Media Transformation
Vorlesung

WiSe 2021-22

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Woche 3

Keith H. Basso:
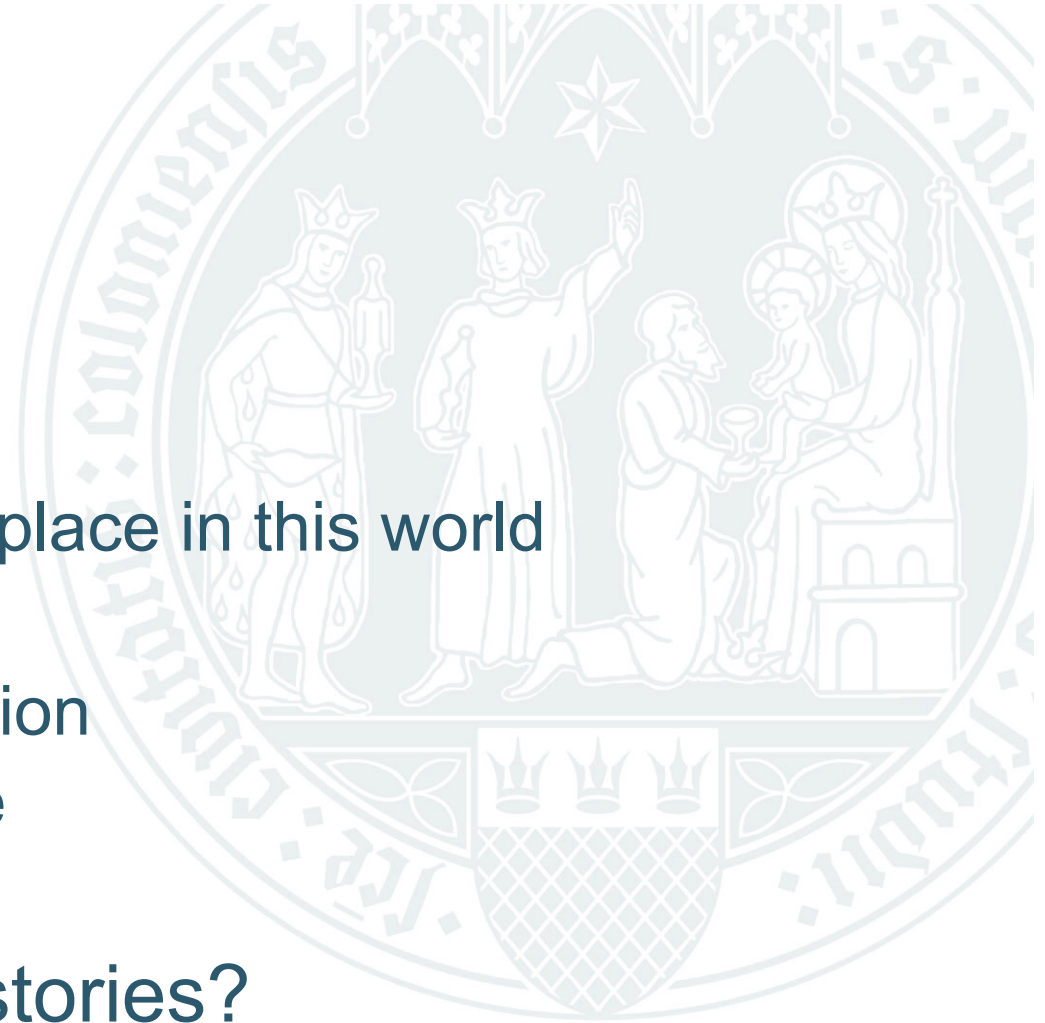
*Wisdom sits in places :
Landscape and Language
among the Western Apache*

Albuquerque, N.M.: University of
New Mexico Press, 1996

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Storytelling

- We tell stories
  - for amusement
  - to understand our place in this world
  - for money
  - to convey information
  - for moral guidance
  - ...
- Societies without stories?
- Stories and preparation

