The Craft of Post-Narratology

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INTRODUCTION

UN/TRODDEN "POST" IN NARRATOLOGY

ZEINEB DERBALI

Narratology[1] has continually been of interest to theorists, linguists, philosophers, anthropologists and literary analysts as it examines verbal and non-verbal narratives through the lens of "narrative science." Up to the 1980s, the term narratology generally meant "narratology à la Genette" (Kindt VI). It was then, ramified into different trends such as poststructuralist narratology, Anglophone narratology, postcolonial narratology, feminist narratology, transgeneric narratology, and transmedial narratology.

This branch of knowledge is thus energized by various theoretical models and concepts leading it to expand into post-narratology and postclassical narratology. The latter—coined by Herman—examines "how interpreters of stories are able to activate relevant kinds of knowledge with or without explicit textual cues to guide them" (Herman, 1997). While pertaining more to narrative generation, post-narratology "refers to a new research system that adopts a synthetic approach to narrative and content that are seen as comprising an organic object; it focuses on the generation and creation of narratives and content by inheriting the previous traditions of narratology and literary theories" (Takashi Ogata, 2019, 86). Post-classical narratology witnessed a moment of extension that compliments classical narratology, yet the two forms of narratology do not break with the first; they are "now in an ongoing phase of expansion" (Olsen, 7).

Indeed, there is a need to revisit narratology in terms of form, content, methodology, and scope in the light of such minority narratives as, slavery narratives, Asian narratives, Arab narratives, and so on, which can be described as "mini" narratives. They narrate differently from Western narrators and target different narratees. They are marginal and carry their own narrative specificity, aside from playing a role in historicising and transferring culture. Minority narratives nurture a dialogue between

[1] Narratology and "narrative theory" were coined by Tzvetan Todorov in 1969.

disciplines, powers, generations, and arts. They do not criticise other narratives; they refute specialisation and geometrisation. They disturb the blurrings between autobiography, history, testimony, storytelling, religion, and so on. They are the residence of interrelated disciplines and subdisciplines. The tension between all trends of narrative theory (pre/post structuralist narratology and postclassical narratology) consequently enlarges the scope of narratology to become a scientific, theoretical, ideological, and methodological research discipline. Thus, this volume seeks to revisit and remodel narratologi(es) as well as assess new research trajectories in the craft of post-narratology.

Surveying narratology

Narratology is premised on the presupposition that Western philosophy did not invent narratology as a theory or a discipline. Narratology has developed through time. Since literary theory is comparatively new, so is narratology—as a label and not a practice—indeed, narratology is the theory of the narrative while the subject of study is narrative. Thus, narrative requires a definition that serves the shaded typology of narratologies presented in this volume. It is undebatable that narrative has different roles in different disciplines. "There are countless forms of narrative in the world. First of all, there is a prodigious variety of genres, each of which branches out into a variety of media, as if all substances could be relied upon to accommodate man's stories" (237) proposes Roland Barthes in "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative." He continues: "among the vehicles of narrative are articulated language, whether oral or written, pictures, still or moving, gestures, and an ordered mixture of all those substances; narrative is present in myths, legends, fables, tales, short stories, epics, history, tragedy, drama [suspense drama], comedy, pantomime, paintings [. . .], stained-glass windows, movies, local news, conversation" (ibid). Barthes's quotation points to an infinite number of genres of narrative, forms of narrative, vehicles of narrative, media of narrative and stories. Barthes compares narrative to "life itself" (ibid.); therefore, since narrative forms, vehicles, media, and genres are infinite and plural so is the theory of narrative. "Literary theory can be understood [. . .] in terms of principles and concepts, strategies and tactics needed to guide critical practice" (Castle, 2). Consequently the "principles, concepts, strategies and tactics needed to guide critical practice" (ibid.) of narrative theory are plural and diverse the way narrative is. It is from this very standpoint that narratology's treatment emphasises the plurality and diversity of the theory.

The next phase of narratology after the Aristotelian one is structural or classical narrative theory. Indeed, Roland Barthes tries to create rules for literature and frames it the way linguists treat language. He proposes to use linguistics—based on a logical approach—as a basic model for the structural analyses of narrative (239). He proposes "to distinguish three levels in any narrative work: the level of 'functions' as first proposed by Vladimir Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktales* (1928), the level of 'actions' as used by Greimas in referring to characters as 'actants' in *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method* (1966) and the level of 'narratives' (which is roughly the level of "discourse" as seen by Todorov)" (243).

Barthes's quotation captures not only the basic structure of modern narratology, but also the fact that the structuralist narratologist quotes theorists who developed similar concepts (Valdimir Propp, Bremond, Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov).

Barthes—as early as the 1970s—identified the recurrent structures that are focused on in many narratives yet the very structures are kept and further developed by theorists. Indeed, he considers that the structural analysis of any narrative is grounded on: functions, actions and narration (16). First, he determines and classifies the narrative units. Second, he analyses how the narrative units are linked, which is functional syntax. Third, Barthes theorizes the structural status of a character (actions), and this coheres with Aristotle's mimetic theory of "men in action." He further defines the "problems" related to classifying the character before moving to the last structure in analysing a narrative, which is narration. The last component contains three sub-parts: narrative communication, narrative situation, and the system of narrative. He considers that "the narrative, viewed as object, is the basis of a communication: there is a giver of narrative and a recipient of narrative" (260). This definition already encompasses the concept of "narrating" elaborated by Gerald Prince in *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (1982); Barthes's "narrative communication" is but Prince's the narrator, the narratee, narration, and narrated. The narrative situation, which refers to the narrational signs as point of view, authorial interventions, beginnings and endings of narrative, styles of representations, and the writing process (246), are Gerald Prince's theoretical consideration of the narrated (organisation of events). The last component in Roland Barthes's tripartite structural analysis of any narrative is, as he recognises, "an articulation and an integration, of form and a meaning" (266). In the system and language of narrative, we look for how meaning is discovered and form marked.

