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Scene Shift, Metalepsis, and the Metaleptic Mode

When Gérard Genette coined the term "metalepsis" in the fifth chapter (on "Voice") of his *Discours du récit*, he defined it as "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.), or the inverse (as in Cortazar) [. . .]" (*Narrative Discourse* 234-35; *Figures III* 244). Genette had already given an example of metalepsis in the second chapter ("Duration") when he refers to a typically Balzacian narrative pause in *La Vieille Fille* in which narrator and reader together "enter" the Cormon townhouse in order to gain a view of the scene:

> But we know that the Balzacian novel, on the contrary, established a typically extratemporal descriptive canon [. . .], a canon where the narrator, forsaking the cause of the story [. . .], makes it his business, in his own name and solely for the information of his reader, to describe a scene that at this point in the story no one, strictly speaking, is looking at. For example, as the sentence in the *Vieille Fille* that opens the scene at the Cormon townhouse certainly indicates: "Now, however, it will be necessary to enter the household of that elderly spinster toward whom so many interests converge, and within whose walls the actors in this Scene are to meet this very evening." This "entering" is obviously the doing of the narrator and reader alone, who are going to wander over the house and the garden while the real "actors in this Scene" continue to attend to their business elsewhere, or rather wait to go back to their business until the narrative agrees to return to them and restore them to life.   (100-01; 134-35)

In this passage the narrator accompanied by the "reader" seemingly moves into the world of the fiction, pointing out to the narratee the setting of events to be described in the following pages. This technique is very similar to one common in Fielding's novels, first pointed out in his doctoral dissertation by Wilhelm Füger, one of the doyens of German narratology: "But we will be more courteous to our reader than he [the coachman] was to Mrs Slipslop, and leaving the coach and its company to pursue their journey, *we will carry our reader on after Parson Adams* [. . .]" (*Joseph Andrews* 2.7). In these examples, two characteristic features are to be noted. First, the discourse level and story level in an authorial narrative (heterodiegetic narrative with zero focalization) seem to merge ontologically or existentially (the narrator and narratee seem to have entered the story world at least in imagination if not in real fact). Second, this curious imaginative transgression of narrative levels occurs in a pause of the story, as a narratorial insertion corresponding to no action on the plot level. The term "transgression," actually, is

quite inadequate to the effect of these passages since they tend to enhance the realistic illusion of storyworld representation, aiding the narratee's (as well as the reader's) imaginative immersion into the story rather than foregrounding the metafictional and transgressive (nonrealistic) properties of such an imaginative stepping into the story world.

In the footnote attached to the paragraph in chapter 2 of *Narrative Discourse* from which I began by quoting, Genette in fact compares the device to a metaphoric Gygean ring—a figure that Genette borrows from Théophile Gautier—that allows narrator and narratee to be present but invisible on the scene:

> Gautier will use this technique to the point of a flippancy that "bares" it, as the Formalists would say: "The Marquise inhabited a separate suite, which the Marquis did not enter unless he was announced. We will commit this impropriety that authors of all times have allowed themselves, and without saying a word to the buttons who would have forwarned the lodger, we will penetrate into the bedroom, sure of disturbing no one. The writer of a novel naturally wears on his finger the ring of Gyges, which makes him invisible" (*Le Capitaine Fracasse*, Garnier ed., p. 103). Later we will again meet this trope, the *metalepsis*, with which the narrator pretends to enter (with or without his reader) into the diegetic universe.   (101n.33; 135n.1)

In this passage Genette humorously indicates that metalepsis is a miraculous device and therefore "typically fictional": like the Gyges's ring or the existence of fairies, this stepping of the narrator into the world of fiction is an impossibility that nevertheless emerges as a requirement of "omniscient" narration, charming us into belief.

In this essay I would like to take Genette's analysis of metalepsis into three directions. First, I will outline five different types of metalepsis in Genette's treatment of the concept as I perceive them in Genette's work. Second, I go on to present examples of metalepsis from English literature between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries in order to document the historical as well as typological variety of the device. These examples mostly relate to *one* of the five subcategories of Genette's, the one that Marie-Laure Ryan has so usefully dubbed "rhetorical metalepsis."[1] Third, I will attempt a few metaphoric extensions of the term into a macrostructural reading of metalepsis. That third move is to be taken as an imaginative transgression similar to the narrator's metaleptic playacting; it will be the narratologist's critical metaleptic move between narratological levels whose boundaries are usually deemed to be sacrosanct.

1. What Are Metalepses?

Genette's concept of metalepsis, as explained in the chapter on voice (*Narrative* 234-37; *Figures* 244-46), is defined as an existential crossing of the boundaries between the extradiegetic and diegetic levels of a narrative or the (intra)diegetic and metadiegetic levels; or, in short, as the move of existants or actants from any hierarchically ordered level into one above or below (also possibly skipping intermediate levels).

Genette starts out from classical rhetoric and the figure called author's metalepsis by Pierre Fontanier, "which consists of pretending that the poet 'himself brings about the effects he celebrates,' as when we say that Virgil 'has Dido die' in Book IV of the *Aeneid* [. . .]" (234).[2] Narrative metalepsis, according to Genette, is supposed to stand in an *inverse* relationship to author's metalepsis as instanced in Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste*:

> You see, reader, how considerate I am. With a flick of the whip on the horses drawing the coach draped in black I could bring together Jack, his master, the tax officers, the mounted guard, and the rest of the procession, at the very next inn, interrupting the story of Jack's captain and provoking you as much as I pleased. But for that I would have to lie and I do not like lies unless they are useful and necessary. The fact is that Jack and his master never saw the black-draped coach again and, while still upset over his horse's antics, Jack continued [. . .]   (Diderot 39)

The absurdity and metafictional quality of such passages derives exclusively from their violation of the pretense that what the narrative is telling is the literal truth (and therefore due to Fate, Chance, or God, but certainly not to the manipulations of the narrator). That Diderot's narrator in his role as author is teasing us of course becomes quite clear at the conclusion of the quoted passage in which he refrains from his Olympian powers by reverting to the so-called facts: "the fact is that ...."

