest ta visandab teatava spektri, mille ühes mõttelises otsas on "transportatsioon," teises aga "transformatsioon" (ibid.:43; vrd Polichak and Gerrig 2002:89jj.). Sa "sukeldud sisse" ja, kui läheb õnneks, pääsed valla muutunud inimesena. Ja tõesti, mis puutub ühelt poolt meediatarbimisse ja teisalt inimarenguteadusse, siis vastavalt teesid "eneseimplikeerimisest" (*self-implication*) (nt Kuiken jt 2004) ja "läbi teiste endaks saamisest" (Võgotskij) mõjuvad kaheldamatult üsnagi veenvalt. Täpsemalt olekski antud juhul vaidluskohaks pigem just Oatley radikaal-konstruktivistlik lähenemine. Rajatud Piaget' ja von Glaserfeldi poolt edasi arendatud Machianlikul mõttetraditsioonil, välistab see täiel määral jälgitavate "Teiste" toimimise *nende enda* suveräännsetest kavatsustest johtuvalt (olene-mata esitlusmeediumist ja hoolimata nende olemasolust koos sellega) nagu seda sääraste, väidetavalt "transformatiivsete" (fiktsionaalsete) kogemuste jooksul võidatakse *tajuda*. Seega saab siinkohal taas postuleeritud mina-perspektiiv (narratiivsele teisele lähenemine nö esimeses isikus), mis 'töötleb' (*process*) re-presentatsioone nn Dennettlikus Karteaanlikus Teatris. Siit johtuvalt on aga lõppkokkuvõttes autor ja narratiiv võetavad suuresti ühehäälse entiteedina, samas kui potentsiaalseid eksistentse viimases postuleeritakse ei enama kui retseptiivse kujutlusvõime viljana, kui "loo poolt pakutavate *materjalidena*" (Oatley 2002:43; rõhutus lisatud); kui "materjalidena," mis asustavad üksnes sel määral, et moodustavad teatava "vaheruumi," suhestamaks omavahel "tõelist autorit" ja "tõelist lugejat" kui ainsaid eksistentse (vrd ibid.:47jj.,64; vt ka sisse-juhatus). Siit tulenevalt saakski väita, vähemalt teatava piirini, et eelkirjeldatud teoretiseerimise keskmes on "ego-kesk[ne] elemen[t] … mis [aga] on meie

lugemiskogemuse [ja iseäranis just *vaatamis*kogemuse] suhtes atüüpiline" (Meskin ja Weinberg 2003:18).

Õigluse huvides olgu märgitud, et teatavaid potentsiaalseid vakantse ning ühisosi, mis ülalkirjeldatud vaateid ehk vaidlustada aitaks, küll leidub—vähemalt mis käesolevalt puutub psühholoogiaalasesse kirjandusse—, kuid, tõsi küll, needki on endiselt pakutud mentalistlik-representatsioonilises "informatsiooni töötlemise" võtmes. Ühe sellisena võiks ära märkida Polichaki ja Gerrigi käsitluse vaatajatest ja lugejatest kui "kõrvalt-osalistest" (*side-participants*). Antud seoses oleks oluline täheldada, et autorite käsitlus tõukub siin just *päriseluliste* vestluste uurimisest (vt Polichak ja Gerrig 2002:72jj.). Kummatigi jäävad võtmekarakterid, kelle eludes "kõrvalt-osaletakse," aga ikka vaid lugejalikeks "mentaalseteks representatsioonideks" (ibid.:78). Neil puudub igasugune suveräänsus **narratiivsete persoonidena**, kellele on omistatavad elatavad elud, mida vaataja või lugeja kui *kõrvaltvaataja* (Zillmanni *onlooker*) püüab tähendustada kolmandas isikus, proovib *selgitada otseselt*, selmet rakendada *re*presenteeritud, vahendavaid 'figuriine vaimusilmas.'

Kõnealusel poleemikal on mõistagi oma koht ka narratoloogias. Nii on Manfred Jahn oma vastulauses Alan Palmeri käsitlusele "sotsiaalsest teadvusest" kiire eritlema "tõelisi teisi teadvusi" (*real other minds*) ja "fiktsionaalseid teisi teadvusi" (*fictional other minds*) (Jahn 2011:249; vt ka nt Margolin 1990; Eder 2010; Caracciolo 2014, kriitiliseks aruteluks, vt 1. peatükk, 1.5.3). (Palmeri ideede juurde ma varsti naasen.) Sama lugu on ka kirjandusteoreetiliste lähenemistega, mis küll pealiskaudsel pilgul võiksid käesoleva dissertatsiooni tuumargumente pigem soosida. Ent näiteks ka Lars-Åke Skalini paeluv artikkel toimetatud kogumikus *Disputable Core Concepts of Narrative Theory* pöördub tagasi konventsiooni juurde, märkides: "[T]egelaskujud pole eksistentsid, s.o. [nad pole] [loo]maailmas *eraldiseisvad* [*particulars, in a world*]. Tegelaskujujutus [*character-talk*] pole võimalik eristada tantsijat tantsust" (Skalin 2012: 127–128). Nüüd võiks vahest folkloristika siinkohal pakkuda lahknevaid vaateid, või vähemasti, kaalukaid kompromisse? Mingil määral, ehkki kahjuks, mitte küll täielikult.

Analüüsides muistendite pajatusi, tuginedes sealjuures arhiveeritud muistendikogudele ning osundades siinkohal nende "kaheti[sele] kvalitee[dile] … ühtaegu kollektiivse[le] ja individuaalse[le]," skitseerib Ulf Palmenfelt intrigeeriva käsitluse "identifikandist" (*identificand*). Identifikand, kirjutab Palmenfelt, annab märku ekstratekstilisest suhtest ja on "mõistetav kokkuleppena jutustaja ja publiku vahel jutustamise jooksul" (Palmenfelt 1993:143,157,166). Teisisõnu, kuulajad on "kontraheeritud" (*contracted*) eeldama teatavat rolli, mille jooksul "identifitseeritakse end" näiteks mõne loo nimelise tegelaskujuga (millegipärast häiritud, üleskõetud, seega vajab tähelepanu) *pace* "ebaisikulise rahvamassi …armeega." Veel enam, olles kord selliselt positsioneeritud, kuulajad "sisenevad muistendi universumisse" ja rakendavad tegelaskuju silmi, ülekantud tähenduses, "vaatamaks" lahtirullivaid sündmusi (ibid.). Kui momendil sulustada võimalikud vastuväiteid *vis-à-vis* et kuulajad võtvat ennetavalt aadli "rolli" (nagu Palmenfelti poolt analüüsitus), selmet—loogilisemalt—"identi-

fitseerida end" talunikehulgaga, võib Palmenfeldi mõistekäsitlus pakkuda seni-räägitule mõningaid põhjendatud korrektiive, ehkki täielik sõltuvus Palmenfeldi mudelist on parimal juhul küsitav. Sellegipoolest ütleksin, et mõiste "identifi-kand" teeb ehk märkimisväärseks asjaolu, et see osundab tegelaskuju-vastuvõtja (jõu)suhte *ümberpööravusele*. Ehk siis: tegelaskuju lakkab olemast sõiduk vastuvõtja "minale." Vastupidi, Palmenfeldi poolt käsiteldav jutustussituatsioon võimaldab sel nimelisel tegelaskujul opereerida suveräännse 'giidina' *koos* esitatud maailmaga (*contra* selle "sees"). See eritlus omakorda lubab vaagida kolmanda isiku perspektiivi, mille alusel antud tegelaskujust saaks "arutlev toimija" (*reasoning agent*), keda tunnistatakse kui kedagi kuulaja "minast" selgelt eraldiolevat, ehkki ühtaegu kriitiline *par excellence* selles suhtes, kuidas kuulajad lugu kogevad. Sest tema potentsiaalsed selgitused on täpse kursi järgi-miseks vajalikud—selgitused, millesse ei sekkuta, vaid mis kehtestavad (kuu-laja jaoks) marsruudi; selmet jääda simulatiivselt "paikseks" ja "sisse," s.o. võtmaks osa "teesklusest" (kuna *see konkreetne kuningas* üldsegi mitte ei *kujuta* ette, vaid tõesti kardab enese tagakiusamist).