To conclude, Barthes's "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" is like Aristotle's *Poetics*. The former is the genesis of structural narratology while the latter is the origin of narratology in general. "Though the term narratology is relatively new," maintains Prince, "the discipline is not, as in the western tradition, it goes back at least to Plato and Aristotle" (4). He adds that in the twentieth century it has been considerably developed (ibid.).

In her *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Mieke Bal considers that narratology is "the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events—of cultural artifacts that tell a story. Such theory helps us understand, analyze and evaluate narrative" (4). In her definition, Bal explicates that narratology is a group of theories that concern narratives of different types. So already the diversity of narratives implies and necessitates the diversity of theories. Furthermore, she hints at their purposes and reduces them not to identify the structure or model of the narratives, rather to "understand, analyze and evaluate" (ibid.). Subsequently, we read about a different theory of narrative that focuses on text analyses and deconstruction. Post-narratology indeed is a theory that is contained in the text. David Herman coined "postclassical narratology" in his essay "Script, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of Postclassical Narratology" in 1997. He asserts that:

> My goal is not to dismiss classical narrative poetics as an outmoded framework for analysis but to argue for its continued usefulness within certain limits. Rethinking the problem of narrative sequences can promote the development of a postclassical narratology that is not necessarily poststructuralist, an enriched theory that draws on concepts and methods to which the classical narratologies did not have access [. . .] postclassical narratology is being energized by a variety of theoretical models and perspectives—feminist, rhetorical, linguistic, and computational. (1048–49)

At the centre of this quotation lie both limits and a critique of classical narratology. It is considered useful "within certain limits" while postclassical narratology is a site for a dialogue between many theories. "Postclassical narratology introduces elaborations of classical narratology that both consolidate and diversify the basic theoretical core of narratology" contend Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, adding that it "proposes extensions of the classical model that open the fairly focused and restricted realm of narratology to methodological, thematic, and contextual influences from outside" (2). Subsequently postclassical narratology does not abide by a

single approach or method or reading. It reflects the variety of narratives in one text.

Like classical narratology, postclassical narratology went through different categories, trends, and phases. The theoretical development of postclassical narrative theory is carried in comparison with classical narratology. The rise of diachronic and historical narratology coupled with the move toward a grand contextual, historical, pragmatic, and reader-oriented effort constructs postclassical narratology asserts Ansgar Nunning (qtd in Alber and Fludernick, 6). Accordingly, postclassical narratology follows theoretical extensions and development.

Organization of the Book

This volume is organised into three parts that offer wide-ranging perspectives on narratology as a theory and practice. All the chapters focus on an infinite number of narrative genres, forms, and media. Since narratology is plural and diverse so are the chapters. The first part is negotiating the "post" in narrative theory. The "post" is scrutinised in paratextual prefaces, death/suicide/confession texts, and finally in narratives of meditation and contemplative narratives. The second deals with both religious and political discourse. We read about a narrative analysis of the Quranic stories in Surat Al-Kamar, the fifty-fourth chapter of the Holy Book, while stories and narratives of the American Civil War are deconstructed in terms of structure, modes, and discourse. The last part of the volume presents post-narratology in visual narratives. In this part, the audio-visual narrative of three short stories as well as the trans-medial strategies of Donald Trump's narrative are investigated.

The first chapter, by Amel Ben Ahmed, "A Narratological Reading of Henry Fielding's Paratextual Prefaces in Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones and Jonathan Wild," examines the prefatory materials of Henry Fielding's major novels as a "paratext" that affects the "reception" and functions as a liminal space between the "inside and outside" of his narratives (Génette, 1–2), in order to highlight the metafictional potential of the novels that triggers indeed more complex reflections on the nature of history and fiction, truth and facts. Drawing upon Genette's theory of the paratext in relation to the discipline of narratology, this chapter explores the narrators' differing levels of intrusion in the three prefaces focusing on the uses of paratextual and narratorial interventions. Ben Ahmed retrieves Genette's concept of the paratext and does so by centring on the relation between literary narration and paratexts and by discussing the implications of this relation for notions of authorship in Fielding's novels. The novels under

consideration in this chapter, each in its specific way, negotiate different evaluative views of the reader and reading. The prefaces, as Ben Ahmed discusses them, serve as a prominent example of the novel itself as criticism: instances where novels, rather than simply being the objects of critical debate, also function as vehicles for participating in it.

The second chapter, "Meditation as Narrative, Narrative as Meditation: A Quest for Contemplative Narrative in French Poetry," is written by Mykyta Steshenko. Unlike prose poems with their apparent linearity, manifest topography, and noticeable events, Steshenko studies some poems in the light of contemplative narratology with meditation being its particular feature and mode of expression. He refers to a separate field of study: "contemplative narrative." He examines contemplative narrative as characterised by its vertically oriented nature and passive perceiving of the world; one narrates, and by narrating, one contemplates. Baudelaire's poem "Interior Life" and "echoes" are examined with emphasis on the notion of space, narrative sequence, metaphysical narrative and cognitive frames. Narrative poetry extends and deepens the principal concepts of post-narratology. It reinvents the notions of space and event and lends itself to a reading informed by metaphysical narratology due to its unique non-narrative mode.

