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Karin Kukkonen, Sonja Klimek (Eds.)

METALEPSIS IN POPULAR CULTURE

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Edited by
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KARIN KUKKONEN and SONJA KLIMEK

Preface

The story behind this volume is one of lively scholarly exchange and great enthusiasm for a phenomenon which seems to pervade Western popular culture: metalepsis. It began at the conference "Metareference in the Arts and Media" (May 2008; Centre for Intermediality Studies, Graz/Austria), where informal discussions on narrative metalepsis in films, comics and popular fiction soon led to the idea of a book project on the topic. For weeks after the conference, these informal discussions were continued in frequent and detailed e-mail exchanges. Scholars from various disciplines, most of whom are also contributors to this volume, participated in a debate on metalepsis across media. Instances of metalepsis and reading suggestions were exchanged, and previous treatments of the transmedial relevance of metalepsis were discussed, such as Werner Wolf's article (Wolf 2005), Gérard Genette's monograph (Genette 2004) and the volume edited by John Pier and Jean-Marie Schaeffer (Pier and Schaeffer, eds. 2005) based on their conference "La métalepse, aujourd'hui" held in Paris in 2002.

Our informal research project on metalepsis in popular culture soon began to take shape as Jean-Marc Limoges directed the e-mail exchanges on the list and as our discussions yielded the fundamental terminology which underlies the present volume.[1] For the case studies, the participants in our discussion proposed articles on metalepsis in comics, fantasy fiction, television, animation film and music videos. However, we also realised how many more media and genres could still be included in the study. The circle of scholars who had met at the conference in Graz needed to be expanded.

With the support of Neuchâtel University, Sonja Klimek proposed to organise our own specialised conference on "Metalepsis in Popular Culture." Karin Kukkonen and Sonja Klimek issued a call for papers to invite scholars to participate in the volume we were planning. Further contributions on comedy film, 3D illusions, television, music lyrics, detective fic-

1 See the following introduction by Karin Kukkonen.

tion and fan vids completed the line-up of media and genres of popular culture we were going to cover.

Only little over a year after the conference in Graz, where the story of this volume began, the participants of the discussion group on metalepsis had become contributors to a volume called *Metalepsis in Popular Culture*. From 25 June to 27 June 2009, we met again to discuss our contributions and the shape the volume was going to take. With the financial support of the "Bureau d'égalité" and the "Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines," Neuchâtel University welcomed us to Switzerland to hold our international and interdisciplinary conference on Metalepsis in Popular Culture. Daniel Sangsue, professor for French literature and at that time vice-dean of the humanities faculty at Neuchâtel, kindly agreed to greet the conference participants and to open the conference with a short reminiscence of his own early work on metalepsis.[2] The vivid debates and inspired discussions which grew during these few days in Neuchâtel were to find their way soon enough into the contributions of this volume. We are very grateful that the Journalism Research and Development Centre of Tampere University has generously provided us with the means for assistance in the preparation of the text in the stages of its completion. We are indebted to John Pier for his kind and thorough help with the final revisions.

The volume is structured along several lines of development: going from the introduction, which explains the conceptual consensus underlying the volume, each contribution details the workings and functions of metalepsis in a different medium or genre. The contributions themselves move from verbal media to visual media, from the photographic image of film to the drawn image of animations and comics and to the performative aspects of metalepsis. With this arrangement, contributions can be read individually, as discussions of metalepsis in a particular genre or medium, or in a series, as tracing larger lines of development in the media and their different modes. John Pier, in his afterword, reminds us how the concept of metalepsis has served as a "threshold" in narrative theory, opening up new vistas across the boundaries between media and genres, and explains how the articles of this volume contribute to this inquisitive project of metalepsis.

In the following, the contributions are listed by the genre or medium they discuss.

2 See Sangsue (1987).

Metalepsis in Popular Culture: An Introduction (Karin Kukkonen)

Karin Kukkonen's introduction lays out this volume's basic definition of metalepsis as a transgression of the boundary between the fictional world and the real world. She gives an overview of the critical history of metalepsis and explores its applicability across the media in general terms. The basic elements of the definition, i.e., 'worlds', 'boundary' and 'transgression', are explained, and different 'types' of metalepsis are distinguished. Kukkonen touches upon different possible 'functions' and 'effects' of metalepsis in her discussion of popular culture.