Nii on võimalik järeldada, et "identifikandi" roll täielikult välistab *igasuguse* iseendal põhineva "mudeli" loomise, eriti kui arvesse võtta kuulamissituatsiooni *konteksti* ja kuulajate sotsiaalset konditsioneeritust, st kuulajateks võisid just olla päriselulised *talunikud*, mitte "aadikud," ja veel kõige ebatõenäolisemalt, "kuningad." Samuti saab siinkohal võimalikuks selgelt eritleda autorit ja tegelaskuju; differentsiaali, mida jutuvestja eksplitsiitselt märgib. Ehkki võib kujuneda nähtavasti raskeks täie kindlusega väita, et "identifikand" 'pöörab ümber' selle, kuidas päris inimesed suhestuvad "fiktsionaalsete" inimestega, on säärasele väitele kasvõi osundamine siiski käesolevas diskussioonis kasulik. Enamgi veel, Palmenfeldi enda tõlgendus näib käesolevas kokkuvõttes senini esitatud oletusi kaitsvat: "Gotlandi muistendites on *talunik* [kui 'tekstuaalne' roll] sageli võrdväärne 'inimese, Gotlanderi … <u>minaga [I]</u>" (ibid.:148–149; rõhutus originaalis; allajoonitus lisatud). Seega näib Palmenfelt vihjavat, et kuu-lajad otsustavad sääraste "rollide" kasuks, mis eristuvad neist endist; ehkki seal-juures ei saa välistada juhtusid, kus tõepoolest ka on pakilisem "vaadata" taluniku "silmadega"—iva on siin selles, et "asendavat" oma mina elamist *läbi* teise siin ei toimu; pigem leiab aset teatav distantseeritud ja erapooletu "trans-portatsioon"; "transportatsioon," mis just nimelt tunnistab teist, kuna üksnes nii jutuvestmissitatsioon töötaks ja saavutaks soovitud mõju.

Viimaks tuleks ära märkida ka folklorist Ulf Palmenfeldi mõiste "identifi-kand" üks võimalikke inspiratsiooniallikaid. Ühe eeldusena tuleksid kõne alla varased arenguteooria käsitlused (nt efektiteooria). Oma 1964. aasta artiklis "Massimeedia effektid" ("Effects of the Mass Media," *Review of Child Development Research*, *Vol. 1*, 1964[1974]) kirjutab Eleanor E. Maccoby: "eeldatavasti sellistes lugudes, mis esitavad rohkem kui ühe juhtiva tegelaskuju, valib vaataja ühe neist oma esmaseks 'identifikandiks' kogedes mõjusid [*actions*] läbi selle tegelaskuju [nö asendavalt; *vicariously*]" (Maccoby 1964 [1974]:326). Ilmselgelt, ehkki Palmenfeldi edasiarendusega teataval määral korreleeruv, on siinkohal kriitiliselt oluline märkida modifitseerunud dünaami-

kat. Maccoby "identifikandi" fokaalsus paikneb mujal, nimelt selles, kuidas tegelaskujud *avaldavad mõju* (*affect*) nt teismelistele poistele. Palmenfeldi poolt kõnekalt sktiseeritud *ümberpöörduvuse* kvaliteet seega haihtub siin koheselt—"fiktsionaalsed" persoonid on taas üksnes pelkadeks "toenditeks" teesklus-mängus (Walton).

Nüüd, olles etableerinud teatava alusjoone seoses valdatavalt mentalistlik-representatsioonilist (*viz*. internalistlikku) tegelaskujuga suhestumise mudelit soosijate kriitikaga, on hädavajalik—enne kui asuda käesolevas väitekirjas välja töötatud mõisteraamistikku kokku võtma ja edasistest plaanidest ja võimalustest rääkima—teha juttu teatavaist narratiiviuuringutest, mis näikse olevat rohkem avatud ka antud doktoriväitekirja kandvatele ideedele. Oma raamatus *Social Minds in the Novel*, väidab narratoloog Alan Palmer järgmist:

> "[Seisukohad, mis tõstavad esiplaanile tegelaskujude vahetu teadvuse] täidavad sageli pöördelist rolli, suunates narratiivi läbi osunduse, et teatav mentaalne sündmus on dispositsiooni manifestatsioon ja et dispositsioon on sündmuses põhjuslik tegur … Teadvuse episoode just dispositsioonide kontekstis tõlgendades ehitab lugeja üles veenva ja koherentse taju [*viz*. tähenduse; *sense*] tegelaskujust" (Palmer 2010:28,27–34)

Süvenemata siinkohal mõiste "dispositsioon" keerukusse (iseäranis seoses psü-hooloogiliste konnotatsioonidega) saab Palmeri inspireerivat "välispidisest per-spektiivist teadvusele" (*externalist perspective on the mind*) teesi (vt Palmer 2014) edasi arendada järgnevalt: see, mida kirjanduslikud narratiivid harilikult "teevad" kirjalikult, saab visuaalsete kunstivormide (nt televisuaalse narratiivi) poolt saavutatud läbi peenekoelise vihjeaparatuuri (näitejate kehakeel ja või põgusad dialoogifraasid, mis ei pruugi pealiskaudsetele või juhuslikele vaata-jatele eriti midagi tähendadagi, nagu see juhtub olema serialiseeritud narra-tiivide puhul); ja ühtlasi läbi mitmekesise filmiliste ('narratoloogiliste') seadete (lähivõtted, erinevad montaažitehnikad jne.) Siinkohal tasub märkida, et välista-sin kavatsuslikult levinud võtte "peale lugemisest" (*voice-over*), kuna, vähe-masti seoses 'keerukate' narratiividega, rikub see printsipiaalselt "näita, ära jutusta!" (*show, don't tell!*) vaikimisi reeglit. Äsjanimetatud jutustuslikke ten-dentse silmas pidades võiks seega järgnevalt väita, et "dispositsioonid" televi-suaalses narratiivis tekitavad lausa tungiva vajaduse säärase vaatajapoolse tähendusloome (*sense-making*) järele, mille predikaadiks oleks "loominguline rahvakeelsus" (*creative vernacular*) ja mis oleks motiveeritud vaikimisi tunnis-tamisest, et narratiivsed persoonid on *kui inimesed*; ehk siis, mis oleks moti-veeritud pärisustamise (*realitization*) aktist (vt alt ülevaatlikku terminoloogia-arutelu ja illustratiivset joonist 1).

Et veel enamgi rõhutada keskset ideed, mille detailiseerimine on käesoleva kokkuvõte üheks eesmärgiks, oleks kasulik kõrvutada Palmeri *Middlemarchi* analüüs kirjandusfilosoofi Gregory Currie omaga. Kuigi Currie tunnistab narratiivi "kavatsustest kantud koherentsust" (*intention-driven coherence*) (Cur-rie 2009:64), paistab juba varakult ja lakooniliselt silma just säärane laialt levinud, kiasmlik mõtteviis, millele Palmer kohe oma töö sissejuhatuses ka

osundab. "George Elioti poolsed sekkumised" *Middlemarchis*, kirjutab Currie, "võimaldavad meil lugeda maha [tegelaskuju] Karakterijooni." Nii võimendab Currie senise kriitika adressaatide peamisi seisukohti. Kuna ka Currie jaoks saavad tegelaskujud olla kavatsuslikult toimivad persoonid üksnes sedavõrd, kuivõrd "kõige üle kõrguva intellgentsi" (*overarching intelligence*) (eeldatavad) põhjused neid nii kavatsema paneb (*viz*. "tõeline" autoriteadvus); ja isegi päramisel juhul on nad representatsiooni "kinnistatud" (Currie 2009:63–66; vt ka Oatley 2011). Teisisõnu, nagu ütlevad James Phelan ja Peter J. Rabinowitz kogumikus *Narrative Theory Core Concepts and Critical Debates*: "realistliku fiktsiooni kunst seisneb illusiooni edastamises, et *tegelaskujud toimivad autonoomselt isegi kui nende tegevus teenib implikeeritud autori üleüldist eesmärki*" (Phelan and Rabinowitz 2012:113; rõhutus lisatud).

Väga märkimisväärselt kontrasteerub senise aruteluga narratoloog David Hermani positsioon, mille kohaselt on tegelaskujud "erilise entiteetide klassi … kategooria 'persoonid' liikmed" (Herman 2012:125; vt ka 2. peatükk). Ehkki Hermani käsitluses säilivad teatavad konstruktivistlikud põhjendused, tuleb sellegipoolest pidada silmas tema väidet, et "[t]eised teadvused pole mitte probleemiks, mida lahendada, vaid hoopis persooni kui sellise kontseptsiooni sisse ehitatud. Seega ideega persoonist … *kaasub*, et mentaalsed predikaadid on iseenda suhtes iseendaleomistavad ja teiseleomistatavad teise puhul … lugejad tähendustavad tegelaskujude teadvusi sedavõrd, kuivõrd nad neid individuaale persoonidomeenis situeerivad" (op. cit.:126; rõhuasetus originaalis, allajoonitus lisatud). Või, kui väljendada sarnaseid ideid veel läbipaistvamalt, ei teeks paha tsiteerida filmiteoreetik Michael Z. Newsmani: "Selle arvesse võtmine, et tegelaskujud pole päris inimesed, ei tähenda, et nad poleks inimesed … nende iseloomujooned pole nemad ise, [vaid] kirjeldused nende kohta" (Newman 2006b:53). Veel salvavam on kirjandusteoreetik Richard Walsh, kes märgib, et senini kritiseeritud lähenemistel on kalduvus "devalveerida kaasahaaratust ja fiktsionaalset olevust proportsioonis" (Walsh 2007:154).