The last chapter in this part investigates a different narrative text: a death note or suicide note. Ilhem Issaoui's chapter, "Death Is Not an Antithesis to Presence: A Narratological Reading of Nidhal Ghribi's Death Note," aims to explore the dichotomy between the presence and absence by focusing on narration from a Genettian perspective, particularly on author and authorship (diegesis, autodiegetic narrator, and function of narrators). Issaoui analyses the narrative of suicide and particularly death as intricate and problematic, as the narrative of suicide is a mini-narrative of otherness. She, further, studies characterisation with reference to Uri Margolin's analysis of characterisation. The chapter scrutinises "the suicidal note" as a confessional piece of writing thematically as well as theoretically. The narrative of death represents the voice of otherness that strives to confess and forge an identity and a discourse. The chapter extends the narrative analysis to one that is labelled: narrative of the 'enfant terrible'. It disrupts the notion of time, place, and even identity. Whether it is about a self erased or a self revealed, suicidal discourse as a discourse of otherness is a discourse that strives to speak of a type of living and belonging.

The penultimate part in this volume identifies the narrative features and conventions of one religious text and two other texts dealing with narratives about the American Civil War. The fourth chapter, written by Rihab Hammi, investigates the significance of narrative analysis to the

Qur'anic stories in Surat Al-Kamar, the fifty-fourth chapter of the Holy Book. It analyses narratives in the light of inter- and intra-verse relations, based on the linguistic and situational contexts of the stories. Using the cohesion taxonomies of Halliday and Hassan (1976) together with "Al-Jirjany's Nadhm theory," it compares the two frameworks to refute criticism on applying a Western taxonomy on an Arabic piece of work. The contributor concludes that results prove the existence of phonetic, lexical, and structural recursive patterns within the text. Besides, there is intertextuality between stories, continuity, and a textual organic unity. An important contribution of this study is that it unveils the miraculousness (I'jaaz) of the Holy Book in terms of numbers, and a dominant phonetic and lexical parallelism.

The fifth chapter, "Historiography and Narratology: Narratives of the American Civil War," written by Fathi Bourmeche, aims to provide different narratives about the American Civil War. The main reason behind the war in Americans' collective memory was to abolish slavery, giving credit to Abraham Lincoln. The paper is an endeavour to delve into different narratives about the Civil War, particularly in relation to its reasons, through a juxtaposition of Lincoln's statements, expressed prior to and during the war, with two secondary sources, one published in 1967 and one in 2017. The contributor's intention is to have a historiographical account of the war from different lenses to gain a better understanding of its main cause, unveiling some established myths around the event, particularly in relation to slavery.

The sixth chapter continues the dialogue between post-narratology and political discourse. Sadok Ladhibi's "Stories of War: Narrativity in Walt Whitman's 'The Centenarian's Story'" studies Whitman's Civil War poem "the Centenarian's Story" from a postclassical narratological perspective. In this chapter, issues of narrativity such as narrative structures, figural narrativity, and modes of narrativity are examined in order to explore the relationship between lyric and narrative modes in poetry. Applying a transgeneric narratological approach to lyric poetry, Ladhibi's chapter attempts to highlight the possibilities that narratological analysis of lyric poetry may offer. The analysis of Whitman's poem "The Centenarian Story" examines how narrativity contributes to the poetic reconstruction of national history.

The final part is entitled "The Post in Visual Narratives." We read Saïd Dalhoumi's "MAGA from Slogan to Narrative: A Survey of the Trans-medial Strategies of Narrative Representation in Donald Trump's Post-Truth Politics." In this chapter, the contributor interprets MAGA from slogan to a narrative text. While MAGA (Make America Great Again) has

been repeatedly utilised as a propaganda slogan by presidential candidates, both Republican and Democratic, it is only with Donald Trump that this catchphrase has been developed into a full-fledged narrative. This chapter examines the slogan as complex, an actantial narrative, a narrative of the superhero and discourse of othering in Donald Trump's campaign. The contributor extends analysis to post-truth politics, trans-medial strategies, and ideologies of falsehoods. The chapter emphasises that the MAGA narrative responds to the requirements of an image-obsessed and hyper-mediated electorate. Thus, depending on a multimodally constituted narrative, it managed to propagate a new image of the American president that revolves around showmanship, cowboyism, and bravado. Through disinformation strategies, fake news, false flags, and a deep narrative intuition, Donald Trump has succeeded not only in shaking the traditional communication landscape but also in breaking the conventional political model. This chapter concludes that the trans-medial strategies of Trump's narrative and the different narrative codes that have been employed blur the boundaries between fiction and reality and manipulate the American voting public.

The eighth chapter, by Sana Ouslati, "The Audio-Visual Narrative in William Faulkner's Short Stories 'A Bear Hunt,' 'A Rose for Emily,' 'Black Music,' and 'Carcassonne.'" The contributor examines the common ground between literature and cinematography in Faulkner's four short stories in relation to the cinematic realm of Hollywood. She studies chronophotography in the narrative, fragmentariness of text and pictures, then scrutinises the different flashbacks and the crosscutting of the camera eye. Furthermore, the chapter treats theatricality, visualisation (optic illusion as "a forced perspective"), and hearing the text's orality and/or literacy. Narratology and all its "post" is not invented by "estern philosophy as a theory or a discipline. It has been growing out of emerging literatures, modes of communication, and criticism and post-narratology is a site for their dialogue.

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PART 1.