The example passage from Diderot (and Genette has two others from this novel that teems with metalepses) constitutes what I see as Genette's first type of metalepsis. It refers to the baring of the mimetic illusion by undermining the realistic expectation that the narrator merely tells a story over which he has no power. (In the realist novel, the author may well be conceived of as the inventor of the story, but the narrator displays himself as a historian of true events. I do not have time to go into this relationship between author and narrator here, but it is historically very interesting and has been given too little attention in narrative study.) Author's metalepses therefore foreground the nature of the narrative as *fictio*, the narrator's invention (from the Latin: *fingere*) of the story.[4] What is interesting about the prototypical Diderot example is its virtuality: its imaginative projection is an irreal or potential one ("I *could* tell you something else, but the fact is that..."); the transgression of narrative levels therefore occurs in a distancing from the truth-related narrative illusion.

The second type of metalepsis that Genette proposes consists in the literal move of the narrator to a lower narrative level of embedded story world, or of a character to a lower (intra)diegetic level. This move is best known from the postmodernist transgressive examples of the device, for instance Woody Allen's "The Kugelmass Episode" (1980) in which Kugelmass descends into the world of *Madame Bovary* and seduces Emma (see McHale 123). However, the much more common and historically more extensive manifestation of this second type of metalepsis displays illusionistic rather than anti-illusionistic effects.[5] The purpose of the device is to enhance the reader's immersion in the fiction by the trick of the

authorial narrator's Gygean ring. We have earlier quoted a passage from *Joseph Andrews*. Here is a second example of the narrator's stepping into the story: "and indeed Fanny was the only creature whom the daughter would not have pitied in her situation; wherin, tho' we compassionate her ourselves, *we shall leave her* for a little while, *and pay a visit to Lady Booby*" (4.12). The narrator seems to accompany Fanny to the house of Parson Adams and leave her behind in order to move on to Lady Booby. By means of an implicit anthropomorphic metaphor the narrator seems to be physically present in the story world, whereas, as we will see in section 2 of this essay, he is merely performing a scene shift.

This projection of the narrator into the story world may be expanded into a literal presence of the narrator on the scene as in some novels by George Eliot:

> A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. [Description of landscape continues.] How lovely the little river is, with its dark, changing wavelets! It seems to *me* like a living companion *while I wander* along the bank and *listen* to its low placid voice, as to the voice of one who is deaf and loving. I *remember* those large dipping willows. I remember the stone bridge.
>
> And this is Dorlcote Mill. *I must stand* a minute or two here on the bridge and *look* at it [. . .].   (*Mill*, ch. 1)[6]

The narrator here descends into the story world as if she herself were an inhabitant of the town and could therefore "remember" the bridge and "listen" to the babbling of the water. This extended Bühlerian "Deixis am Phantasma,"[7] this imaginative projection of the narrator into the story, is of course designed to draw the reader more closely into the fiction.

Genette's third type of metalepsis implicates the narratee on the story level or the protagonist as narratee on a superior (discourse) level. For instance, in Michel de Pure's seventeenth-century novel *La Pretieuse ou le mystere des ruelles*, recently discussed by Daniel Maher in an article in *Narrative*, an embedded narrative contains characters who are also the narratees listening to the narration of this embedded tale (129). This implication of the narratee on the story level or the raising of a character from an embedded tale onto the superior (usually extradiegetic) plane correlates with two strategies commonly employed in second-person fiction. Either the addressee, first conceived of as extradiegetic, turns out to be a character (as in Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*), or the second-person narrative operates by address to a story-internal recipient who then turns out to have some existential link with the extradiegetic story level as well. In Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*, the letters that the two major characters George and Ophelia address to one another at first seem to be sent from one live person to another, and one surmises that they are reminiscing about their common experiences in the past (boy meets girl) because they have separated. However, it later turns out that Ophelia is dead, so that her letters are sent from the beyond, the magic world believed in by the magician (Miranda) in the heterodiegetic frame

narrative, which determines her actions.

Brian McHale already suggested that second-person fiction can be regarded as an extended metaleptic device (222-27). A good illustration of how the reader is drawn into the story is the beginning of the following text:

> The telephone rings. It's right beside you—you jump—reach for the receiver. "Yes?"
>
> A tiny instant's silence. Then "Jacqueline?" A man's voice—deep, civilized—with a- somehow caressing intonation that is yet quiet and respectful.
>
> Your heart beats. "No," you say, with a little apologetic laugh.   (Sarah 22)

Robyn Sarah's "Wrong Number" starts out with a recognizable situation that will be familiar to most readers. By line two of the text, that situation will be one shared only by female readers. As the text continues, the actual reader is less and less likely to continue reading in terms of general reference and will begin to evolve a fictional scenario in which "you" is a protagonist on the story level and has received the phone call with which the short story starts.

Anti-illusionistic versions of the narratee-protagonist exchange occur as early as *Tristram Shandy*, where the narrator in Book 1.4 orders the narratee to shut the door (on the story level!). One can also note the metafictional game in Raymond Federman's *Take It or Leave It*, where an observer interviews the protagonists, bypassing the narrator (see McHale 123-24 for an analysis of this text.)