Nimelt, väidaksin, et võetuna ühe tervikuna on (i) Alderson-Day jt värsked kvantitatiivsed leiud; (ii) Hermani, Palmeri jt teedmurdvad narratoloogilised käsitlused seoses kirjandusliku meediumi ja "sotsiaalse teadvusega," ja viimaks, ja mitte vähem olulisena, (iii) Palmenfeldi paeluv käsitlus "identifikandist" seoses muistendi pajatustega ülimalt viljakaks distsipliinide *vaheliseks* "hüppelauaks," millest edasi saab juba mõelda distsipliinide *ülesele* mõisteraamistikule, mida käesolev doktoriväitekiri just püüdiski välja arendada ja esile tõsta.

Kuigi ma ei pruugi ülalmainitud teadlaste käsitlustega alati täielikult nõustuda, on vaieldamatu, et nende ideed toestavad käesoleva doktoriväitekirja kesket seisukohta: et eeskätt just televisuaalse tegelaskujuga suhestumise predikaadiks on nende kui "sisseelatud inimeste" (Sepinwall 2015) kõrvaltvaatamine—st tegelaskujud lihtsalt on kogemuslikult *inimlikud*. Siinkohal oleks ühtlasi kohane märkida sedagi, et fraas "sisseelatud" kõnetab meid käesoleva doktoriväitekirja valguses kahetise konnotatsiooniga. Ühelt poolt on narratiivsete persoonide puhul tegemist suveräännsete persoonidega; teisalt aga on nad sellistena *saamises* (*becoming*) läbi pikaajalise interaktsioonilise suhestatuse,

s.o. läbi *arenemises-oleva-interaktsiooni* (*interaction-in-development*). Järgnevalt liigun ma edasi käesoleva doktoriväitekirja poolt välja pakutud terminoloogilise panuse kokkuvõttega (vt ka joonist 1), arutledes seejärel selle üle, mida peaks, või vähemasti, mida saaks, antud seoses veel edasi teha.

Ülevaade käesoleva doktoriväitekirja teoreetilis-analüütilisest panusest
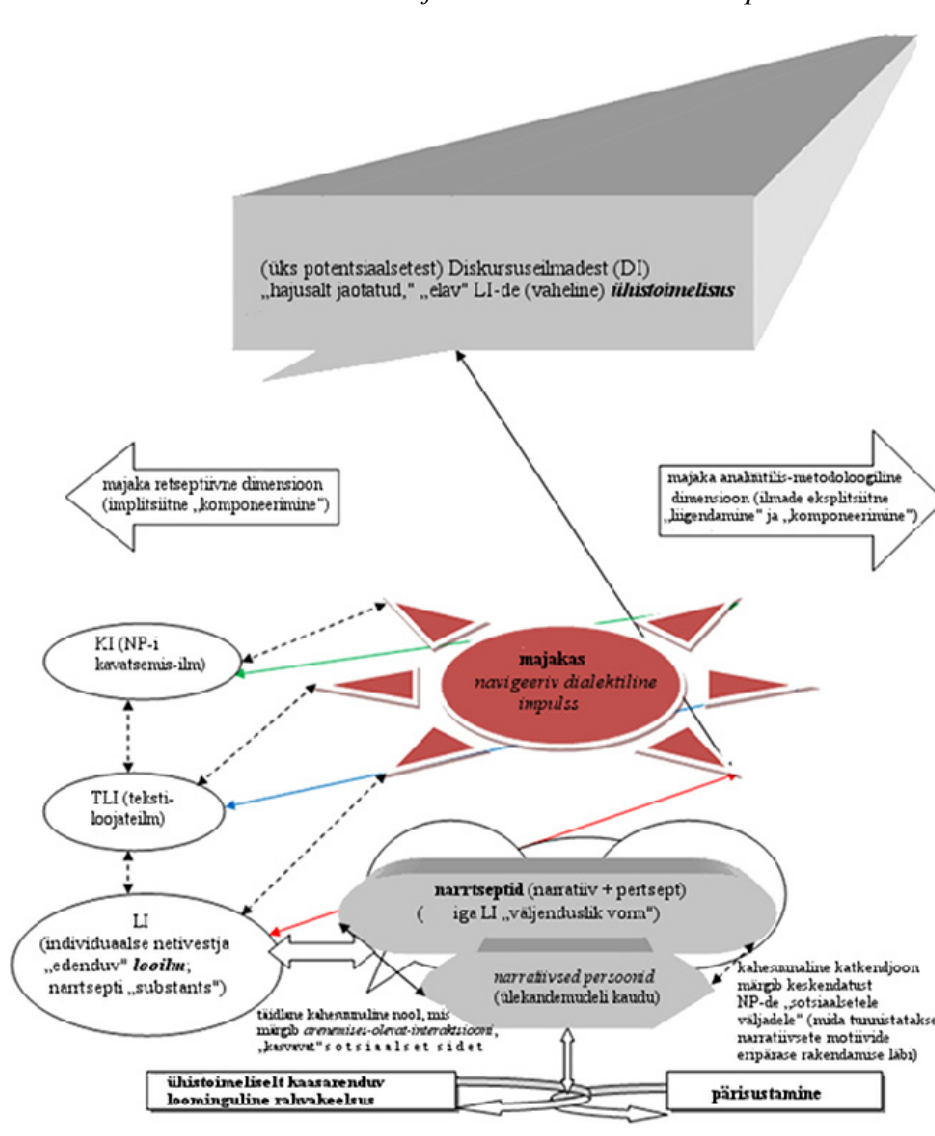
Joonis 1

Käesolevas doktoriväitekirjas kavandatud teoreetilise raamistu eesmärgiks oli (i) tutvustada niihästi tarvilikke originaalmõisteid kui ka (ii) tuletada kohaseid

alternatiive olemasolevast mõistestikust, selleks et viimaseid seejärel (iii) täpse-malt 'välja timmida' ning seejärel uue raamistusse inkorporeerida.

Alustada võiks sünkroonsete mõistetega **ühistoimeliselt kaasarendumine** (*co-elaboration*) (kui **loomingulise rahvakeelsuse** (*vernacular creativity*) 'mootor') ja **pärisustamine** (*realitization*), mis on visualiseeritud joonis 1-e kõige alumisel astmel. Antud mõistesuhte kvaliteeti annavad edasi kaks teine-teisse mässitud, enesele tagasiosundavat noolt, kus 'sissemässimine' kui selline osundabki sünkroonsusele. Ühelt poolt märgib ühistoimelisus sotsio-indivi-dualismi, sealjuures aga vältides individualismi (kuid ka kollektivismi) primaar-sust. Kuna ühistoimelisuse jagatud siht (*viz*. narratiivsete persoonide elu-arut-luste 'õigesti' tähendustamine) on alati ja juba mingile kollektiivselt loodud 'saadusele' taandamatu. Teisalt on seesugune ühistoimeline tegevus *hajusalt jaotatud* (*distributed*), st uurija narrativistlik-toimetajalik roll tõstab esile indivi-duaalseid looilmu (vt märget LI joonisel 1, ülal), mis, vastastikuses seoses ole-vaina modifitseerivad, vaidlustavad ning seavad teineteist kahtluse alla mitte üksnes ühe diskussioonikeskkonna lõikes, vaid *üle* mitme samaaegse. Teisisõnu, kirjeldatud relatsiooniline kvaliteet annab märku "elavatest lugudest," mille edendumine on subjekti-lookuse telje suhtes transendentne. Samaaegselt on ühistoimelisuse mõistes implikeeritud ka "kaanonile," nagu nt teleseriaali "Hal-vale teele" 'ametlikule' narratiivile, väljakutse esitamine, millest tulenevalt joo-nistuvad välja "jutustamiste [ajalised] vahemikud" (*interstices of narrations*), mis rajavad teatava "kogukonna ajaloo" (Smorti 2008:231), mida omakorda toestab narratiivne kogemuslikkus.

Pärisustamise mõiste on inspireeritud inglise keelsest neologismist, mida on selgitatud kui kellegi 'reaalsusse' toomise 'seisundit.' Narratiivsete persoonide vaikimisi pärisustamise aktis, netisuhtluse kontekstis, nägi käesolev doktori-väitekiri ühistoimelise loomingulise rahvakeelsuse põhialust. Nii rõhutasin ma sotsiaalse sideme kontingentsust, mida vaatajad narratiivsete persoonidega kultiveerivad; seda kontingentsust toestab *arenemises-olev-interaktsioon* ja seda edastatakse läbi argitarusliku praktilise keelekasutuse igapäevase väljendus-rikkuse, mis piiritleb konkreetsed huvisfäärid (nö katsutav *kellestki teisest* 'mõtlemine' ja 'rääkimine'). Äsjakirjeldatud ideid illustreerib joonisel 1 kahe-suunaline, täidlane nool, mis juhib narrtseptide juurest narratiivsete persooni-deni ja tagasi; vt ka lühikest lisatud selgitust.