NEGOTIATING THE POST IN NARRATIVE THEORY

CHAPTER 1

A NARRATOLOGICAL READING OF HENRY FIELDING'S PARATEXTUAL PREFACES IN *JOSEPH ANDREWS*, *TOM JONES*, AND *JONATHAN WILD*

AMEL BEN AHMED

Abstract

Henry Fielding's novels discuss a variety of ideas and assumptions about the interplay between fiction, history, authorship, writer and reader. Fielding's style and narrative techniques foreground indeed his interest in the challenges and intricacies of writing fiction. Along with his first experiment in the novel genre *Jonathan Wild*, his two masterpieces *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* delineate the evolving use of diverse stylistic and narrative modes that shape and establish the increasingly assertive authorial voice of the novelist. Fielding develops a particular narrator role in the prefaces to his novels which reconfigures their general structure and serve to bring up what is arguably the eighteenth century's central issue with regard to reading: the dynamic and dialectical relationship between text and the reader that serves moral instruction. This article examines then the prefatory materials of Henry Fielding's major novels as a "paratext" that affects the "reception" and functions as a liminal space between the "inside and outside" of his narratives (Génette 1-2), in order to highlight the metafictional potential of the novels that triggers indeed more complex reflections on the nature of history and fiction, truth and facts. Drawing upon Gérard Genette's theory of the paratext, prolepsis and the extradiegetic level of narration, this article explores the narrators' differing levels of intrusion in the three prefaces focusing on the uses of paratextual and narratorial interventions. The article retrieves from Genette's concept of the paratext in relation to by scrutinizing the relation between literary narration and paratexts and by discussing the implications of this relation

for notions of authorship in Fielding's novels. The novels under consideration in this article, each in its specific way, negotiate different evaluative views of the reader and reading. The prefaces, as I will attempt to prove, serve as a prominent example of the novel itself as criticism: instances where novels, rather than simply being the objects of critical debate, also function as vehicles for participating in it. The articles examines also Genette's sense of "textual transcendence" (*Palimpsests* 1), that is at the center of his poetics and aesthetics of narratology, and which I think characterizes also Fielding's narratives as structures of meaning attesting then to the dynamic and evolving interplay between authorship, reader and truth, history and fiction in his writings.

Henry Fielding is a recognized figure in respect to the 'history' of the novel as an established literary genre during the Eighteenth century. Along with Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson, "the formal realism" of his novels (Watt 10), marked the development of the novel genre and intrinsically linked it to the debate on the role of the author which should be viewed in relation to the struggle for "social standing and cultural authority at a moment of radical social change", as authors witnessed their social status diminishing with the emergence of the construct of the professional writer (Bell 2). In fact, Fielding was writing in a period where the role of the authors was much debated, his novels grew out of a period which witnessed the emergence of a divergent, sometimes conflictual understanding of authorship and ownership. His major novels, namely *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, foreground indeed his interest in the challenges and intricacies of writing fiction. Along with his first experiment in the novel genre *Jonathan Wild*, these two masterpieces delineate the gradual development from the pervasive and self-reflexive irony of his earlier dramatic works to the more confident interplay of diverse stylistic and narrative modes that shape and establish the increasingly assertive authorial voice of the novelist he would further maintain in his latter novels.

Fielding's novels do clearly show the remarkable developments in his style and narrative techniques which can be seen in relation to his own evolving theory of fiction: his "New Province of Writing". In *Joseph Andrews*, his theory of "The Comic Epic in Prose" is thoroughly outlined but it remained for *Tom Jones* to exemplify it as a whole or to fully 'practice' it. Fielding's entry into the world of "prose fiction" coincided indeed with a period seen as pivotal in the development of the novel, because it witnessed "an epistemological crisis [and] a major cultural transition in attitudes toward how to tell the truth in narrative" (Mckeon,

161). In Europe, the lengthy *roman*, concerned with, to use McKeon's terminology, "questions of virtue," and morality developed into the *histoire romaine*, and then started to be pervaded by the shorter *nouvelle*, concerned with much more complex questions of truth and how to tell the truth in a narrative (Mckeon 20). Fielding's awareness of this shift in trend towards a new understanding of truth and a more conscious awareness of its diverse socio-historical associations is highlighted through his choice of terminology, with many of his texts containing a reference to "history" within their titles: *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his friend Mr. Abraham Adams* (1942) *Clarissa* (1748) or *The History of a Young Lady*, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, (1749) *The Life and Death of Jonathan Wild the Great* (1943). According to Edith Kern, the "preoccupation with morality and its concern for truth and vraisemblance" that occurred during this transitional period "prompted writers [Fielding] to distance themselves from romance" (524). This claim to verisimilitude in Fielding's narratives, which is deliberately made in his introductions, prefatory chapters or essays and prefaces, attests to the discourse on authorship in Fielding's novels.

As Ansgar Nünning has argued, "the extensive use of metanarration in Fielding serves as a literary means of staging authorship and poetological self-reflection, reflecting Fielding's attempt to establish the novel in the neoclassicist system of genres and to formulate a theory of the novel" ("On Metanarrative: Towards a Definition, a Typology and an Outline of the Functions of Metanarrative Commentary" 41-2). Henry Fielding's 'innovative' approach to narrative form and his narratorial choices have been thoroughly discussed by classical but still influential critics such as R.S. Crane and Ralph Rader, who stress either the artifice and control of the narrator (Crane, 1957) or the diverse socio-historical representations that the novel typifies even as it creates a comic artefact (Rader, 2011). Crane's analysis of the plot of Fielding's *Tom Jones* stresses particularly its unifying comic form whereby, he claims that our anxiety over Tom's fate "is the comic analogue of fear" (87), comic because there are plenty of narrative signals that will be finally validated in the basically good and virtuous world that Fielding evokes and controls. Malinda Snow in her article "The Judgement of Evidence in *Tom Jones*" discusses the narrator's manipulation of evidence in *Tom Jones* claiming that the narrator's slippery nature forestalls any first-time reader who might think he can draw accurate conclusions and claims about characters and events before finishing the novel and who thinks that he can ever come to definite conclusions about the best methods of judging evidence. While D.A Miller rejects the "human verisimilitude, the all-too-familiar 'character' with