Genette's fourth type of metalepsis will be highly relevant to my own historical proposals in the subsequent section of this article. This concerns a metaleptic move by the narrator during a pause in the discourse which Genette illustrates with the example from Balzac:

> "*While* the venerable churchman climbs the ramps of the Angoulême, *it is not useless to explain* the network of interests into which he was going to set foot. [. . .] After Lucien's departure, David Séchard..." [*Les souffrances de l'inventeur*].
> Here is how the first narrative resumes, more than one hundred pages further on: "At the moment when the old curé de Marsac was climbing the ramps of Angoulême to go inform Eve of the condition her brother was in, David had been hidden for eleven days only two doors from where the worthy priest had just come out." This play between the time of the story and the time of narrating (to *tell* of David's misfortunes "while" the curé de Marsac climbs the staircase) will be discussed on its own account in the chapter on voice.   (*Narrative* 65; *Figures* 104)

In chapter 5 Genette picks up the topic again:

> We will extend the term *narrative metalepsis* to all these transgressions. Some of them, as ordinary and innocent as those of classic rhetoric, play on the double temporality of the story and the narrating. Here for example, is Balzac, in a passage already quoted from *Illusions perdues*: "While the venerable churchman climbs the ramps of Angoulême, it is not useless to explain...," as if the narrating were contemporaneous with the story and had to fill up the latter's dead spaces. This is the very prevalent model Proust follows when he writes, for example, "but I have no time left now, *before my departure for Balbec...*, to start upon a series of pictures of society," or "I confine myself at present, *as the train halts and the porter calls out 'Doncières', 'Grattevast,' 'Mainville,' etc.*, to noting down the particular memory that the watering place or garrison town recalls to me," or again: "*But it is time to rejoin* the Baron as he advances...".
> (Genette's emphases, 235; 244-45)

The narrator takes the opportunity of providing the reader with some background information, of filling in on the previous life story of David Séchard, while events on the plotline are not worth remarking about to the reader. Ryan has memorably dubbed this type of metalepsis *rhetorical* metalepsis, distinguishing it from *ontological* metalepsis ("Logique").

I was at first rather puzzled why this technical ploy should be linked with metalepsis by Genette. After all, where is the boundary transgression? The narrator continues on the extradiegetic level, the character "meanwhile" climbs the stairs. The supposed simultaneity or rather isochrony between the telling of the story and the time moving on the plane of the narrated world, the synchronization of narrating time and narrated time (according to Günther Müller's terminology), does not at first seem to imply a transgression of levels. After all, when the narrator reports dialogue in verbatim fashion we do not talk about metalepsis either. It was only when I realized that the projected simultaneity metaphorically moves the narrator into the realm of the fictional world that I started to see where the boundary crossing might be located. In order to be able to talk while the cleric is climbing the stairs, the extradiegetic narrator would have to be located *in* the story, otherwise the *while* cannot link the same kind of temporality.

Although Genette at first locates this type of metalepsis in nineteenth-century realist fiction, as does Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan when she provides an example from Melville's *Pierre* ("While Pierre and Lucy are now rolling along under the elms, let it be said who Lucy Tartan was" [qtd. 94]), the device is frequently employed to spectacular effect already in Sterne and can be traced back as far as Sidney's *Old Arcadia*:

> In this attitude I am determined to let her [Mrs Shandy] stand for five mintues: till I bring up the affairs of the kitchen [. . .] to the same period [. . .].
> *(Tristram Shandy* 5.5, qtd. Rimmon-Kenan 94)[8]

> My mother, you must know, —but I have fifty things more necessary to let you know first, —I have a hundred difficulties which I have promised to clear up, and a thousand distresses and domestic misadventures crowding in upon me thick and threefold [. . .]. — I have left my father lying across his bed, and my uncle Toby in his old fringed chair, sitting beside him, and promised I would go back to them in half an hour, and five-and-thirty minutes are lapsed already [. . .].   (3.38)

> And so, with consent of both parents [. . .] their marriage day was appointed; which, because it fell out in this time, I think it shall not be impertinent to *remember a little our shepherds while the other greater persons are either sleeping or otherwise occupied.*
> (Sidney 212)

Whereas the passage from the *Old Arcadia* is closely parallel to the nineteenth-century formula, the examples from Sterne veer towards author's metalepsis, since the narrator not only says he is talking while there is unimportant business on the story level, he additionally freezes the actions on the story level in order to gain time for his discourse, thus interfering with the story much like Diderot's narrator.

Rhetorical metalepsis, therefore, is a device of long standing and does not necessarily have merely illusionistic effects.

Genette's fifth and final category of metalepsis consists in what he calls the pseudo-diegetic or reduced metadiegetic. His example is Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (1731):

> A less audacious figure, but one we can connect to metalepsis, consists of telling as if it were diegetic (as if it were at the same narrative level as its context) something that has nevertheless been presented as (or can easily be guessed to be) metadiegetic in its principle or, if one prefers, in its origin: as if the Marquis de Renoncourt, after having acknowledged that he has gotten the story of Des Grieux's loves from Des Grieux himself (or even after having let Des Grieux speak for several pages), subsequently took back the floor to tell that story himself, no longer "speaking," Plato would say, "as if he had become Des Grieux."   (qtd. Genette 236; 245)

This substitution by the frame narrator for the narrator on the intra- or metadiegetic level is only very tangentially related to a metaleptic crossing of boundaries; after all, the frame narrator can report what he has listened to as a summary or report of Des Grieux's story, so his assumption of the narratorial role is realistically motivated and can be treated as an extended instance of speech report.