Nimelt, käesoleva doktoriväitekirja keskset väitest tõukuvalt kannab säher-dune 'väljendusrikkus' (*pithiness*) 'teisese materiaalsuse' (*secondary materia-lity*) kvaliteeti, mida polsterdavad netivestlejate otse-tajuvuslikud (*direct-per-ceptional*) kalduvused; siit tulenevalt saab tõelise sotsiaalse interaktsiooni ja 'fiktiivsete tegelaskujudega' (aga ka päris autoritega) suhestumise (*engagement*) konsolideerida 'alternatiivseks' mõttelaadiks, mida toestab rahvaliku tähendus-loome ajaline esitus (aruteluarhiivid, mis ulatuvad üle mitme suhtluskesk-konna). Enamgi veel, nagu osundab katkendjoonega kahesuunaline nool joonisel 1, säärast sotsiaalse sideme saamist (*becoming*) väidetavalt valideerib 'juhitud' praktika seoses narratiivse informatsiooni mõtestamisega. **Narratiiv-sed motiivid** opereerisid siinkohal kui narratiivsete persoonide tajurelevantsi

(*perception of relevance*) korrelaadid; oluliseks sai see, millist mõju võis üks või teine narratiivne motiiv *neile* avaldada. Ehk teisisõnu: netivestlejad käsitlesid neid "autorijutuste" "elementaarüksuseid" (nt kaotsiläinud ritsiini-sigarett, noore lapse mürgitamine), põhistamaks tõika, et narratiivseid persoone *tunnistatakse* (*acknowledge*) kui "arutlevaid toimijaid" (*reasoning agents*); kui oma maailmaga *koos* olevaid ('asustades' seda suveräännsete potentsiaalsete persoonidena) *pace* et olla selle maailma "sees," sellesse kinnistunud (vrd. koos/sees skaala, *with/in scale*; vt 1. peatükk).

Niisiis, konventsionaalne ettekujutus "transportatsioonist" järgnevalt "ülekandemudelis" (*viz*. Carry-Over Model, COM, CO-Model) inverteerub ning pärisustamise aktist sai baastasandi operatsiooniprintsiip (vrd joonis 1: jäme kahesuunaline nool osundab sünkroonselt baastasandilt ülespoole). Nimetatud ülekandemudel etableeris, et nt teleseriaali "Halvale teele" narratiivsed tegelaskujud "kanduvad üle" netivestlejate kogemuslik-diskussiivsele väljale, kuna diskursiivne akt (s.o. pikaajaline vestluspraktika) 'nivelleerib' (*levels*) ontoloogilised erinevused. Käesoleva doktoriväitekirja väidete kohaselt säärane transpositsioon (i) ühistoimelise loomingulise rahvakeelsuse ruumi piires küllastab narratiivsed persoonid idiomaatilise suveräännsuse ja individuaalsusega, ja ühtlasi ka (ii) säilitab 'tõelise' narratiivi kõrge relevantsuse, kuna tegemist on narratiivsete persoonide 'asualaga' (*inhabitat*). Enamgi veel, ülekandemudelist johtuvatest eeldustest tõukuvalt pidasin käesolevalt vajalikuks määratleda ka kontseptsiooni **kokkukäändunud loostusest** (*twistory*) Kokkukäändunud loostusega (põimumine+lugu; *twistory*+*story*) püüdsin edasi anda neid momente, kus netivestjate/televaatajate päriselulised kogemused ja mälestused 'põrkuvad' (*collide*) narratiivsete persoonide "sotsiaalse välja" teatavate aspektidega, juhul kui nad püüavad viimaste toimimist tähendustada. Ehkki selguse huvides on jooniselt 1 äsjamainitud mõiste puudu, on võimalik väita, et sõltuvalt individuaalsest narrtseptist võib kokkukäändunud loostusest saada narratiivse persooni kavatsemisilma tähendustamise juures võtmeosis (KI; *intend-world*; kokkukäändunud loostuse jaoks, vt 1. peatükk; kavatsemisilma jaoks, vt 2. peatükk, ja alt).

Püüdes koondada eelkirjeldatud dünaamikat maksimaalselt kõikehõlmavasse kontseptsiooni, pakkusin käesolevas doktoriväitekirjas välja originaalse **narrtsepti** mõiste. Narrtsept võiks olla mõtestatav sillastava kontseptsioonina, mis ühelt poolt osundab rahvakeele loomupärasele narrativistlikule impulsile ("narr" narratiivist), teisalt aga viimases sisalduvale argitarkuslikule "otsesele tajule" (*direct perception*) ("tsept" pretseptist). Kuna narrtsept keskendub spetsiifiliselt teisepõhisele tähendusloomele, eristub see võrreldavatest kontseptualiseerimiskatsetest narratiiviuuringutes üleüldiselt, kuid lubab mõningaid neist samas ka viljakalt edasi arendada, nt internetiuurija Ananda Mitra mõisteleidu "narb" (antud seoses, vt käesoleva kokkuvõtte viimast alaosa).

Eelkirjeldatud mõisted leidsid väljatöötamist ja üldises mõisteraamistus positsioneerimist käesoleva doktoriväitekirja 1. peatükis. Töö 2. peatükk laiendas eelnevat ning pakkus välja veel ühe originaalmõiste: **majakas** (*beacon*). Väitsin, et kui kõneleda abstraktselt, omab majakas vajalikku

'mobiilsust' eristamaks narrtseptides (*viz.* narrtseptiivses mõtlemises) peidus-olevaid "ilmu." St majakas *liigendab* (*decompose*) need ehk differentseerib fluiidseteks kogemusliku tähendusloome "taskuteks"; ja seejärel *komponeerib* (*compose*) need looilmadena—analüütilis-metodoloogiliste mõistmiskategoo-riatena—mis manifesteeruvad "protsessis olevana" ühe individuaalse narrtsepti, s.o. kommentaariteksti või foorumilõimupostituse põhiselt. Seeläbi on joonisel 1 esitatud majaka päikeselaadne kujutis ilmselgelt taotluslik. Olles mõtestatav arvukate rõhuasetustega dialektilise mehhanismina, tõukub majakas "rahva-likest" ja "akadeemilistest" tõlgendusprotsessidest ja ka protsessidest viimaste sees; st majakas "blingib," "heidab valgust" niihästi *retseptiivsele dimensioonile* (*reciprocal dimension*)—s.o. kavatsemis-ilmale (KI), mis 'toidab' tekstiloojate-maailma (TLM), mis 'toidab' looilma (LI)—, andes nii mõista, et netivestjate individuaalsete narrtseptide kontekstis on tegemist on 'implitsiitse' komposit-siooniga, looilma komponeerimist saatva nö vaikimisi effektiga; kui ka *analüütilis-metodoloogilisele dimensioonile*, millega seoses jõuame omakorda **diskursuseilmani** (*discourse world*) (laiemaks aruteluks, vt 2. peatükk, 2.0; lühiülevaateks, vt loetelu alt). Säärast äsjamainitud 'vaikimisi' kvaliteeti, mis narrtseptide ja looilmade "substantsina" toestab viimaste fluiidset edenemist (*development*) on joonisel 1 edasi antud katkendjooneliste kahesuunaliste nool-tega, mis nö ühendavad "ilmu" majaka retseptiivsete 'harudega.' Vahepealse kokkuvõtte korras olgu mainitud ilmadekategooriad konkreetselt välja toodud:

- **kavatsemisilm** (*intend-world*; IW/KI): Rõhutades narratiivsete persoonide kui suveräännsete, eraldiseisvate toimijate kavatsuslikkuse tähendustamist, eristub antud mõiste selgelt M.-L. Ryani "kavatsuseilmast" (*intention-world*) (vt 2. peatükk, 2.1, eriti 2.3.1, alaosa *Worldying the intend-worlds*). Kuna narrtseptid edastavad kavatsemist *väljaspoolt* (*from without*) (s.o. kolmanda isiku perspektiivilt), aimdub siit katse mõista narratiivseid persoone kui omal "sotsiaalsel väljal" pärisustatuid. Seega tunnistatakse narratiivsete persoo-nide suveräännsust *koos* oma "aktuaalse maailmaga" (AW; *actual world*); see hoitakse puutumatu ja selle piiridesse ei tungita. Ühtlasi aitab antud kontseptsioon esile tuua aga ka selliseid tähendustamisjuhtumeid, kus neti-vestlejad/televaatajad jõuavad teatavail tähendustamismomentidel ühildu-miseni narratiivsete persoonide elukontekstide ja nende endi elukonteksti vahel. Nimetatud fenomeni olen käesolevalt määratlenud kui päris ja (tajutava) elukogemuse kokkukäändunud loostusena (*twistory*) (vt 1. peatükk, 1.4),

- **tekstiloojateilm** (*text makers' world*; TMW/TLI): rõhutades looilma (vt alt) organiseerimist põhistavat narrtseptiivset printsiipi, saavad ka stsenaristidest ja "loojatest" (nt teleseriaali "Halvale teele" Vince Gilligan) "osalejad" (*actors*), "tegijad" (*doers*), *viz.* "arutlevad toimijad" (*reasoning agents*). Nende (võimalikud) kavatsused vajavad (välja)selgitamist ning narrativi-seeritud selgitused ilmnevad kriitika, hinnangu, vaidlustamise vms vormis (vt 2. peatükk, 2.3.1),