which [the narrator of Fielding's novels] can't help tending to coincide" (31-32) by comparing the novel to Jane Austen's more impersonal or dematerialized authority, the influential presence of the figure of the narrator in Fielding's novels, particularly in *Tom Jones*, has been acclaimed by other critics as one of Fielding's great achievements. In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), Wayne Booth identifies the narrator of *Tom Jones* himself as one of the novel's main characters and describes the story of the narrator's developing intimacy with the reader as an important and effective "subplot" of the novel. F. Kaplan, in his article "Fielding's Novel about Novels: The "Prefaces' and the 'Plot' of *Tom Jones*", designates Fielding's narratological device of speaking to the reader in the first chapter of each of the eighteen books as a prefatorial device.

More recent critical studies of *Tom Jones* scrutinize the way Fielding urges the readers to participate in the novel by making them conscious of their own readership. John Preston, Wolfgang Iser, and others argue that our response to Fielding's novel is "epistemological rather than moral" (Preston 114), that Fielding deliberately leaves gaps in the text which incite us to make inferences about moral actions and to comment on these inferences as more information is present[1].

Aspects of Fielding's style and narrative techniques reflect then ways in which he explores the implications of the terms 'truth,' 'fiction' and 'history,' and grapples with the problems of authority, intrusion and reliability. Fielding's narratives, I think suggest multiple strategies for addressing these issues of authority and narrative discourse. Key topics of discussion include Fielding's evolving use of the differing levels of intrusion created by his narrators' employment of diverse metanarrative commentaries. The relationship in his works between metafiction and fiction remains thus a dialectical and developing one. Fielding's continuous narrative experimentation allows indeed a more sustained narratological study of narrative person, focalization and temporality. My intention in this chapter is to present a narratological analysis of Fielding's major

[1] Iser's and Preston's rhetorical discussions of *Tom Jones* take their points of departure from Wayne C. Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961). Booth examines the nature of Fielding's "telling" narrator arguing that there is no similarity between the story of *Tom Jones* and the narrator's intrusive addresses in which, he notes, "there is no complication, not even any sequence except for the gradually increasing familiarity and intimacy leading to farewell" (216-17). Other critical studies on the narrative point of view in *Tom Jones* include: John Ross Baker, "From Imitation to Rhetoric: The Chicago Critics, Wayne C. Booth, and *Tom Jones*," Novel 6 (1973): 197-217; Michael Bliss, "Fielding's Bill of Fare," ELH 3 (1963):236-43.

novels, focusing particularly on his prefatory essays, chapters and prefaces. This chapter examines then the prefatory materials of Henry Fielding's major novels as a "paratext" that affects the "reception" and functions as a liminal space between the "inside and outside" of his narratives (Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* 1-2), in order to highlight the metafictional potential of the novels that triggers indeed more complex reflections on the nature of history and fiction, truth and facts. Drawing upon Gérard Genette's theory of the paratext in relation to the discipline of narratology, this chapter explores the narrators' differing levels of intrusion in the three prefaces focusing on the uses of paratextual and narratorial interventions. The reference to Genette's concepts of the paratext centers basically on the dynamics of the relation between literary narration and paratexts, which I think is also illuminating in discussing the implications of this relation for notions of authorship in Fielding's novels.

My intention is to present a narratological analysis of Fielding's three major novels drawing upon key concepts as paratext, prolepsis and extradiegetic. In fact, many of the terms introduced by Genette's *Narrative Discourse* have long been used as key concepts and notions of the theoretical and critical discourse about narrative. Although this theory together with its terminology and the synthetic discussion of familiar narrative devices and techniques offered by *Narrative Discourse* have contributed to the book's fame, the theory and its application have been subject to various critiques. Ansgar Nünning, for instance, opposes structuralist ("classical") narratology to the new ("postclassical") narratologies: one according to him is text-centered as it concentrates on textual "features" and "properties," the other is rather context-oriented, and focuses particularly on the dynamics of the reading process which favors thematic readings and posits ideologically charged evaluations. ("Narratology or Narratologies" 243 – 44). The proper context in which to place Genettian narratology, it seems to me, is not a transdisciplinary theory of narrative advocated by postclassical narratology, but the transtextual dimension of Genette's open poetics (*Fiction and Diction* 56). This sense of openness and diversity, I think is also characteristic of Henry Fielding's narrative modes and discourses in his novels.

The novels under consideration in this chapter, each in its specific way, negotiate different evaluative views of the reader and reading. The prefaces and all other prefatory material serve as a prominent example of the novel itself as criticism: instances where novels, rather than simply being the objects of critical debate, also function as vehicles for participating in it. *Joseph Andrews*, which chronicles the adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams, consists of a

preface followed by four books divided into sixty-four chapters. Each chapter is prefaced by a short, often humorous summary. In the preface, Fielding defines and defends his choice of the comic epic, or "comic Epic-Poem in Prose." Claiming a lost work of Homer as precedent, he then argues that the comic epic differs from comedy in having more "comprehensive" action and a greater variety of incidents and characters; it differs from the "serious Romance" in having lower-class characters and hence favoring, in "Sentiments and Diction," the ridiculous over the sublime.