Metalepsis in Fantasy Fiction (Sonja Klimek)

Sonja Klimek develops a practical scheme of metalepses in narrative texts and illustrates it with examples from fantasy fiction. This genre has shown a remarkable richness of different types of narrative paradoxes during the last three decades. But Klimek's paper does not restrict itself to the establishment of a purely structuralist terminology. By regrouping the variety of different forms of metalepses into three main categories (ascending, descending and complex metalepsis), she reveals different philosophical problems that at present are being treated through the means of metalepsis within the popular genre of fantasy fiction, such as the tradition of scepticism and praise for the imaginative forces of the human being's fantasy. Its capacity to transcend the borders between fiction and reality (at least within literary texts) forms the basis of a popular treatment of the old tradition of scepticism and the question of whether free will and transcendence exist.

Metalepsis in Detective Fiction (Liviu Lutas)

Liviu Lutas illustrates metalepsis in detective fiction as a crossroads between the rational and the irrational and between conventional popular culture and self-reflexive high culture. After detailing the generic conventions of detective fiction and their metaleptic potential, Lutas discusses four case studies: Arturo Pérez-Reverte's *The Flanders Panel*, Hiber Conteris' *Ten Percent of Life*, Stephen King's "Umney's Last Case" and Jasper Fforde's *The Eyre Affair*. Lutas highlights how worlds, their boundaries and transgressions are treated in these four novels, and he explains how these metalepses form part of a larger allegorical discussion of the processes of reading and writing.

Metalepsis in Pop Lyrics (David Ben-Merre)

Taking a case study of Carly Simon's song "You're so vain" as his point of departure, David Ben-Merre develops the thesis that "pop music is by its very nature a metaleptic form." These metalepses emerge from a "struggle for authority" of getting to tell the story. Ben-Merre traces these struggles for authority back to literature and Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, and he shows how this kind of "vanity" is important. According to Ben-Merre, this kind of "vanity" of the narrator or singer is an even more crucial point when studying the problematic "I" in popular lyric poetry in general.

Metalepsis in Fan Fiction (Tisha Turk)

In fan fiction and fan vids, members of the audience rewrite their favourite fiction and supplement it from their own perspective. As Tisha Turk shows, these fan authors are very much aware that they are interfering with a previously existing fictional world, and they discuss this on Internet platforms, but also in fan fiction and fan vids, through metalepses. In fan fiction and fan vids, the division between author and audience becomes greatly complicated, and Turk explores the implications this has for Genette's definition of metalepsis. According to Turk, in fan fiction, fan vids and the discourses of fan culture, the audience takes control of its own immersion, and this participatory culture is thus inherently metaleptical.

Metalepsis in Music Videos (Henry Keazor)

Music videos are a multimodal genre. As they combine film and sound in innovative ways, they have often been considered the younger, innovative but superficial sibling of film. Henry Keazor explains in his contribution that metalepses in music videos are by no means simply a meaningless aesthetic plaything, and he goes on to show the larger narrative relevance of metalepsis in music videos such as a-ha's "Take On Me," Aerosmith's "Amazing" and "Cryin' " as well as Craig David's "Seven Days." Keazor elaborates the problems which the classic notion of narration as verbal discourse (to which Genette's definition of metalepsis also subscribes) poses for film. He then elaborates further on how music videos in particular employ metalepsis and how their use of different forms and levels of metalepsis proves them to be more than just a younger, style-conscious sibling of film.

Metaleptic TV Crossovers (Erwin Feyersinger)

Erwin Feyersinger discusses metalepsis in contemporary TV series, such as *Family Guy*, *The Simpsons* or *The Practice*. He distinguishes between metalepsis, which is a paradoxical transgression between discrete worlds, and crossover, which is a transgression between fictional worlds that seem to be part of a larger fictional world (or universe) extending over several TV programmes. As Feyersinger makes clear in his article, here the specific media conditions of TV programmes with their serial narration and spin-offs come to bear on the storytelling. Feyersinger develops an account of the dynamic construction of fictional worlds in TV series and uses this model to distinguish various types of transgression on the continuum between metalepsis and crossover.