- **looilm** (*storyworld*; SW/LI): sotsio-individuaalsete alltoonidega subjektiivne "kalibreering" (*calibration*), mis teostub läbi narrtsepti—st läbi majaka poolt

analüütilis-metodoloogiliselt piiritletud "retseptiivse dimensiooni" "väljenduslikku vormi" (*expressive form*)—edastades narratiivselt situeeritud sündmusi ja viimaste (potentsiaalseid, paljastatud, ja välja praagitud) tagajärgi "persooni tasandil." Sisuliselt liidab looilm endaga—anti-hierarhialiku jada põhimõttel (*on the principle of non-hierarchal array*)—kõik potentsiaalsed kavatsemis- ja tekstiloojateilmad, olles viimaste narrativiseeritud mõtteline 'summa.' Teisisõnu: looilmas "kohtuvad" *kõik* kavatsuslikult signifikantsed "persoonid," kuna neid tajutakse toimivat teatud põhjustel. Niisiis on säärase kalduvuse minimaalne 'formaat' estableeritud individuaalsete narrtseptide näol. Nö maksimalistlik formaat formuleerib seejärel kõik looilmad analüüsitavas "hajutatult jaotatud" (*distributed*) diskursusevalimis osistena *saavas* (*becoming)* diskursuseilmas (vt 2. peatükk, 2.3.2),

- **diskursuseilm** (*discourse world*; DW/DI): DI-d karakteriseerib uurijapoolne järjepidev ülalmainitud "ilmade" liigendamine (*decomposition*) ja DI-ks komponeerimine (*composition*). Need ilmad edenduvad (*develop*) narratiivseid persoone tähendustades ja võttes antud narratiivi (s.o. teleseriaali "Halvale teele") kui nende narratiivsete persoonide "kavatsuslikku välja" (*intentionale Feld*). Järelikult on diskursuseilma puhul tegemist uurijapoolse saava "jutustuste jutustusega" (*narration of narrations*), tähendusloome ja kogemise "jooksva" piiritlemisega, mis sellisena hõlmab, ent ka ümber mõtestab, sildistusi nagu "rahvalik" (*popular*) ja "akadeemiline" (*academic*). Teisisõnu: diskursuseilm võimaldab osundada tarvilikule uurijapoolsele toimetajalikule, kuid siiski ka "narrativistlikule" (*narrativist*) kalduvusele— saab temast siinkohal ju televaatajate ja netivestjate jutuvestmise "ilmastaja" (*worlder*) (*ibid.*).

Nagu viimane punkt viitab, hõlmab kontseptsioon majakast kui analüüsi rakenduslikust meetodist "akadeemilist," s.o. *analüütilis-metodoloogilist dimensiooni*. See "dimension" aitab selgitada jutuvestmise "makrotasandi" tendentsi, ehk siis, ühistoimelist loomingulist rahvakeelsust kui sellist. Siinkohal säilitab siis ka õpetlase analüütiline metodoloogia netivestjatega analoogse kontekstualiseeriva ja tõlgendava impulsi, kuna diskursuseilm on *saav* alates sellest momendist kui majakat käsitada praktiliselt—kui dialektilist makrotasandi(le) "struktureerijat" (*structurer*). Seega, majaka analüütilist-metodoloogilise dimensiooni sihiks, nagu väitsin 2. peatükis, on *varjatud* (*covert*) retseptiivsete "taskute" eritlemine *eksplitsiitsete* (*overt*) "ilmadena," *viz*. kui koostisosiste, kui "looainesena" (*story matter*) narrtseptiivsete looilmade tarbeks. Ühelt poolt saab majaka kaudu nii võimalikuks jälgida, kuidas narratiivsete persoonide kavatsemisilmad; nende ja netivestjate vahelises kokkukäändunud loostumised; ning ka tekstiloojateilmad moodustavad lõppude lõpuks kõik looilma "konsistentsuse," mis väljendub läbi üksiku narrtsepti. Teisalt võimaldab majakas diskursuseilma propositsiooni—s.o. looilmade *saamist* uurija narrativistliku-toimetajaliku agentsuse kaudu--,mis on sealjuures aga kaheldamatult vaid *potentsiaalne* ja kriitiliselt mittetäielik, lõpetamata analüütiline tõlgendus. Seega on eelöeldust johtuvalt majaka *analüütilis-metodoloogilises dimensioonis* "liigendamine" ja "komponeerimine" esil

üheaegselt: uurija niihästi liigendab narrtseptiivseid "ilmu" (*viz*. tähendustab neid "eksplitsiitsel" moel), kui ka komponeerib neid *uuesti* "jooksva" dis-kursuseilma perspektiivilt; milles omakorda heiastub hajusalt jagatud "makro-tasandi" tendents, mis karakteriseerib televaatajate/netivestjate ühistoimelist loomingulist rahvakeelsust *üle* mitmesuguste arutluskeskkondade. Selline (potentsiaalne) diskursuseilm võib küll omada "parameetreid," mida kitsendada või laiendada (nt piirates või suurendades kvantitatiivset andmemahtu), kuid seda on olemuslikult võimatu mõista "lõpetatuna." Kuna see on *saav*, 'elav sündmustus' (*living eventness*). Niisiis on igati tõenäoline, et mõni teine õpet-lane, olles omalt poolt analüüsinud käesolevas doktoriväitekirjas analüüsitud materjali, võib, omades sealjuures ehk ka põhjalikku teadmist teleseriaalist "Halvale teele," arendada välja hoopis omasugused selgituslikud "narratiivid," mis kas vaidlustaks ja või seaks kahtluse alla minu poolt pakutava mõiste-raamistu asjakohasuse. Tõsi, isegi sellisel juhul mu mõisteraamistu sobilikkuse tõenäosusaste ei kahane, kuna see ei väidagi kunagi olevat midagi muud, kui just nimelt üks *potentsiaalsustest* vaibumatus liikumises ja sissevoolus. Vahest oleks isegi paslik käesolev alapeatükk lõpetada Charles H. Kahni sõnadega raamatust *The art and thought of Heraclitus*: "kui me just nimelt tahtlikult ei konstrueeri ega vali tõlgendavat raamistikku, saavad meist mitteteadlikud ja seeläbi kriitikameeleta vangid mis tahes hermeneutilistele eeldustele, mis juhtuvad "õhus olema" (Kahn 1979[2001]:88).

Mida teha edasi?
Eelmises alaosas sai ähmaselt viidatud Ananda Mitra paeluvale mõistele "narb" (vt Mitra 2010, 2013; Mitra ja Mamani 2014). "Narbi" kontseptsioon inte-greerib niihästi narratiiviuuringud kui ka "andmekaevanduse" tehnilised võima-lused, misläbi on tegemist katusterminiga põhimõtteliselt igasugusele digi-taalsele "leivapurule," mida me tänapäevasel sotsiaalmeedia ajastul endast maha jätame. Ütleksin, et minu poolt vermitud **narrtsepti** mõiste võiks siinkohal pakkuda vajalikku kitsendust, mis suunaks "narbi" uurimusliku "jõu" pealnäha väga tavapärasele praktikale—sellele, kuidas *inimesed räägivad teistest ini-mestest*. Antud täpsustust meeles pidades ei pruugi aga narrtsepti kontseptsiooni võimalik panus sugugi mitte piirduda üksnes "tegelaskujuga suhestumise" ja "fiktsionaalsete" narratiivide uurimisega. Kui möönda, et keskse küsimusena saaks võtta reaalsuse edendamist *läbi* keele; või, mõnevõrra teisiti sõnastades, kui fookuses oleks materiaalse reaalsuse mitmesuguste diskursuste "lekkimine" (Grishakova ja Sorokin 2016) "fiktsiooni" kogemisse; võiks näiteks väita, et teleseriaali "Halvale teele" näitlejanna Anna Gunni vastu suunatud onlain misogüünlik "diskursus" (fenomen, millele 1. peatükis viitasin möödaminnes kui "vaieldavatele viiludele 'sotsiaalsetes reaalsustes') viitab sõltuvussuhtele eelarvamuslike 'sentimendi konfiguratsioonidega' päriselus. Võimalik, et äsja-kirjeldatud probleemistik leiaks täielikumat selgitamist läbi narrtsepti kont-septsiooni, erinevalt tavapärasest toetumisest päris/mittepäris teljele (vt ka Gunn 2013). Lisaks sellistele "viiludele" seoses "fiktsionaalsete tegelaskujude" rahvaliku suhestumisega, tuleks eeldatava laiendusena kõne alla ka narrtsepti

seos muutlike ja "poleemiliste" teemadega, mis baseeruvad mitmesugustel küsimustel, leides järjest enam kõlapinda ka digitaliseeritud aruteludes. Kuigi kaugeltki mitte uurimata 'territoorium' nii mõnegi distsipliini poolt, võiks narrtsepti kontseptuaalne kaal paljastada ja kalibreerida teatud 'avausi' sellistes teemades nagu kontroll, jõutamine, rõhumine, ja "teisestamine" (vt nt Said 1978[2001]; Gramsci 1985: Fuchs ja Dyer-Witherford 2013; Dyer-Witheford 2015; Galloway 2004).