Let us summarize Genette's proposals regarding metalepsis. Genette, as he commonly does, takes his departure from a rhetorical term, the author's metalepsis of "Virgil has Dido die." He then extends the device of foregrounding the inventedness of the story to the metafictional strategy of Diderot (type 1). In this case the story becomes a function of the narratorial discourse, its separate existence (and truth) are denied. In metalepsis of types 2 and 3, the distinction between the narrator's plane of existence and the story world is not denied but transgressed, either in order to enhance the reader's immersion in the fictional world or, on the contrary, to undermine the mimetic illusion, in which case the technique links up with type 1 (Diderot). It is to be noted that in types 2 and 3 the narrator and narratee transgress by imaginatively stepping onto the plane of the fictional world, and that this crossing of the boundary starts with implied anthropomorphic metaphors and continues through the explicit physical projection of the narrator into the story. Conversely, characters start by addressing the narrator, arguing with him (Flann O'Brien's *At-Swim-Two-Birds*), and at the limit interact with the narrator as equal partners. On account of the presupposition that literary figures exist only in an invented world, these transgressions have a much more radical metafictional effect.

Genette's types 4 and 5 (simultaneity and the pseudo-diegetic) focus on the narratorial level again. The simultaneity type additionally parallels type 1 (Diderot) by emerging in a pause of the plot. (I will from now on eliminate type 5 from discussion because I do not consider it to be properly metaleptic.) In order to provide schema that is easy to remember I would like to rename the Genettean subcategories of metalepsis as follows, integrating Marie-Laure Ryan's distinction:

Type 1 (Virgil has Dido die): "authorial" metalepsis

Type 2 (narrator moves into story with narratee): ontological metalepsis 1: narratorial metalepsis

Type 3 (narratee/protagonist exchange): ontological metalepsis 2: lectorial metalepsis

Type 4 (while-formula): rhetorical metalepsis or discourse metalepsis

None of these types occurs in pure form, as we will see in section 2.[9]

I now want to turn to a functional and historically relevant aspect of metalepsis that specifically concerns the contextualization of type 4 (the simultaneity trope) and places it within a historical development of the narrative scene shift.

2. Scene Shifts and Metalepsis

In recent research connected with a long-term project on the diachronization of narratology I started to analyze the formal and functional changes from fourteenth-century to late nineteenth-century narratives in the handling of the so-called scene shift. A scene shift, for my specific purposes, is a move from one setting and set of characters to a different setting and set of characters.[10] Such scene shifts become crucial to the macrostructure of a narrative when longer texts with several plot strands, locations, and groups of characters have to be transposed into the written form. In fact, the medieval scene shift markers presumably echo formulae of oral poetry; they continued to be used in verse narrative because they proved necessary to the structuring of longer romances, with the result that they even survived into the fifteenth-century prose romances, especially Malory's oeuvre.

In Middle English the scene shift was effected by a neat recurrent formula that said "let us leave X and Y behind and turn to A and B." In the prose of Sir Thomas Malory, this can be illustrated with the following passage from *The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones*:

> *Now leve we* sir Launcelot in Joyus Ile wyth hys lady, dame Elayne, and sir Percivayle and sir Ector playyinge wyth them, and *now turne we* unto sir Bors de Ganys and unto sir Lyonell that had sought sir Lancelot long, nye by the space of two yere, and never coude they hyre of hym.   (504)

This extremely widely used formula disappears from sight (almost) and is replaced by a number of different links. Among these the *while*-clause and *meanwhile*-constructions are the most common: "Meanwhile Felix Holt had been making his way back from Sproxton to Treby in some irritation and bitterness of spirit" (Eliot, *Felix Holt* 1.13). The disappearence of the medieval formula can be connected, first, to the invention of the chapter, which made chapter beginnings logical points at which to place a scene shift and reduced the necessity of marking such a scene shift by additional formulae; secondly, the formula foregrounded the authorial narrative voice—a factor that certainly led to its decease in the late nineteenth-

century consciousness novel. Moreover, one can additionally speculate whether the extensive use of first-person fiction in the early eighteenth century did not also help to reduce the usefulness of the "let us leave" formula, since realistically handled first-person narratives do not need to shift between different plot strands (the autodiegetic narrator is the continuous protagonist in all plot strands).

Despite the fact that the *let us leave* construction dies out, some uses of the formula do remain in currency. One can observe an increasing use of metanarrative deployments of the scene-shift marker (frequently in a different wording):

> Mrs Tow-wouse [...] began to compose herself, and at length recovered the usual serenity of her temper, in *which we will leave her, to open to the reader* the steps which led to a catastrophe, common enough [...] yet often fatal to the repose and well-being of families, and the subject of many tragedies, both in life and on the stage [i.e. adultery].
> (Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* 1.17)

> As we have now brought Sophia into safe hands, the reader will, I apprehend, be contented to *deposit her there awhile, and to look a little after other personages*, and particularly poor Jones, whom we have left long enough to do penance for his past offences, which, as is the nature of vice, brought sufficient punishment upon him themselves.
> (*Tom Jones*, Book 11, end)

These metanarrative statements become increasingly metafictional and metaleptic in quality. One also encounters a variety of metaleptic scene shifts that do not use the formula:

> But alas, sweet Philoclea, how hath my pen forgotten thee, since to thy memory principally all this long matter is intended. Pardon the slacknesss to come to those woes which thou didst cause in others and feel in thyself.   (Sidney, *Old Arcadia*, 95)

> But methinks *I hear the old shepherd Dorus calling me to tell you* something of his hopeful adventures.
> (162)

In so far as the formula remains in use, a very interesting functional development can be observed to emerge:

> Shift from A to B   >   Return to B   >   Flashback   >   Narrative Comment

At first we have a shift from scene A forward to scene B (*Let us leave ... let us turn to*). Later the formula increasingly uses lexemes of *return* rather than progess (*we now return; I must go back*):

> *We now return to the Marquis de Montalt*, who having seen La Motte safely lodged in the prison of D——y, and learning the trial would not come on immediately, had returned to his villa on the borders of the forest where he expected to hear news of Adeline.
> (Radcliffe, *Romance of the Forest*, ch. 20)

> *We must now go back a little* and describe how Frank had been sent off on special business to London.   (Trollope, *Doctor Thorne*, ch. 44)

Thus, the shift becomes less a shift from scene A to scene B than a retracing of the narrative from progression to a flashback of delayed orientation: "*I must go back a little* to explain the motives which caused Esther to seek an interview with her

niece" (Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, ch. 21). "*We go back* for a moment to the preceding night, to acount for Henchard's attitude" (Hardy, *Mayor of Casterbridge*, ch. 22). Such a use additionally creates a pause in the narrative, with the result that the formula ends up signalling an opportunity for narratorial comment that is no longer linked to the plot, much less to the shifting between two plot strands.

> *Leaving* it [the coach] to pursue its journey at the pleasure of the conductor aforementioned [. . .] *this narrative may embrace the opportunity of ascertaining* the condition of Sir Mulberry Hawk, and to what extent he had, by this time, recovered from the injuries consequent on being flung violently from his cabriolet, under the circumstances already detailed.   (Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, ch. 38)

Virginia Woolf parodies this narratorial intrusion in *Orlando* by reiterating secrets which the reader already knows.

> He stretched himself. He rose. He stood upright in complete nakedness before us, and while the trumpets pealed Truth! Truth! we have no choice but to confess—he was a woman. The sound of the trumpets died away and Orlando stood stark naked. No human being, since the world began, has ever looked more ravishing. [. . .] Orlando looked himself up and down in a long looking-glass, without showing any signs of discomposure, *and went, presumably, to his bath.*
> *We may take advantage of this pause in the narrative to make certain statements.* Orlando had become a woman—there is no denying it.   (137-38)

As a properly authorial technique, the formula therefore withdraws into those patches of discourse where the narratorial voice is still needed or foregrounded for metafictional purposes.

My reasons for summarizing this history of scene shifts lie in the clear link between Genette's fourth type of metalepsis (rhetorical metalepsis) with the development from retrospective scene shift to the delayed orientation function. Rimmon-Kenan's example from Melville's *Pierre* ("While Pierre and Lucy are now rolling along under the elms, let it be said who Lucy Tartan was") and many of the previous passages (*Tom Jones*, Trollope, Gaskell, Hardy, Dickens) document how rhetorical metalepsis emerges as a stage in the development from mere scene shifting to the accommodation of narratorial flashbacks and pure commentary. The "using the opportunity" formula to provide background information while the protagonists are "either sleeping or otherwise occupied"—to use Sidney's *bon mot*—constitutes a kind of missing link between the flashback per se and the foregrounding of the narratorial function for metafictional purposes. The case history that I have provided by way of context moreover demonstrates that metalepsis occurs as a companion of the scene shift as early as the sixteenth century so that its simultaneity version in the nineteenth-century realist novel can be regarded as a suitably downtoned variety supporting Victorian conventions rather than a foregrounded anti-illusionistic technique.

The little excursus which I have undertaken here was also designed to underline that metalepsis, irrespective of its illusionistic or anti-illusionistic qualities, may perhaps be linked to the necessity of functional gear-shifting, to the

mechanics of telling that remain visible at times, allowing the reader a brief glimpse into the machinery producing the story through the technology of narration. In my corpus of example passages, Genettean metalepses of types 1 to 3 seem to occur only in the eighteenth century and beyond, and one could perhaps argue that they grew out of the prevalent use of metalepsis in the context of the scene shifting function.

The results of my analysis so far can now be summarized in four theses:

(1) Metalepsis is not an exclusively postmodernist device. It has a long history reaching back to the Renaissance and, possibly, to antiquity.

(2) Metalepsis is not necessarily an anti-illusionistic device. Like metanarration (Nünning) it significantly enhances the realistic illusion in the realist novel.

(3) Metalepsis, or at least some types of metalepsis, has important structural functions in the narrative beyond their illusionistic or anti-illusionistic effects.

(4) In the context of my speculative proposal of a narratological type of metalepsis in section 3, I will suggest that one could perhaps see this device as far more central to narratology, raising what seemed to be a fairly limited and marginal aspect of nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels to a master trope of the narratological imaginary.

3. From Micro- to Macro-Structure: The Metaleptic Mode

As a kind of speculative afterthought on the theme of metalepsis, I would now like to turn back to Brian McHale's remarks about metalepsis, which suggest an extension of the device to a more macrostructural technique affecting entire texts.

McHale extends metalepsis in two related directions, in the direction of the reading process and in the direction of overall involvement of the addressee/reader on the story level. In the first case, he suggests that the reading process can itself be equated with the reader's seduction by the story: "Love as a principle of fiction is, in at least two of its senses, metaleptic. If authors love their characters, and if texts seduce their readers, then these relations involve violations of ontological boundaries" (222). The metaleptic transgressions implied here operate between the real author or real reader and the text, jumping the extradiegetic textual level. Both phenomena can be treated as cases of immersion: by "loving his characters" the author creating the fictional universe imaginatively lifts the characters onto his own ontological plane (or transfers himself into the fictional world as a presentified elsewhere). If, as Peter Brooks suggests in *Reading for the Plot*, readers experience titillation through the seductive powers of textually elicited desire for the consummational effects of closure, then reader's experience of love within the fictional universe made possible through readerly immersion equally invites comparison with metaleptic transgression.