Metaleptic Remote Controls (Jeff Thoss)

Jeff Thoss continues our discussion of metalepses related to television, but turns from the serial format of TV programmes to a crucial device of TV viewers: the remote control. Thoss examines several films and TV series in which the remote control becomes the centre of the action. Discussing examples from the TV series *Eerie, Indiana*, *The Simpsons*, and *Family Guy* and from the films *Amazon Women on the Moon*, *Stay Tuned*, and *Funny Games*, Thoss shows how the metaleptic occurrence of the remote control in the fictional world addresses the popular status of the television medium. The fight over the remote control leads to entertaining scenes, but as Thoss goes on to show, these are also negotiations of power (who is in control, the audience or the characters?) and fictionality (should popular media be commended or criticised for offering a platform for escapism?).

Metalepsis in Comedy Film (Keyvan Sarkhosh)

Keyvan Sarkhosh studies metalepses in popular comedy films from the early 1970s. Starting from Genette's term "narrative metalepsis," he carefully transfers the term "metalepsis" to film studies, then analyses a variety of examples of metalepses and the comic effects they produce in films by Woody Allen, Marty Feldman, Mel Brooks and others. This leads him to his final hypothesis that metalepsis might "serve as a kind of comic relief" for the "possible yet unbearable truth" that our whole world (that is, *our reality*) might in fact just be a work of fiction.

Metalepsis in Animation Film (Jean-Marc Limoges)

Like most of the contributions in this volume, Jean-Marc Limoges' article hinges upon the question of whether Gérard Genette's definition of metalepsis is complete or whether metalepses in the media other than written fiction rather force us to extend the definition and distinguish between additional types. Limoges goes on to propose a much more detailed model of potential types of metalepses, which is based on Genette's terminology in *Narrative Discourse*. Using the wealth of metalepses in the animation films by Tex Avery, Limoges finds examples of many types of metalepsis which stretch the limits of the classical definition of the term.

Metalepsis in Comics (Karin Kukkonen)

Karin Kukkonen begins by identifying the potential of the comics form for different types of metalepsis. As characters cross the panel frames, they leave the storyworld, and as they interfere with the images' drawings and paratextual features, they take up the role of authors. Kukkonen connects these instances of metalepsis in comics to the notion of foregrounding: metalepsis not only transgresses the boundary between the fictional world and the real world, but it also makes readers aware of the ontological difference between the two. In her case study, Kukkonen explores metalepsis in superhero comics such as *Animal Man* and *Tom Strong*, where its functions and effects serve to illustrate power struggles.

Metalepsis in Holographic Projection (Roberta Hofer)

Roberta Hofer introduces a new genre to the field of studies of metalepsis. After an introduction to the history of holography and projection techniques during the last centuries, Hofer analyses metaleptic aspects of "the world's first 3D hologram performance," the live gig of the cartoon rock band "Gorillaz" at the MTV Europe Music Awards in 2006, and the follow-up performance at the Grammys, where the comic holographs even performed on stage together with the singer Madonna, who was present in the flesh. These two case studies provide Hofer with the opportunity to explore the 'boundaries' of representation that are transgressed in contemporary holographic stage art and to study functions and effects of metalepses in 3D hologram performance.

Metalepsis in Music Theatre (Harald Fricke)

In his paper on "Metalepsis and Metareference in German and Italian Music Theatre," Harald Fricke explores to what extent meta-phenomena have always been a part of the formerly popular genre of opera. Starting from a theoretical explanation of the term "metareference," Fricke traces the device back to the theory of German Romanticism before introducing his own terminological scheme: he distinguishes "Gradated Metareference" (with its sub-forms "Infinite" and "Recursive Metareference") from "Paradoxical Metareference," synonymous, according to him, with metalepsis in the stricter sense. Testing his new categories on two detailed case studies (of Rossini's Buffa *Il Turco in Italia* and Richard Strauss' *Capriccio*), he reaches an answer to the question of whether such an artificial and "highly complex genre" as opera includes that much metareference and metalepsis.

All the articles of this volume extend our understanding of metalepsis by discussing its narrative implications for different media and different publication forms, by outlining its potential functions and effects in the context of popular culture and by explaining new types of transgression between the real world and the fictional world. The articles emerge from a common understanding and discuss these issues in a principled manner. The general bibliography at the end of the volume could be the starting point for new enthusiasts of metalepsis to read more extensively about the particular scholarly discussions connected with these issues.