In the preface, Fielding attempts to differentiate the comic epic and comedy generally, from burlesque genre. He claims "no two Species of Writing can differ more widely than the Comic and the Burlesque," for while the writer of burlesque depicts "the monstrous," the writer of comedy depicts "the ridiculous." "The Ridiculous only . . . falls within my Province in the present Work," and Fielding accordingly goes on to define it. "The only Source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is Affectation," to which Fielding assigns two possible causes, "Vanity, or Hypocrisy" (3). The basis of the narrative structure and significance of *Joseph Andrews* resides mainly in its preface and its relationship with the main text. In fact, the preface lengthily introduces to the reader the singularity of the writer and his main thematic concerns and literary choices. As Simon notes, their contents [Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*], like those of the Preface, are based upon various classical and contemporary precedents; also like the Preface, they complicate considerably what is often assumed to be their straightforward relationship with the material which they "premise" (3).

The first question for the reader of *Joseph Andrews* is how to read the Preface. The definition and nature of Fielding's comic theory (the main subject of the Preface) remains of secondary importance, the reader needs first to decide what type of authority to give the Preface. In fact, the preface constitutes the most overt appeal from the author to the reader regarding how to read the story, it serves as "innermost" frame where the author's presence is strongly felt. Its contiguity with both the story and authorial intention enhances its framings and construction of the story's historical contents and further establishes the author's apparent position on the relationship between history and fiction. In his theoretical study of the preface, Genette indicates the variety of French words used for "préface":

> I said the term most commonly employed in French: the list of that term's French parasynonyms is very long, reflecting changing fashions and innovations, as this haphazard and not at all exhaustive sample may suggest: introduction, avant-propos, prologue, note, notice, avis, présentation,

> examen, préambule, avertissement, prélude, discours préliminaire, exorde, avant-dire, poème - and for the postface, après-propos, après-dire, postscriptum, and others. Naturally, many nuances distinguish one term from another, especially when two or more of these texts appear together, as in the didactic type of work, where the preface takes on a function simultaneously more formal and more circumstantial, preceding an introduction that is tied more closely to the subject of the text. (*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* 161)

This multitude of terms with almost synonymous meaning demonstrates not only the instability of both "generic categories" as evinced by Genette's varied generic designations but also of different other "social categories" in respect to the novel as an established literary genre (McKeon 20). The theoretical basis for such an understanding of the preface and prefatory essays in *Joseph Andrews* is provided then by Genette's concept of the paratext as an influential and pivotal category to describe a text's "accompanying productions" such as titles, notes, back and front pages and prefaces (*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* 5). Genette's theory offers a conceptual basis for examining the relations between the text proper and the elements he defines as paratext. It also highlights the main functions that paratextual elements such as the preface might fulfill as mediating between a text and both its imagined and real historical audiences.[2] In fact, In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Gérard Genette defines preface as class of paratext including "every type of introductory (preludial or postludial) text, authorial or allographic, consisting of a discourse produced on the subject of the text that follows or precedes it" (161). Drawing upon Genette's general definition of paratext as "a verbal or other production... that surrounds or extends [a literary work] in order to present it", the existence of a preface becomes necessarily dependent on a primary or main text (a "literary work," in Genette's terminology) that the paratext accompanies (1-2).

The preface to *Joseph Andrews* introduces in this sense the basic question that posits the process of reading in relation to the nature of authority. The definition of the Ridiculous and the expression of truth itself are mediated and motivated basically by the readers. The Preface begins as follows:

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[2] As Richard Macksey puts it in his foreword to the English translation, he "seems to be the first to present a global view of liminal mediations and the logic of their relation to the reading public" (Macksey, "Introduction," in Genette, *Paratexts*, xi–xxiv, xx).

> As it is possible the mere English Reader may have a different Idea of Romance with the Author of these little Volumes; and may consequently expect a kind of Entertainment, not to be found, nor which was even intended, in the following Pages; it may not be improper to premise a few Words concerning this kind of Writing, which do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our Language. (*Joseph Andrews* 3)

The potential gap between the "mere English Reader" and the "Author of these little Volumes" is evinced by the use of "I" that sooner claims to "premise a few Words concerning this kind of Writing" (3). The verb "premise" is actually defined by *the Oxford English Dictionary* as "a previous statement or proposition from which another is inferred or follows as a conclusion; the two propositions from which the conclusion is derived in a syllogism, it also implies "to put before, prefix (words. etc.) to a writing, speech," or "to presuppose" and "to state in the premises" (977). The preface retains in this sense close ties with the events about to unfold as it deploys a logical control over the meaning of the story that follows. The existence of the preface strengthens then the argument that it is a constant and significant part of all "telling". Commenting on the nature of the preface as a paratext which constitutes a parallel discourse that contributes to the main discourse regarding the text itself, Genette claims that the preface:

> surround [s] it [the main text] and prolong [s] it, precisely in order to present it, in usual sense of this verb, but also in its strongest meaning: to make it present, to assure its presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption, in the form, nowadays at least, of a book. The accompaniment, of varying size and style, constitutes what I o christened elsewhere, in conformity with the frequently ambiguous meaning of this prefix in French--consider, I said, adjectives like *parafiscal or paramilitary*-the paratext of the work. Thus the paratext is for us the means by which a text makes a book of itself and proposes itself as such to its readers, and more generally to the public. Rather than with a limit or a sealed frontier, we are dealing in this case with a threshold, or-the term Borges used about preface-with a "vestibule" which offers to anyone and everyone the possibility either of entering or of turning back. ("Introduction to the Paratext," 261)

The preface to *Joseph Andrews* in then important in the context of Fielding's own perception of his readers and of how the narrative of the preface relates to the narrative of the novel per se. The preface occupies in this sense to use Genette's words "a liminal" phase between the writing and the reading of the book, marking a frame and mediating between the two activities.