Narratologists have traditionally resisted the poststructuralist temptations of such metaphorical exuberance. After all, authors love their characters only in a

manner of speaking; they do not really step down into the fiction and make love to
them (except in some deliberately metaleptic texts like Allen's "Kugelmass
Episode"). Likewise, readers do not actually get "seduced" by story or plot—not
only do readers rarely engage in sexual actions as part of their reading experience;
as a nonhuman entity, the text (plot, configuration, closure) cannot literally
provoke stimulation. What we are dealing with here, then, is of course an
imaginative extension of the term *metalepsis* to cover a virtual scenario in which
the effects of textual creation or consumption on the level of an experiential blend
are being characterized by this manner of speaking.[11] A blend, according to Mark
Turner and Gilles Fauconnier, is a realm that creatively combines input from
source and target domains in metaphoric discourse. Only in the realm of
metaphoric blending can authors "love" their characters or texts "seduce" their
readers.

Having said that, one can, however, turn back to some of the metaleptic
strategies that Genette introduced into the narratological discussion and to some of
the examples that we have quoted earlier in this article. When the narrator in *Joseph
Andrews* says he will "leave" Fanny "for a little while" and "pay a visit to Lady
Booby," we can claim that a similar metaphoric blend is being created. In effect, the
narrator is using the common metaphor of the journey for the "trip" that readers and
the author-qua-narrator have taken together during the course of the novel.[12] In a
quotation from Thomas Skinner's *Life of General Monk* (1724) Wilhelm Füger
documents metaphoric discourse relating to military campaigning. Here, too, the
narratorial manipulations of the story on the discourse level are treated in a blend
that combines a campaigning narrator and a narrating military strategist:

> But *leaving now* the General in his Quarters, and the Citizens to their jollity, *we will
> retreat* a little while, (though late) to Westminster, and see what this new named Rump
> Parliament had, this Afternoon and Evening, been doing there.   (qtd. 125)

What I am suggesting here is that many examples of metalepsis, especially the
illusion-enhancing ones, need to be treated as metaphoric transgressions of
narrative boundaries; they are part of a narratorial metaphorics of immersion in the
fictional world that attempts to make believe that this fictional world is real—at
least for the time while readers are engaged in the reading process. What I am
therefore saying is that the device of metalepsis in many instances need not actually
be literally treated as an ontological contradiction (and therefore transgression),
but could be regarded as an imaginative transfer into the impossible in parallel with
authorial omniscience or autodiegetic narrators' precise memory of dialogues and
thoughts in the past.

McHale's second example of a macrostructural metalepsis is second-person
fiction:

> The changed function of metaleptic relation in postmodernist writing can be traced
> through the changing fortunes of the second-person pronoun: *you.* [. . .] *you* is shifty.
> Technically, of course, it is a "shifter" in [Roman] Jakobson's sense, an "empty"

linguistic sign whose reference changes with every change of speaker in a discourse
situation: every reader is potentially *you*, the addressee of the novelistic discourse. This
shiftiness of the second person was already exploited as early as Sterne's *Tristram
Shandy*, with its addressees singular and plural, male and female, peer and commoner,
critic and amateur. Modernist aesthetics, following the examples of Flaubert and James,
all but eliminates the explicit *you*. The communicative circuit becomes oblique, narrative
seduction becomes indirect rather than direct; "showing" replaces "telling," as Percy
Lubbock taught us to say. [. . .]

    The second-person pronoun does occur in modernist and late-modernist contexts, but
in such a way as to lose its function of direct address. [. . .] Postmodernist writing extends
and deepens this aura of the uncanny, exploiting the relational potential of the second-
person pronoun. The postmodernist second person functions as an invitation to the reader
to project himself or herself into the gap opened in the discourse by the presence of *you*.

<div align="right">(McHale's emphasis, 223-24)</div>

Although McHale goes on to treat examples of (verbal) reader abuse in which the
metalepsis does in fact refer to an ontological difference between the narrator's
world and that of the reader (225-26),[13] the examples of readerly projection into the
gap of pronominal ambiguity in fact rely on a "blend" and closely resemble the
metaphoric techniques that we discussed above. Since there are many types of
second-person fiction, some more transgressive than others, the metaleptic
qualities of second-person fiction—which emerge primarily when one focuses on
the realistic impossibility or awkwardness of second-person narration—need to be
determined in each individual case. The less one focuses on the realist expectations
(*you* has to address somebody; the narratee or reader is located on the extradiegetic
level or even in the so-called real world), the less metaleptic second-person
narrative becomes. Its extensive deployment can in fact evolve into a kind of dead
metaphor, like omniscience, whose metaphoric and metaleptic qualities remain
buried under the currency of unthinking use of the technique.

    Once one has accepted a metaphoric mode of talking about metalepsis—a
metaphoric mode that relies on the metaphoric qualities of metalepsis and is
therefore a type of meta-metaphoric criticism—once one has gone down that
incline and stepped into the sand of metaphoric shifting, one could claim even
further critical licence. One might then go on to ask whether a few well-known
narratological scenarios might not also be described within a framework of
metalepsis. This would extend the metaphorics of metalepsis to cover a critical use
of metalepsis designating as metalepic any crossings between narrative levels or
any shiftings between them *within the critical discourse of narratology*.