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Metalepsis in Popular Culture: An Introduction

When Gérard Genette coyly states that "I fear I am […] a bit responsible for annexing to the field of narratology a concept which originally belonged to the field of rhetoric" (Genette 2004: 7)[1], he could not have been more modest. Any discussion of metalepsis, the "concept" in question, refers back to his definition of the term in *Narrative Discourse* (Genette 1972: 243–251). Metalepsis occurs when an author enters or addresses the fictional world he or she created, and when characters leave their fictional world or address their author and their readers. When the superhero Animal Man embarks on a quest to meet his author Grant Morrison or when John Fowles seemingly enters the fictional world of his novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, this is metalepsis. Metalepsis means literally 'a jump across' and, when it occurs in literature, film or other media, the boundaries of a fictional world are glanced, travelled or transported across.

Genette takes the term metalepsis from Pierre Fontanier's commentary on a treaty called *On Tropes* by the Enlightenment grammarian Dumarsais.[2] With the help of these two classical rhetoricians, Genette identifies Diderot's famous phrase "Who would prevent me from marrying off the Master and cuckolding him?"[3] as an "author's metalepsis" (1972: 244). Here, the author brings about the marriage, he himself precipitates the consequences of what he reports and thus it can be understood as the author crossing over into the fictional world. Gérard Genette extends this simple rhetorical figure to cover any transgression of fictional worlds or

Acknowledgements: My thanks to Hans-Ulrich Seeber and to my co-editor Sonja Klimek for their thoughtful comments on earlier drafts of this introduction.

1 My translation. The original reads: "Je crains d'être […] un peu responsable de l'annexion au champ de la narratologie d'une notion qui appartient originellement à celui de la rhétorique" (Genette 2004: 7). All the following quotes from Genette are my own translations with the original French given in the footnotes.

2 César Chesneau Dumarsias wrote his *Traité des tropes* in 1730. Pierre Fontanier reedited it in 1818 as *Les Tropes de Dumarsais* and added an extensive commentary. Fontanier's own work in rhetoric, on which Genette draws extensively in *Narrative Discourse*, has been reedited by Genette himself in *Les figures du discours*.

3 "Qu'est-ce qui m'empêcherait de marier le Maître et de le faire cocu?" (quoted in Genette 1972: 244).

levels of narration in fiction. By broadening the 'author's metalepsis' to 'narrative metalepsis' (Genette 1972: 244), Genette not only includes instances of Diderot and Sterne in the early novel, but also of Balzac, Cortázar and, of course, Proust (Genette 1972: 243–246) in his discussion of metalepsis. In his most recent treatment of metalepsis, *La Métalepse* (2004), Genette addresses examples of metalepsis across media, showing that the figure is ubiquitous in our cultural expressions.

The term metalepsis comes from rhetoric, and rhetoric holds a strong stake in narratology, especially in the analysis of written verbal narratives in the tradition of Wayne C. Booth and James Phelan. However, rhetorical narratology usually concerns itself with the situation of storytelling, its communicative implications and strategies of persuasion, not tropes like metalepsis, metonymy and metaphor. On the basis of Genette's development of the term, metalepsis now stretches from a simple figure to a larger narrative phenomenon. As a rhetorical figure, metalepsis expresses the creative agency of the author, who can embellish the earth with flowers and make fountains purl.[4] Enacted in narrative, metalepsis addresses the transgression of the boundaries of the fictional world and thus narrative levels (we will discuss and distinguish these two in a moment). As Genette broadens the applicability of the term from rhetorical figure to narrative phenomenon, metalepsis makes the transition from classical rhetoric to modern narrative studies.