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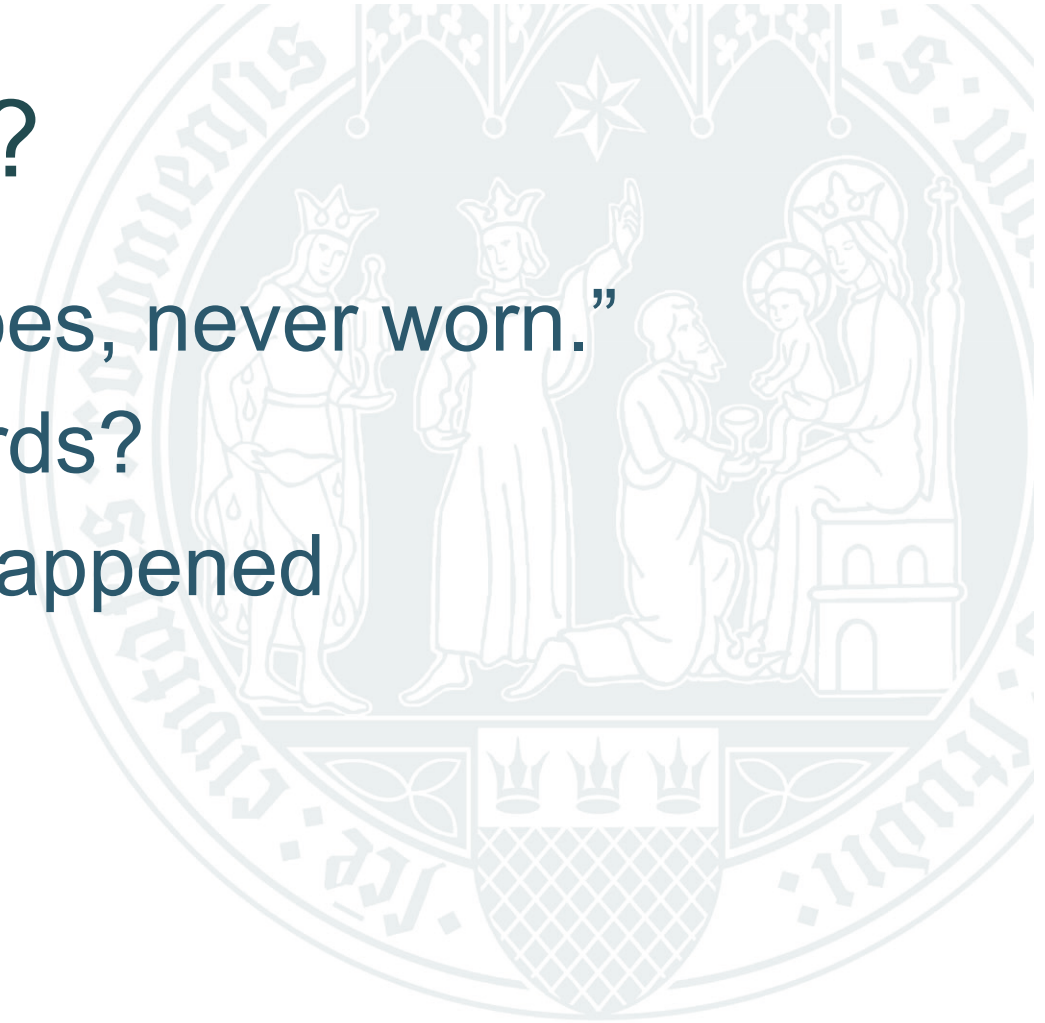
Stories and history

- All cultures have history
  - also oral cultures
- Linking stories to places
  - landscape
  - stars
- Creation myths
  - stories in religious systems
  - parables

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What is a story?

"For sale: baby shoes, never worn."