Eelöeldu aga mõistagi ei tähenda, nagu niihästi narrtsepti mõiste kui ka käesolevalt piiritletud teoreetiline raamistu tervikuna ei saaks veel põhjalikumalt panustada **narratiivsete persoonidega** suhestumise uurimisse, ja et selle käigus antud raamistik lisaviimistlust leiaks. Siinkohal ei pea ma silmas mitte eelneva argumentatsiooni ja analüüsi kriitilist taaskäsitlemist laiemal skaalal seoses teleseriaaliga "Halvale teele" (terviklik empiiriline aines koosnes tuhande üheksast kommentaaritekstist üle kolme, omavahel sisuliselt seotud, episoodi kahe aasta lõikes), vaid pigem *võrdlevat* aspekti, näiteks seoses ühe väga erineva teleseriaaliga, s.o. *Lost* (empiiriline materjal oleks siinkohal kvanitatiivselt võrreldav) (vrd vt Sorokin 2013a, 2015). Võrdlusmoment avaks siinkohal tee mitte üksnes käesoleva raamistu modifitseerimiseks, vaid kasvõi selle kummutamisekski. Enamgi veel, taolist võrdlevat taktikat saaks veelgi laiendada, hõlmates esmast andmekogumist ja hilisemat kolme-suunalist võrdlevat analüüsi, mis võiks kaasata nt digitaalseid arutelusid seoses menukate filmisarjadega (nt *Harry Potter*) *Internet Movie Database* foorumis ja mujal.

Ja viimaks: kõik ülalmainitud uurimisvõimalused kannavad endas vajalikke "eoseid," mis võimaldavad veel enamgi detailiseerida seda, mis käesolevalt on üldisel tasandil eritlenud *hajusalt jaotatud* (*distributed*) ühistoimelise narratiivse praktikana internetis, ja täpsemalt, mida käesolevas doktoriväitekirjas käsitasin *narrtseptiivse* väljendus- ja mõttelaadina.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Siim Sorokin
Date of birth: May 18, 1984
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Education:

2010–2018	Graduate Studies, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, Institute of Cultural Research, University of Tartu
2007–2010	Masters' studies, Literature and Folklore, University of Tartu, Master's Degree in Arts and Sciences (Estonian and Comparative Folklore) (*cum laude*)
	Siim Sorokin, Master's Degree, 2010, (sup) Ülo Valk, Jutustaja – kas hääle andja või hääle kandja?, University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Culture Studies and Arts, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore
2003–2007	Bachelors' studies, Literature and Folklore, University of Tartu, Bachelor's Degree in Arts and Sciences (Estonian and Comparative Folklore)
2000–2003	Hugo Treffner Gymnasium (Humanities)

Language skills: English, Estonian – C2; German – B2; Russian – A1

Professional career

	University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research, Junior Research Fellow (Cultural Research) (0,85)
2010–2018	University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, Graduate Student (1,00)

Research and development work

Main fields of research:

– 2. Culture and Society; 2.4. Cultures Research; CERCS SPECIALTY: H400 Folklore; SPECIALITY: The socio-cognitive reception of televisual text based on the example of Internet-centered dynamic interaction/creative communities.

List of publications:

Grishakova, Marina; Sorokin, Siim (2016). Notes on Narrative, Cognition, and Cultural Evolution. *Sign Systems Studies*, 44 (4), 542–561. http://dx.doi.org/10.12697/SSS.2016.44.4.04

Sorokin, Siim (2016). Televaatajate ja karakterite intersubjektiivne ja kontekstuaalne lõimumine teleseriaali "Halvale teele" internetiretseptsioonis. *Eesti

Kirjandusmuuseumi aastaraamat. Tartu: EKM Teaduskirjastus. (Paar sammukest Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Aastaraamat 2012–2013) 125–152

Sorokin, Siim (2013). Televaatajate ühistoimeline tähendusloome. *Acta Semiotica Estica*, 10, 11–39

Sorokin, Siim (2010). Die Zeit und die Erfahrungswelt des Menschen – der literarische Text und das Gedächtnis. Liimets, Airi. *Denkkulturen. Selbstwerdung des Menschen. Erziehungskulturen: Festschrift für Professor Dr. Dr. h. c. Dr. h. c. Heino Liimets*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften (Baltische Studien zur Erziehungs- und Sozialwissenschaft; 18). 225–237

Sorokin, Siim (2015). Collaborative sense-making complexities of (for?) *Lost* and *Breaking Bad*. *Proceedings of the 7th Narrative Matters Conference*, 2014; Narrative Knowing/Récit et Savoir: Narrative Matters Conference, 2014; Pariis, Prantsusmaa, 23.–27. juuni, 2014. hal-univ-diderot.archives-ouvertes.fr/NARRATIVE_MATTERS/search/index/q/authFullName_t%3A%28Sorokin+Siim%29/1-11

Sorokin, Siim (2017). Pärisustamise paradoksid: narratiivsed persoonid, "Halvale teele" ja argitarkus netisuhtluses. Ostrak, Anne; Voolaid, Piret (Toim.). Annual conference of Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies and annual 61st Kreutzwald Days conference. Variation in Language, Literature, Folklore, and Music. December 7–8, 2017. Programme and Abstracts. Annual conference of Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies and annual 61st Kreutzwald Days conference, 7–8. December, 2017. Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, Tartu. 112–114

Sorokin, Siim (2014). Finding the Ties, Minding the Minds: Collaborative Sense-Making Complexities of *Lost* and *Breaking Bad*. *Cognitive Futures in the Humanities 2nd International Conference University of Durham, 24.–26. April 2014 Book of Abstracts: Cognitive Futures in the Humanities 2nd International Conference University of Durham*, 24.–26. April 2014. Ed. Garratt, Peter. Durham University, UK. 21–22

Sorokin, Siim (2013). Sidusad karakterikavatsused, ebausutavad lood? Kollektiivselt esilduv mõtlemisest mõtlemine teleseriaali "Breaking Bad" internetiretseptsioonis. Labi, Kanni (Toim.). 57. Kreutzwaldi päevade teaduslik konverents "Transmeedialised siirded". "Transmeedialised siirded", 17.–18. detsember, 2013. Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Teaduskirjastus. 8–10

Sorokin, Siim (2015). Me peame rääkima rassismist Eestis: pagulasteema sõnavägivald. *Müürileht*, 47, 20–21

Sorokin, Siim (trans.) (interview by: Sobtšuk, O.) (2014). Humanitaarteaduski võib olla praktiline ja rakenduslik. Interview with Prof. A. Nünning. Valle-Sten Maiste (Toim.). 26−27

List of major publications:

Grishakova, Marina; Sorokin, Siim (2016). Notes on Narrative, Cognition, and Cultural Evolution. *Sign Systems Studies*, 44 (4), 542–561. http://dx.doi.org/10.12697/SSS.2016.44.4.04

Sorokin, Siim (2010). Die Zeit und die Erfahrungswelt des Menschen – der literarische Text und das Gedächtnis. Liimets, Airi. *Denkkulturen. Selbstwerdung des Menschen. Erziehungskulturen: Festschrift für Professor Dr. Dr. h. c. Dr. h. c. Heino Liimets*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften (Baltische Studien zur Erziehungs- und Sozialwissenschaft; 18). 225–237

Research grants:

PUT1481 "The Role of Imaginary Narrative Scenarios in Cultural Dynamics (1.01.2017−31.12.2020)", Marina Grishakova, University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research; Other research staff.

IUT2-43 "Tradition, creativity and society: minorities and alternative discourses (1.01.2013−31.12.2018)", Ülo Valk, University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research; Other research staff.

Completed projects

PUT192 "Emergent Stories: Storytelling and Joint Sensemaking in Narrative Environments (1.01.2013−31.12.2016)", Marina Grišakova, University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research.

ETF8874 "Narrative Forms and Functions in Contemporary Culture: Narrative as a Means of Cognition, Communication and Sense-Making (1.01.2011−31.12. 2015)", Marina Grišakova, University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy.

SF0180139s08 "Folklore and Society: Tradition Memory, Creativity, Applications (1.01.2008−31.12.2012)", Ülo Valk, University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy.

ETF7166 "The Semiotics of Narrative and Interdisciplinary Analysis of Culture (1.01.2007−31.12.2010)", Marina Grišakova, University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy.