    A couple of possible extensions of metalepsis along this line suggest
themselves. If second-person narratives are taken to be examples of metalepsis,
what about autodiegetic narratives with internal focalization? In these the narrating
self turns itself into its former experiencing self. (Actually, as with much second-
person fiction, I do not see this as a case of metalepsis at all, not even
metaphorically speaking, since it is simply an extension of the possibilities of
figural narrative to the first-person or second-person realm. However, on the basis
of second-person fiction, the extension could be posited.)

A much more convincing example of "critical" metalepsis concerns the narrator-turned-witness figure as we encounter it, for instance, in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (Stanzel 202-05). The authorial narrator suddenly outs himself as a character in the fictional world who actually claims to have met Becky Sharp at the court of Pumpernickel (ch. 62). Similar instances of the authorial narrator or even the covert narrator turned character can be encountered in regional fiction where the narrator suddenly starts to talk about "our" town and indicates personal knowledge of some of the characters. (A typical example of this is Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, where the narrator is clearly omniscient for most of the text and there are additionally many forays into reflector-mode narrative.) Moreover, Stanzel's concept of reflectorization (*Personalisierung*) as explicated in his *Theory of Narrative* also lends itself to appropriation as a metaleptic phenomenon (168-84). According to Stanzel's definition, *Personalisierung* occurs when the authorial narrator voices opinions of a character, mimicking that character's diction. Another way of describing this would be to say that the narrator projects himself into the character (for ironic purposes), as does the narrator of Thomas Mann's "Tristan," who adopts the perspective and diction of an inmate of the sanatorium which is the setting of the story:

> The characters whom Einfried has sheltered! Even a writer is here, an excentric person, who bears the name of some kind of mineral or precious stone and who fritters the Lord's days away here.   (qtd. Stanzel 182)

In my own development of Stanzel's concept I have introduced the term *figuralization* (*Towards* 217) to account for cases of what Ann Banfield had called the "empty deictic centre." I argued that in passages that project a figural consciousness by means of expressivity markers, as in Katherine Mansfield's "At the Bay," it could be argued that the reader adopts the empty position of a figural consciousness for him/herself to become a kind of imaginative witness on the scene.[14] Moreover, the type of narrative mixing figural and authorial features that I recently discussed could be appropriated for the same purpose ("New Wine in Old Bottles?").

Once we have allowed metaleptic transfers to include not only second-person narrative or the authorial narrator turned witness, but also to subsume cases of figuralization and reflectorization, it becomes possible to extend the concept of metalepsis to the dual-voice theory of free indirect discourse. After all, both figuralization and reflectorization share stylistic qualities with the free indirect discourse which constitutes them. In addition, the mixing of narrator's and character's voices seems to occur precisely on a level where it is forbidden (in heterodiegetic narrative these voices are, after all, located on different ontological planes), and the invented discourse in the free indirect mode creates precisely the kind of "blend" that is so typical of metaphoric projection.

If one goes along with all of these virtual and metaphoric extensions of the concept of metalepsis, it becomes increasingly clear that metalepsis is then no longer a rare, rather marginal phenomenon of narrative texts and a negligible minor term within the architecture of narratological typology; on the contrary, once we reach the point of extending it to free indirect discourse, the transgression of story and discourse level signified by metalepsis becomes a fairly central instance of narratological theorizing.

Despite this logical conclusion, I would like to transport the reader of this article back to the pragmatic realities of the metaleptic case and remind him or her that, after all, we have just been taking a trip into the virtual realm of metaphoric licence and that, seriously speaking, we do not really consider free indirect discourse as a metaleptic phenomenon. What we have observed, instead, are metaleptic *effects* of narratological theorizing. (Free indirect discourse, after all, creates an effect of a dual voice but—in my own theoretical framework—does not actually mix voices.) Like McHale, I wish to see the speculations of this section as an exercise in playful critical metalepsis transgressing the boundaries of the technical and the metaphorical uses of critical terminology.

Yet this playful indulgence in metaphoric theorizing has opened up some gaps and danger spots that may continue to haunt us in all-too-confident future attempts to dispose of metalepsis as a minor narratological embarrassment. As we have seen in section 1, many examples of metalepsis do indeed consist in largely metaphoric strategies. The distinction between "real" and "metaphorical" metalepsis, between an actual crossing of *ontological* boundaries and a merely imaginative transcendence of narrative levels, is a fine one. Not only is this true from a Derridean perspective clearly suggests that a metaphoric component of metalepsis will inevitably involve metalepsis in the intractabilities of distinguishing between the "proper" and the "metaphoric" use of the term "ontological crossing." The critical impasse that is here seen to rear its head is additionally aggravated by the insight that the ontology of narratological levels exists only in the mind of readers and critics. It is a fiction based on realistic presuppositions about heterodiegetic and especially authorial narrators. Narrative levels or narratological boundaries are erected by recourse to commonsensical realistic scenarios that have been metaphorically and perhaps metaleptically applied to narratological theorizing. It is only in relation to a strong commitment to a realistic or pragmatic narratology, firmly based on the story/discourse distinction, that the concept of metalepsis can be fruitfully discussed as a metaphoric crossing of taken-for-granted (but really artificially imposed) theoretical boundaries. It will, therefore, be a useful reminder of the limits and precariousness of narratological epistemology to consider whether metalepsis can be logically talked about at all in reference to texts that undermine the story/discourse distinction. But perhaps that is a problem affecting only illusionistic uses of metalepsis. I will leave this issue for debate at a later date.

As a recent conference on metalepsis in Paris has demonstrated, the topic has as yet hardly been exhausted. Allons, enfants de la narratologie, le jour de la métalepse est arrivé.

Notes

[1] Ryan's paper ("Logique de la métalepse"), presented at a conference on metalepsis in Paris in November 2002, will be published in the French proceedings of that conference.