- A novel in six words?
- Something that happened
- Engagement
- Identification
- Self-expression
- Novelty

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Events

- Basic element in a story
  - stories as a series of events
- Minimal story (Prince)
  1. stative event
  2. active event
  3. stative event, inverse of first
- Basic narrative progression (Todorov)
  1. initial equilibrium
  2. destabilisation
  3. new equilibrium

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Narratology

- The study of narrative
  - thus, the study of stories
- The theory of narrative
  - that is, theories
- How does narrative work on us?
  - how does the story→ emotion process work?

Narrotological models: Propp

- Absentation
- Interdiction
- Violation Of Interdiction
- Reconnaissance
- Delivery
- Trickery
- Complicity
- Villainy Or Lack
- Mediation
- Beginning Counter-Action
- Departure
- First Function Of The Donor
- Hero's Reaction
- Receipt Of A Magical Agent
- Guidance
- Struggle
- Branding

- Victory
- Liquidation
- Return
- Pursuit
- Rescue
- Unrecognized Arrival
- Unfounded Claims
- Difficult Task
- Solution
- Recognition
- Exposure
- Transfiguration
- Punishment
- Wedding

Propp, Vladimir. Morphology of the Folktale. Bloomington, 1958. Orig: Морфология сказки.
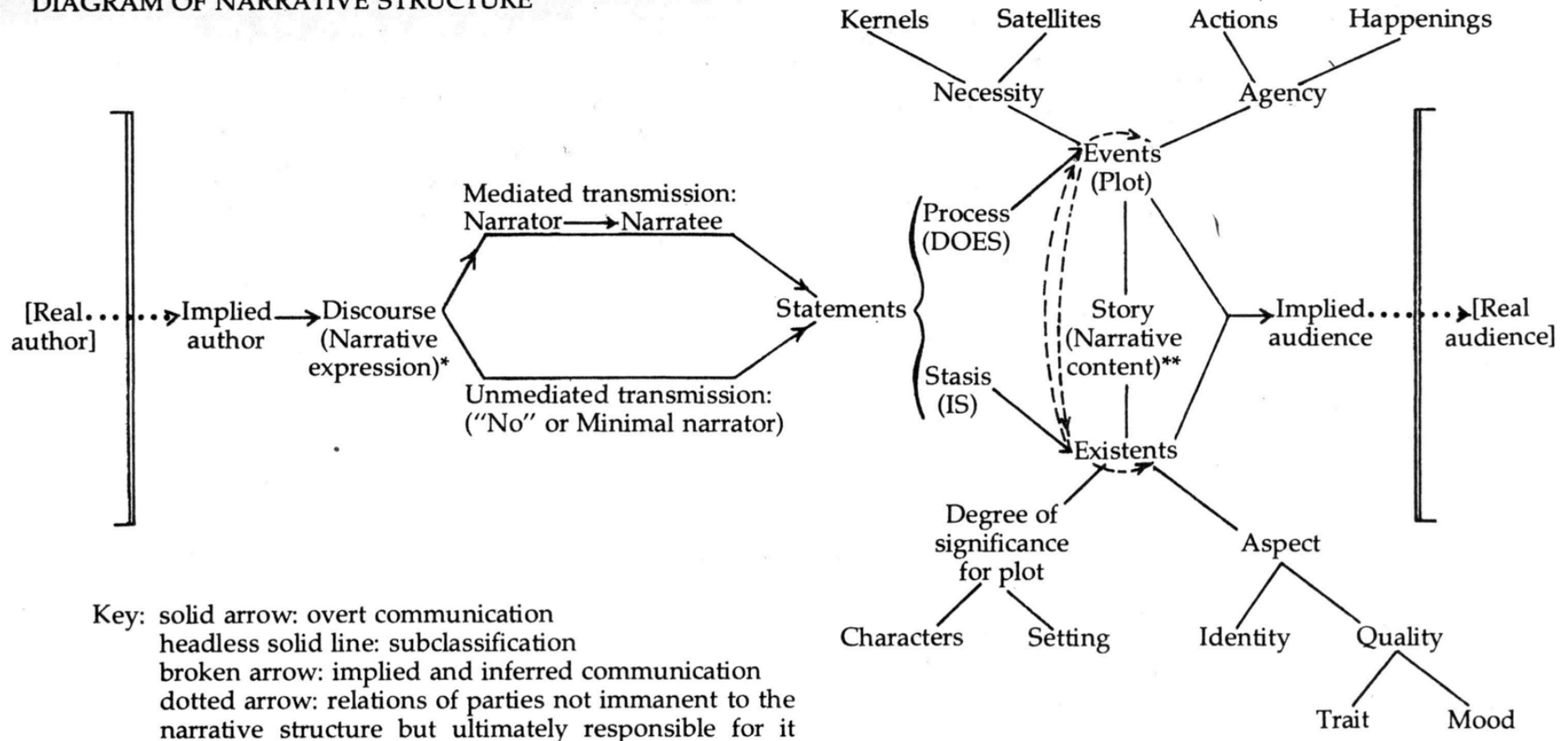
Story and discourse