Other administrative and professional activities:

2017, August–2018, January: LACE Winter School *Uses of Narrative* (Member of the Organizing Committee)

2011–… Nordic Network of Narrative Studies, webmaster

2010–… Nordic Network of Narrative Studies, member

Teaching work

Information regarding teaching work carried out at universities:

2016, April: lecture "The Reception of Film and Television" under the auspices of course FLKU.05.229 Reception Theory and Sociology of Art (6 EAP)

2013, April-May: lector, refresher course "The Analysis of Film Work" for the teachers of Estonian Language and Literature

Supervision:

2011, November-December: Review of two Bachelor's theses for the SA Archimedes Research Contest (2011)

Laura Mägi: *Lapsetapu ja libahundi motiivid eesti õuduskirjanduses*. Supervisor: Siim Sorokin (MA); Reviewer: researcher Merili Metsvahi (1.06.2011)

Administrative and other duties

2017, August–2018, January: Winter School *Uses of Narrative* (Member of the organizing committee)

2011–… Nordic Network of Narrative Studies, webmaster

2010–… Nordic Network of Narrative Studies, member

Professional development

2018, 5.–6. April: presentation "Digital Enclaves as Leakage Spaces for Societal Realities: Reciprocal Misogyny of Skyler White" (working title) at the conference "Real Fictions" (University of Tampere; Organizers – Narrare: Centre for Interdisciplinary Narrative Studies, The Academy of Finland project "The Literary in Life: Exploring the Boundaries between Literature and the Everyday", Doctoral Programme in Literary Studies)

2018, 22.–26. January: LACE Winter School *Uses of Narrative* (member of the organizing committee)

2017, 7.–8. December: presentation "The Paradoxes of Realitization: narrative persons, "Breaking Bad" and common sense in Internet communication" at CEES annual conference/61. Scientific conference on Kreutzwald "Variation in language, literature, folklore and music"

2016, August: presentation "The Lives of Characters: Affective World-Building in the Internet Discussions of Breaking Bad" at the international conference "The Stories of Hope and Fear: Mapping Emotions and Affects in Life, Arts, and Literature." Executive Manager Prof. Dr. Marina Grishakova (in collaboration with the University of Tampere School of Literary and Translation Studies, and University of Helsinki Department of Finnish Studies) in the Palmse Manor

2016, April: lecture "The Reception of Film and Television" under the auspices of course FLKU.05.229 Reception Theory and Sociology of Art (6 EAP)

2014, June: "Narrative Matters 2014: Narrative Knowing/ Récit et Savoir" conference (American University of Paris, France), presenter in panel "Narrative and Complexity II" (with M. Grishakova and M. Poulaki;

moderator: R. Walsh); presentation: "Collaborative sense-making complexities of Lost and Breaking Bad"

2014, April: Cognitive Futures in the Humanities 2nd International Conference (University of Durham, UK), invited presenter (presentation: "Finding the Ties, Minding the Minds: Collaborative sense-making complexities of Lost and Breaking Bad")

2013, December: invited presenter at the 57. Scientific conference on Kreutzwald, entitled "Transmedial transitions" with presentation "Coherent character intentions, non-plausible stories? Emergent collective thinking of thinking in the Internet reception of "Breaking Bad"

2013, April-May: lector, refresher course "The Analysis of Film Work" for the teachers of Estonian Language and Literature

2013, August: participation in the Summer Course in Narrative Studies (SINS2013), University of Aarhus (PhD course certificate)

2012, October: presentation "Correlations of Form and Response: Free and Restricted Plays of Sense-Making" at the international conference "Narration and Narratives as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study" (Örebro University, research group "Narration, Life, and Meaning" in History and Literary Studies)

2012, June: presentation "(In)determinacies of Comprehension: Making Sense of Television Serials as Joint World-Construction" (co-author M. Grishakova) at the StoryNet intensive seminar "Narratives and entertainment: The use of stories to make communication more entertaining and effective" (University of Amsterdam, School of Communication Research)

2011, November-December: Review of two research items (BA) under the auspices of SA Archimedes research contest of 2011

2011, May: presentation: "Open Texts, Open Interpretations: Narrative Dynamics of Continuous Viewer Participation" at the international Nordic Network of Narrative Studies (NNNS) conference "Teaching Narrative and Teaching Through Narrative" (University of Tampere)

2011, May: participation in Doctoral Course as part of NNNS international conference "Teaching Narrative and Teaching Through Narrative" (University of Tampere)

2010, October: participation in the intensive seminar "Narrative Interactions: Stories, Identities and Voices", Institute of Cultural Research and Fine Arts, University of Tartu (certificate)

Public and social activities

Sorokin, Siim (2015). Me peame rääkime rassismist Eestis: pagulasteema sõnavägivald. *Müürileht*, 47, 20−21

Sorokin, Siim (trans.) (interview by: Sobtšuk, O) (2014). Humanitaarteaduski võib olla praktiline ja rakenduslik. Interview with Prof. A. Nünning. Valle-Sten Maiste (Toim.). 26−27

ELULOOKIRJELDUS

Nimi: Siim Sorokin
Sünniaeg: 18. mai, 1984
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Haridus:

2010–2018   Doktorantuur Tartu Ülikooli Kultuuriteaduste instituudi eesti ja võrdleva rahvaluule osakonna juures (kirjanduse ja kultuuriteaduste õppekava)

2007–2010   Kirjanduse ja rahvaluule magistriõpe Tartu Ülikoolis; omandatud Humanitaarteaduste magistri kaad (eesti ja võrdlev rahvaluule) (*cum laude*)
Siim Sorokin, magistrikraad, 2010, (juhendaja) Ülo Valk, Jutustaja – kas hääle andja või hääle kandja?, Tartu Ülikool, Filosoofiateaduskond, Kultuuriuuringute ja kunstide instituut, Eesti ja võrdleva rahvaluule osakond

2003–2007   Kirjanduse ja rahvaluule bakalaureuseõpe Tartu Ülikoolis; omandatud Humanitaarteaduste bakalaureusekraad (eesti ja võrdlev rahvaluule)

2000–2003   Hugo Treffneri Gümnaasium (humanitaarsuunitlusega klass)

Keelteoskus: eesti, inglise – C2; saksa – B2; vene – A1

Teenistuskäik

            Tartu Ülikool, Humanitaarteaduste ja kunstide valdkond, Kultuuriteaduste instituut, Kultuuriteaduste nooremteadur (0,85)

2010–2018   Tartu Ülikool, Humanitaarteaduste ja kunstide valdkond, Kultuuriteaduste instituut, Eesti ja võrdleva rahvaluule osakond, doktorant (1,00)

Teaduslik ja arendustegevus

Peamised uurimisvaldkonnad:

– 2. Ühiskonnateadused ja kultuur; 2.4 Kultuuriuuringud; CERCS ERIALA: H400 Folkloristika; PÕHISUUND: Televisuaalse teksti sotsio-kognitiivne retseptsioon internetipõhise (blogid) dünaamilise interaktsiooni/loomingu-liste kogukondade näitel.

Publikatsioonide üldloetelu:

Grishakova, Marina; Sorokin, Siim (2016). Notes on Narrative, Cognition, and Cultural Evolution. *Sign Systems Studies*, 44 (4), 542–561. http://dx.doi.org/10.12697/SSS.2016.44.4.04

Sorokin, Siim (2016). Televaatajate ja karakterite intersubjektiivne ja konteks-tuaalne lõimumine teleseriaali "Halvale teele" internetiretseptsioonis. *Eesti*

Kirjandusmuuseumi aastaraamat. Tartu: EKM Teaduskirjastus. (Paar sammukest Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Aastaraamat 2012–2013) 125–152

Sorokin, Siim (2013). Televaatajate ühistoimeline tähendusloome. *Acta Semiotica Estica*, 10, 11–39

Sorokin, Siim (2010). Die Zeit und die Erfahrungswelt des Menschen – der literarische Text und das Gedächtnis. Liimets, Airi. *Denkkulturen. Selbstwerdung des Menschen. Erziehungskulturen: Festschrift für Professor Dr. Dr. h. c. Dr. h. c. Heino Liimets*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften (Baltische Studien zur Erziehungs- und Sozialwissenschaft; 18) 225–237

Sorokin, Siim (2015). Collaborative sense-making complexities of (for?) *Lost* and *Breaking Bad*. *Proceedings of the 7th Narrative Matters Conference*, 2014; Narrative Knowing/Récit et Savoir: Narrative Matters Conference, 2014; Pariis, Prantsusmaa, 23.–27. juuni, 2014. hal-univ-diderot.archives-ouvertes.fr/NARRATIVE_MATTERS/search/index/q/authFullName_t%3A%28Sorokin+Siim%29/1-11

Sorokin, Siim (2017). Pärisustamise paradoksid: narratiivsed persoonid, "Halvale teele" ja argitarkus netisuhtluses. Ostrak, Anne; Voolaid, Piret (Toim.). Annual conference of Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies and annual 61st Kreutzwald Days conference. Variation in Language, Literature, Folklore, and Music. December 7–8, 2017. Programme and Abstracts. Annual conference of Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies and annual 61st Kreutzwald Days conference, 7–8. December, 2017. Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, Tartu. 112–114

Sorokin, Siim (2014). Finding the Ties, Minding the Minds: Collaborative Sense-Making Complexities of *Lost* and *Breaking Bad*. *Cognitive Futures in the Humanities 2nd International Conference University of Durham, 24.–26. April 2014 Book of Abstracts: Cognitive Futures in the Humanities 2nd International Conference University of Durham*, *24.–26. April 2014*. Ed. Garratt, Peter. Durham University, UK. 21–22

Sorokin, Siim (2013). Sidusad karakterikavatsused, ebausutavad lood? Kollektiivselt esilduv mõtlemisest mõtlemine teleseriaali "Breaking Bad" internetiretseptsioonis. Labi, Kanni (Toim.). *57. Kreutzwaldi päevade teaduslik konverents "Transmeedialised siirded". "Transmeedialised siirded", 17.–18. detsember, 2013*. Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Teaduskirjastus. 8–10