Henry Fielding's *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*, another major prose narrative which was published in the *Miscellanies* volume III (1743), retains its specificity as a work of prose fiction from its very complexity as a satiric biography of the criminal Jonathan Wild satirizing the Robert Walpole[3]. The work is indeed a more complex prose narrative, a text which Harold Pagliaro in his book *Henry Fielding: A Literary Life* claims to be:

> At one a pseudo-history of the real-life of the criminal Jonathan Wild, who was hanged at Tyburn on May 24 1725; a political and a social satire; a study of evil represented by a man who repudiates, exploits and corrupts binding human relations; and a serious comic sentimental treatment of marriage, which serves as a foil to the evil Wild, who works to destroy it. (*Jonathan Wild* 155)

Much of what Fielding's narrative voice claims about *Jonathan Wild* in the prefatory materials is in truth a more complex embodiment of the dichotomy that characterises the relationship between his fictive character and the criminal, Jonathan Wild. The preface in *Jonathan Wild* highlights then the metafictional potential of the genre, directing the reader to the historical novel's "status as an artefact" in order to trigger reflections on the nature of history, biography and fiction[4] (Waugh 2).

Unlike *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* begins with two distinct prefatory claims about the truth of the story itself. The first declares its factual authenticity while the second asserts that it is a greater truth, which is not to be confined to mere facts. The sense of inconsistency articulated in the preface itself is amplified by the apparent contradictions in the following two prefatory conjectures claimed by the preface-narrator himself:

> My design is not to enter the Lists with that excellent Historian, who from authentic Papers and Records, hath already given so satisfactory an Account of the Life and Actions of this Great Man. I have not indeed the

[3] The conternporary eighteenth century English audience would be farniliar with the major points of the career of Jonathan Wild: his career as a thief, thief-taker, and receiver of stolen goods, his arrest, his attempted suicide, and his hanging. They would be aware of a composite history of the "real" Jonathan Wild collected from the many newspaper stories, pamphlets and poems, to appear during his lifetime or after his execution in 1725, and the many more comprehensive criminal biographies written subsequently see Gerald Howson's *Thief-Taker General: The Rise and Fall of Jonathan Wild.*

[4] For further discussions of metafictionality in historical fiction, see Hutcheon: 1989, who called postmodern historical fiction 'historiographic metafiction'.

> least Intention to depreciate the Veracity and Impartiality of that History; nor do I pretend to any of those Lights, not having, to my Knowledge, even seen a single Paper Relating to my Hero. (*Jonathan Wild* 219)

Paradoxically, he will then extrapolate from the "first narrative" of Wild's historical figure a rather greater truth. The preface narrator asserts:

> To confess the Truth, my Narrative is rather of such Actions which he might have performed, or would, or should have performed, than what he really did; and may, in reality, as well suit any other such great Man, as the Person himself whose Name it bears. A second Caution I would give my Reader is, that as it is not a very faithful Portrait of Jonathan Wild himself, so neither is it intended to represent the Features of any other Person. (*Jonathan Wild* 219)

Fielding's preface-narrator reinforces this distinction as truth/history (that excellent historian) and truth/fiction (what may not have done, but might have, should have done), reminding the reader of the very fictitious aspect of the text, meanwhile calling attention to the "generic ambiguity" of Fielding's narrative (Pettit 156). The two contrasting prefatory claims about the nature of truth in *Jonathan Wild* create thus a sense of indeterminacy which is further intensified by the narrative's persistent concern with the slipperiness of language, proverbs that are reversed, an ironic allegorical use of the vocabulary "good" and "great", instances where meaning is never stabilized and depends on what particular value the reader is willing to attribute to the text or the speech.

The question that posits itself here is whether Fielding is deliberately misleading about his biography of Wild in order to establish his prefaces as constructs between the fictional and the factual (non-fictional). Operating both ways, the preface in *Jonathan Wild*, as a fiction framed historically, gives way to other fictions framed historically as well (the title and the story), making it increasingly difficult to be separate out what is true from what is fictional, even when the novel provides clearer levels of authenticity in the form of prefaces, notes, and frame narratives. The controversial nature of the preface in *Jonathan Wild* is further underlined as Fielding later revised the 1743 text of *Jonathan Wild* substantially for a new revised 1754 edition. This second edition is often considered a substantial improvement because he omitted the "two digressive chapters and [softened] the satire against Walpole, altering the emphasis to a more general attack against politicians and great men as types" (Bender 290). In the 1743 edition, the preface narrator thoroughly

discusses the narrative to follow even to the extent that the Wild/Walpole[5], thief/statesman affinity becomes the main focus of the novel not the events or the plot that is about to unfold. For instance, addressing the question "how is it going to happen?" the preface-narrator claims:

> My design is not to enter the Lists with that excellent historian who from authentic papers and records, & hath already given so satisfactory an account of the life and actions of this great man. I have not indeed the least intention to depreciate the veracity and impartiality of that history; nor do I pretend to any of those lights, not having, to my knowledge, ever seen a single paper relating to my hero. (*Jonathan Wild* 255)

With the revised preface, the readers are dealing with a device that is instructing and educating them about the processes of the transmission of history not only through a discussion of historical accuracy and authenticity but also through a willful misinterpretation of what is –what is not- historical. As the preface makes it clear, J*onathan Wild* is displaced and set apart from stable categories such as history and fiction. The preface-narrator's account of "roguery, and not a rogue" (256) and "such actions which he might have performed, or would, or should have" (255) makes of Fielding's novel a fictionalized and self-conscious documentary of the history or the Wild biography that had long since stabilized in the public mind of eighteenth century England or to use Genette's words a "textual transcendence of the text" (*Palimpsests* 1) that actually lies between texts and their surrounding social discourse, which he actually defines as "all that sets a text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (*Palimpsests* 1).