- **Story**
  - what "happened"
  - fictional
  - specific meaning (different from above)
- **Discourse**
  - how it is told
- **Terminological differences**
  - different words uses: plot, fabula, syuzhet, ...
- **Systemic differences**
  - different categories

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Narratological models: Chatman

DIAGRAM OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Key: solid arrow: overt communication
headless solid line: subclassification
broken arrow: implied and inferred communication
dotted arrow: relations of parties not immanent to the
narrative structure but ultimately responsible for it

*This is the form of narrative expression; its *substance* or manifestation appears in various media (verbal: fiction, history; visual: paintings, comic strips; audio-visual: cinema, etc.).
**This is the form of the content not its substance.

Showing or telling

- Showing mode
  - events are shown
  - witnesses
  - small distance
- Telling mode
  - told about events
  - large distance
- But: terms used in very different ways
  - little agreement on classification

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Stories and reality

"[T]he 'principle of minimal departure' [...] states that we reconstrue the world of a fiction and of a counterfactual as being the closest possible to the reality we know. This means that we will project upon the world of the statement everything we know about the real world, and that we will make only those adjustments which we cannot avoid"

Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Fiction, Non-Factuals, and the Principle of Minimal Departure." Poetics 9 (1980): 403–22.

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- **The extra-communicational domain**
  - the background area in the mind of the perceiver of media products

- **The intra-communicational domain**
  - the foreground area in the mind of the perceiver of media products
  - formed by one's perception and interpretation of the media product
  - based on both extra-communicational and intra-communicational objects

Elleström, L. (2018). Modelling Human Communication: Mediality and Semiotics. Meanings & Co.: The Interdisciplinarity of Communication, Semiotics and Multimodality. A. Olteanu, A. Stables and D. Borţun. Cham, p. 26–27.

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Stories and reality

Rehashing Ryan's "principle of minimal departure," I argue that one construes the intra-communicational domain as being the closest possible to the extra-communicational domain, and allows for deviations only when they cannot be avoided. In other words: one does not question familiar ideas and experiences until it is called for.

Ibid, p. 27.

Historic and poetic truth

- Mimesis – diegesis (Aristotle: Poetics)
  - imitation – narrative
- Types of representation (Auerbach: Mimesis)
- Distance and identity
  - recognisable, but distant
- History
  - specific facts – contigent
- Poetry
  - can be based on history, but
  - events that could have (should have) happened

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Movement

- "Moving images"
- Shapeshifting
- Making things
  - Modelling
  - Thinking tools
  - Epistemic artefacts manipulated according to rules embedded in them
- Gesture and power
- Teaching how to touch

Games and stories

- Do computer games have a narrative
  - narratology vs. ludology
- Narratological perspective
  - look for the story
- Ludological perspective
  - this is a different medium
  - asking for story is not relevant
- Transmedia storytelling
- Studying games on their own terms
  - "new" media growing old

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