Sorokin, Siim (2015). Me peame rääkima rassismist Eestis: pagulasteema sõnavägivald. *Müürileht*, 47, 20–21

Sorokin, Siim (tõlk.) (intervjueeris Sobtšuk, O.) (2014). Humanitaarteaduski võib olla praktiline ja rakenduslik. Interview with Prof. A. Nünning. Valle-Sten Maiste (Toim.). 26−27

Teaduslikud artiklid rahvusvahelise levikuga väljaannetes:

Grishakova, Marina; Sorokin, Siim (2016). Notes on Narrative, Cognition, and Cultural Evolution. *Sign Systems Studies*, 44 (4), 542–561. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.12697/SSS.2016.44.4.04

Sorokin, Siim (2010). Die Zeit und die Erfahrungswelt des Menschen – der literarische Text und das Gedächtnis. Liimets, Airi. *Denkkulturen. Selbstwerdung des Menschen. Erziehungskulturen: Festschrift für Professor Dr. Dr. h. c. Dr. h. c. Heino Liimets*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften (Baltische Studien zur Erziehungs- und Sozialwissenschaft; 18). 225–237

Saadud uurimistoetused:
PUT1481 "Imaginaarsete narratiivsete stsenaariumite roll kultuuridünaamikas (1.01.2017−31.12.2020)", Marina Grišakova, Tartu Ülikool, Humanitaarteaduste ja kunstide valdkond, kultuuriteaduste instituut; Täitja.

IUT2-43 "Traditsioon, loovus ja ühiskond: vähemused ja alternatiivsed diskursused (1.01.2013−31.12.2018)", Ülo Valk, Tartu Ülikool, Humanitaarteaduste ja kunstide valdkond, kultuuriteaduste instituut; Täitja.

Lõppenud projektid
PUT192 "Esilduvad lood: jutustamine ja ühine tähendusloome narratiivses keskkonnas (1.01.2013−31.12.2016)", Marina Grišakova, Tartu Ülikool, Humanitaarteaduste ja kunstide valdkond, kultuuriteaduste instituut.

ETF8874 "Narratiivi vormid ja funktsioonid tänapäeva kultuuris: narratiiv kui kognitsiooni, kommunikatsiooni ning tähendusloome viis (1.01.2011− 31.12. 2015)", Marina Grišakova, Tartu Ülikool, Filosoofiateaduskond.

SF0180139s08 "Folkloor ja ühiskond: pärimusmälu, loovus, rakendused (1.01.2008−31.12.2012)", Ülo Valk, Tartu Ülikool, Filosoofiateaduskond.

ETF7166 "Narratiivi semiootika ja kultuuri interdistsiplinaarne analüüs (1.01.2007−31.12.2010)", Marina Grišakova, Tartu Ülikool, Filosoofiateaduskond.

Muu teaduslik organisatsiooniline ja erialane tegevus:
august, 2017–jaanuar, 2018: LACE Talvekooli „Uses of Narrative" korralduskomitee liige

2011–… Põhjamaade Narratiiviuurijate Koostöövõrgustiku (Nordic Network of Narrative Studies) veebimeister

2010–… Põhjamaade Narratiiviuurijate Koostöövõrgustiku (Nordic Network of Narrative Studies) liige

Õppetöö
Andmed kõrgkoolis tehtud auditoorse õppetöö kohta:
aprill, 2016: loeng "Filmi ja televisiooni retseptsioon" ainekursuse FLKU. 05.229 Retseptsiooniteooria ja kunstisotsioloogia (6 EAP) raames

aprill-mai, 2013: eesti keele ja kirjandusõpetajate täienduskoolitus "Filmiteose analüüs" (FLKU.TK.081), lektor

Juhendamine:
november-detsember, 2011: Kahe teadustöö (BA) retsenseerimine 2011. Aasta SA Archimedese teadustööde konkursi raames
Laura Mägi: *Lapsetapu ja libahundi motiivid eesti õuduskirjanduses*. Juhendaja: Siim Sorokin (MA); oponent: teadur Merili Metsvahi (1.06.2011)

Administratiivtöö ja muud kohustused
august, 2017–jaanuar, 2018: LACE Talvekooli "Uses of Narrative" korraldus-komitee liige
2011–… Põhjamaade Narratiiviuurijate Koostöövõrgustiku (Nordic Network of Narrative Studies) veebimeister
2010–… Põhjamaade Narratiiviuurijate Koostöövõrgustiku (Nordic Network of Narrative Studies) liige

Erialane enesetäiendus
5.–6. aprill, 2018: ettekanne "Digital Enclaves as Leakage Spaces for Societal Realities: Reciprocal Misogyny of Skyler White" (algne pealkiri) konverentsil "Real Fictions" (Tampere Ülikool; korraldajad – Narrare: Centre for Interdisciplinary Narrative Studies, The Academy of Finland project "The Literary in Life: Exploring the Boundaries between Literature and the Everyday", Doctoral Programme in Literary Studies)
22.-26. jaanuar, 2018: LACE Talvekooli "Uses of Narrative" korralduskomitee liige
7.–8. detsember, 2017: ettekanne "Pärisustamise paradoksid: narratiivsed persoonid, "Halvale teele" ja argitarkus netisuhtluses" Eesti-uuringute tippkeskuse (CEES) aastakonverentsil/61. Kreutzwaldi päevade konve-rentsil
august, 2016: ettekanne "The Lives of Characters: Affective World-Building in the Internet Discussions of Breaking Bad" rahvusvahelisel konverentsil "The Stories of Hope and Fear: Mapping Emotions and Affects in Life, Arts, and Literature." Peakorraldaja prof. dr. Marina Grishakova (kaaskorraldajad Tampere Ülikooli School of Literary and Translation Studies, Helsingi Ülikooli Department of Finnish Studies) Palmse mõisas
aprill, 2016: loeng "Filmi ja televisiooni retseptsioon" ainekursuse FLKU. 05.229 Retseptsiooniteooria ja kunstisotsioloogia (6 EAP) raames
juuni, 2014: konverentsi "Narrative Matters 2014: Narrative Knowing/ Récit et Savoir" (American University of Paris, Prantsusmaa), paneeli "Narrative and Complexity II" esineja (koos M. Grishakova ja M. Poulaki; moderaator: R. Walsh); ettekanne: "Collaborative sense-making comple-xities of Lost and Breaking Bad"
aprill, 2014: Cognitive Futures in the Humanities 2nd International Conference (University of Durham, UK), kutsutud esineja (ettekanne: "Finding the

Ties, Minding the Minds: Collaborative sense-making complexities of Lost and Breaking Bad")

detsember, 2013: 57. Kreutzwaldi päevade teadusliku konverentsi "Transmediaalsed siirded" kutsutud esineja, ettekanne "Sidusad karakterikavatsused, ebausutavad lood? Kollektiivselt esilduv mõtlemisest mõtlemine teleseriaali "Halvale teele" internetiretseptsioonis"

aprill-mai, 2013: eesti keele ja kirjandusõpetajate täienduskoolitus "Filmiteose analüüs" (FLKU.TK.081), lektor

august, 2013: osavõtt Suumer Course in Narrative Studies (SINS2013) suvekoolist Aarhusi Ülikoolis (PhD course certificate)

oktoober, 2012: ettekanne "Correlations of Form and Response: Free and Restricted Plays of Sense-Making" rahvusvahelisel konverentsil "Narration and Narratives as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study" (Örebro Ülikool, research group "Narration, Life, and Meaning" in History and Literary Studies)

juuni, 2012: ettekanne: "(In)determinacies of Comprehension: Making Sense of Television Serials as Joint World-Construction" (kaasautor M. Grishakova) StoryNeti intensiivseminaril "Narratives and entertainment: The use of stories to make communication more entertaining and effective" (Amsterdami Ülikool, School of Communication Research)

november-detsember, 2011: Kahe teadustöö (BA) retsenseerimine 2011. Aasta SA Archimedese teadustööde konkursi raames

mai, 2011: ettekanne "Open Texts, Open Interpretations: Narrative Dynamics of Continuous Viewer Participation" NNNS-i rahvusvahelisel konverentsil "Teaching Narrative and Teaching Through Narrative" (Tampere Ülikool)

mai, 2011: osavõtt doktorikursusest NNNS-i rahvusvahelise konverentsi "Teaching Narrative and Teaching Through Narrative" raames (Tampere)

oktoober, 2010: osavõtt Tartu Ülikooli Kultuuriteaduste ja kunstide instituudi intensiivseminarist "Narrative Interactions: Stories, Identities and Voices" (täienduskoolituse tunnistus)

Muud publikatsioonid

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Sorokin, Siim (tõlk.) (intervjueeris Sobtšuk, O.) (2014). Humanitaarteaduski võib olla praktiline ja rakenduslik. Interview with Prof. A. Nünning. Valle-Sten Maiste (Toim.). 26−27

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