More than a narrative précis, the preface frames Wild's subsequent story as historically based but still contingent on the preface-narrator's personal inquiry and personal attempts at maintaining a sense of accuracy. Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, to use Genette's words, revisits "the first narrative" (*Narrative Discourse* 68) of Wild's life in 1743. Since Jonathan Wild was a dishonorable historical figure; a notorious criminal, in Genette's terms, the main narrative acts as a prolepsis that discloses and then substitutes the suspense deriving from the question "What will happen next? for another kind of suspense, revolving around the question

[5] Some of the satire in Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* is read as a satire on the Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole. The text was composed in the late 1730s, in other words in the aftermath of Walpole's passing the Theatre Licensing Act which ended Fielding's own literary career as a dramatist. For further arguments about the date of publication see John Edwin Wells, "Fielding's Political Purpose in *Jonathan Wild*," PMLA 28 (1914), 14.

"How is it going to happen?" (Rimmon-Kenan 48). In fact, in *Narrative Discourse*, Gérard Genette defines prolepsis as "any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later" (40). In other words, prolepsis is when one event predicts a future event. Genette further discusses prolepsis and notes that "the first-person narrative lends itself better than any other to anticipation, by the very fact of its avowedly retrospective character, which authorizes the narrator to allude to the future and in particular to his present situation, for these to some extent form part of his role" (*Narrative Discourse* 67). Fielding's preface-narrative in *Jonathan Wild* lends itself more to prolepsis because it is narrated in first-person claiming to be fictional but true. The prefaces in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Jonathan Wild* function then as go-betweens of truth and fiction where comments on the following story may range from reliable criticism and/or endorsements of relating to historical source material (signed by the author), to unreliable narratives about the discovery of lost manuscripts which are presented to the reader as legitimate (Wolf, '"Unnatural" Metalepsis and Immersion: Necessarily Incompatible?" 303-304).

The reader of *Joseph Andrews* moves also through different other numerous prefatory materials on the way to the narrative or the story itself. These prefatory essays address more complex concerns of authorial intention, the interplay between character and commentator, and the nature of textual truth. For instance, the introductory chapter to Book Three entitled *Matter prefatory in praise of biography* is also of seminal relevance. The narrator declares "here once for all I describe not men, but manners; not an individual, but a species. Perhaps it will be answered, are not the characters then taken from life? To which I answer in the affirmative; nay, I believe I might aver that I have writ little more than I have seen (*Joseph Andrews* 162). To construct his characters and build the incidents of his story, Fielding's narrator adopts the point of view of the biographer since "truth is to be found only in the works of those who celebrate the lives of great men and are commonly called biographers. Positioning himself as a biographer, the narrator intends to copy nature in contraposition both to those authors of romances, whose heroes are of their own creation "and their brain the chaos whence all the materials are selected," and to historians, whose work is confined to a particular period of time, and to a particular nation (*Joseph Andrews* 162).

The biographer's stance is fused here with the narrative voice in the prefatory introduction, which becomes an amalgamation of the elements of history and the writer of classical history and epic, to which is added the role of a maker of purely fictitious narrative. The dialogue looks

then to the past, reframing historical figures, events, and narratives, as well as to the future, anticipating further engagements that develop and challenge the reader's own experience of history. This dialogue takes place within the framing narratives of paratexts before, during, and after a reading, and continually informs (and is also informed by) the story and the reader's prior knowledge of the context of the novel's claims. Genette proclaims in this context that "The paratext is only an assistant, only an accessory of the text," and that as a threshold it "exists to be crossed" (*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* 410). He warned against replacing the text with the paratext, or concluding that "'all is paratext" (*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* 407). Scholars have since challenged this assumption, not on the grounds that all is paratext or that the text is less important, but rather by exploring the complex relationship between reader, text, and paratext, along with the outcome of this dialogue on how to channel and communicate meaning. In a recent study of paratexts, Gray argues that "between the outward overflow and inward convergence of paratextuality ... we see the beating heart of the text" (41). "Paratexts," he claims, "are always constitutive parts of the text itself," an idea echoed by Smith and Wilson in *Renaissance Paratexts*, where they proposed that "paratextual elements are in operation all the way through the reader's experience of the text" (6). This should not be understood as an elimination of the category of the paratext, an inability to distinguish between devices such as prefaces, titles and the story. Rather, it encourages the readers to consider how paratexts continually frame and reframe their ongoing experience of the text. Hence, not only do readers balance the novel's fictional and historical framings throughout the prefaces and the prefatory essays in Fielding's novels, but they also conclude by strengthening the different connections made, empowering their historical imagination with ideas from the novel.

In *Tom Jones*, the prefaces[6] are also an integral part of the novel as they introduce and discuss a variety of ideas and assumptions about the interplay between art, the artist and the audience. In comparison to *Joseph Andrews*, the narrative voice in preface I in *Tom Jones* evolved into a more intrusive and controlling force, a more authoritative figure that consciously draws the reader's attention to the author's fiction-writing in order to claim his "New Province of Writing" (*Tom Jones* 40). Indeed, Fielding's narrator in *Tom Jones* overtly declares himself as an "Author" and defines

[6] I use the word prefaces here to refer to the introductory chapters of each of the eighteenth books of *Tom Jones*.