[2] The citation of the source is provided by Genette in the footnote: "Pierre Fontanier, *Commentaire raisonné sur 'Les Tropes' de Dumarsais*, vol. 2 of Dumarsais's *Les Tropes* (1818; repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1967), p. 116" (*Narrative* 234n.49; *Figures* 244n.2).

[3] I am here referring to the distinction between *fictio* and *fictum* in Werner Wolf's classic study *Ästhetische Illusion* (38-39).

[4] On the illusionistic or mimetic effects of supposedly transgressive techniques like paralipsis, paralepsis, metanarration and metalepsis see also Phelan (chs. 3-5) and Nünning (passim).

[5] The device is extremely common in nineteenth-century fiction. See also the following passage from Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* quoted in Ryan (*Narrative* 89): "You shall see them, reader. *Step* into this neat garden-house on the skirts of Whinbury, *walk* forward into the little parlour—they are there at dinner [. . .]. *You and I will join the party*, see what is to be seen, and hear what is to be heard" (1.2-3).

[6] Karl Bühler's example in his lectures at the University of Vienna was to have students turn "towards" St. Stephen's Cathedral, which involved an imaginary relocation in relation to Viennese topography (133-39).

[7] Genette also mentions Sterne in the context of Diderot.

[8] My analysis concentrates on quite different aspects of metalepsis than does David Herman´s article on *At-Swim-Two-Birds* or Debra Malina´s recent study on frame-breaking in Beckett, Brooke-Rose, and Angela Carter. Herman focuses on stylistic juxtaposition that implies a frame break; Malina emphasizes the construction of subjectivity in texts that abound in metaleptic frame-breaks. A recent PhD dissertation by Bernd Häsner on the genesis of the metaleptic mode has unfortunately been   inaccessible to me. For some excellent insights into postmodernist metalepsis see also Hempfer (191). A volume containing articles exclusively about metalepsis is in preparation (Pier and Schaeffer, eds.).

[9] First results of this research are reported in my "The Diachronization of Narratology." See also the superb recent study by Ken Ireland, *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative*, which is focused on temporal rather than spatial shifts but in part overlaps with my own concerns.

¹⁰ "That we 'love' the books we read (and write) is of course a mere cliché, a dead metaphor. Postmodernist writers like Sorrentino, Barthelme, and Gass reanimate this cliché and restore to it its full erotic connotations" (McHale 227).

¹¹ Ansgar Nünning, in his work on metanarrative, has a category of metaphoric metanarration to account for these common comparisons of the reading process with a journey, or with the succession of courses in a meal. An English translation of his "Mimesis des Erzählens" is forthcoming. See also Marie-Laure Ryan's notes on "transportation" in her *Narrative as Virtual Reality* (93-94).

¹² "Now that I've got you alone down here, you bastard, don't you think I'm letting you get away easily, no sir, not you brother" (William H. Gass, *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife*, qtd. McHale 225).

¹³ Compare also Ryan, *Narrative* 133-34.

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Abstracts of Articles

Davⁱᴅ Gorman, Translator's Introduction to Boris Tomashevskii's "The New School of Literary History in Russia" / 353

The author was a leading figure in the short-lived Formalist school of literary criticism, and the article here translated was only one item he published during a decade of intensive work in prosody and literary history. The latter interest is especially evident in Tomashevskii's survey, and remains significant today.

Boris Tomashᴇvskⁱⁱ, The New School of Literary History in Russia / 355

A contemporary overview of the Russian Formalist movement by one of its leading practitioners. Begins by outlining the emergence of the movement in the 1910s (section 1) and ends by discussing its prospects as of 1927 (section 7). In between, discusses three major theoretical problems that concerned the Formalists: the need for an authentically *literary* history (section 2), the nature of literary language (section 3), and the distinction between literary form and content (section 4). The Formalists' solution to the first of these problems, their theory of literary evolution, is discussed at some length (section 5) and, more briefly, later developments generalizing on this model, particularly the use of the notions of system and function (section 6).

Wⁱₗₗⁱₐm J. Vₐₙᴅᴇ Koᴘᴘₗᴇ, M. A. K. Halliday's Continuum of Prose Styles and the Stylistic Analysis of Scientific Texts / 367

This article begins by describing the continuum that M.A.K. Halliday often uses to analyze prose styles. This continuum has what Halliday calls the synoptic style on one pole and the dynamic style on the other. After this description, the article reviews a study showing how the discourse of experimental work in spectroscopy shifted from the dynamic style to the synoptic style over the course of much of the twentieth century. The essay also attempts to explain why this shift occurred. The article concludes by describing seven areas of stylistic work that research based on Halliday's tools of analysis can open up.

Moɴⁱᴋₐ Fₗᵤᴅᴇʀɴⁱᴋ, Scene Shift, Metalepsis, and the Metaleptic Mode / 382

Starting out with Gérard Genette's classic passages about metalepsis, the article distinguishes between five different types of metalepsis in Genette's *Narrative Discourse*. Section 2 then concentrates on one particular type of metalepsis which Marie-Laure Ryan has recently dubbed "rhetorical" metalepsis. The paper therefore does not treat the most commonly known type of metalepsis, ontological metalepsis. By focusing on one particular context in which rhetorical metalepses occur with some regularity, section 2 discusses the historical development of this figure between the late Middle English prose romance and the nineteenth century novel. In section 3 metaphoric uses of the term metalepsis are enumerated and analyzed. It is argued by way of conclusion that the concept of metalepsis inevitably depends on a mimetic understanding of narrative and on a neat distinction between story and discourse.