Genette singles out several types of metalepsis in *Narrative Discourse*: the metalepsis of the author or narrator in Balzac, Diderot and Sterne, characters escaping from the fictional world in Pirandello and Genet, or a narrator appropriating other narrative levels ("pseudo-diegetic"; 1972: 246). After Genette, narratology went on to continue his classificatory work and distinguish various types and kinds of metalepsis. "Ontological metalepsis" occurs when character, author or narrator are relocated across the boundary of the fictional world; "rhetorical metalepsis," when they only glance or address each other across this boundary (see Ryan 2004a; Ryan 2005 and Fludernik 2003 discuss the distinction further). A "rhetorical metalepsis" thus does not correspond to the figure metalepsis in rhetoric. In order to avoid confusion, we could adopt Dorrit Cohn's distinction between metalepsis on the level of story and metalepsis on the level of discourse (Cohn 2005: 121). However, the story-discourse distinction upon which Cohn's categories are based is problematic. Visual and performance media do not report; they do not necessarily feature the verbal

4 Genette refers back to an instance of Fontanier citing Virgil's fourth eclogue: "Ô Ménalque, dit Virgile dans sa IVe élogue, si nous vous perdions, qui émaillerait la terre de fleurs? Quit ferait couler les fontaines sous une ombre verdoyante?" (2004: 11).

discourse of an agent ordering and communicating the earlier story,[5] and thus a typology of metalepses on the basis of the story-discourse distinction is problematic for a transmedial approach to metalepsis. Metalepsis in films or comics can also emerge when their production context is represented or characters break the fourth wall.

Across media, metalepsis can be ascending across narrative levels, when a character moves out of the fictional world and enters the real world, potentially encountering its author or readers; or it can be descending across narrative levels, when authors or narrators enter the fictional world (see Pier 2005; see also McHale 1987 who speaks of entanglements of the hierarchy of narrative levels).

As the discussion of metalepsis gathered pace toward the turn of the millennium, the distinctions between different types of metalepsis became more intricate and revealed the complexity and ubiquity of the phenomenon. And as narratology began to investigate storytelling across the media, metalepses were discussed for film (see Schaeffer 2005 or Limoges 2008), animation (see Feyersinger 2007), TV, comics or music video (see Keazor and Wübbena 2005). Each medium of storytelling has its specific limitations and possibilities for communicating a story. Media studies calls these "affordances" (see Jensen 2008 or Ryan 2004b), and they not only shape the narrative content in various ways, but also affect how metalepsis occurs. Studies in metalepsis across media are aware of these affordances (see the different contributions to Pier and Schaeffer, eds. 2005), but rarely discuss them in a systematic manner. Werner Wolf takes a first step towards a transmedial systematic terminology for metalepsis, when he details how the narratological concept of metalepsis could be exported into different media (Wolf 2005; expanded by Klimek 2009), but since the space available to him in the article is limited, much remains to be discussed when it comes to metalepsis in different media.

This is the point where our present volume *Metalepsis in Popular Culture* enters the discussion on metalepsis: its articles apply and expand a coherent set of terms to instances of metalepsis across media in popular culture. The contributions focus clearly on texts or artefacts of popular culture and their narrative features. As they present metalepses in film, video, TV, comics, song lyrics and different genres of popular fiction, the articles take into consideration how the affordances of these media shape the transgression of the boundary of the fictional world. We will outline the basic set of terms for metalepsis on which the articles build and address a num-

5 See Ryan 2004b for an extensive discussion of the problems of the story-discourse distinction for transmedial narratology. Patron 2009 elaborates the theoretical presuppositions underlying the verbal discourse of the narrator in the story-discourse distinction.

ber of problems connected to them before the case studies in the articles take our set of terms to task on metalepses in popular culture.

1. Metalepsis…

Metalepsis is the transgression of the boundaries of the fictional world. For this transgression we can distinguish between various types and their effects or functions. 'World', 'boundary' and 'transgression' with its 'types', 'effects' and 'functions' will form the basic set of terms on which we base our discussion of *Metalepsis in Popular Culture*. The 'world' is the fictional world in which the story takes place and which characters can leave and authors or narrators can enter metaleptically. This fictional world is distinguished from the real world, or its representation, by a 'boundary' which is 'transgressed' in metalepsis. Building on the Genettian definition of metalepsis, I will begin to outline our basic set of terms for metalepsis with its general problems and specific media affordances.

In *Narrative Discourse*, Gérard Genette provides two definitions of metalepsis:

1. Metalepsis is the "passage from one narrative level to another" (Genette 1972: 243).[6] Narrative levels are the level of the teller or producer of a story and the level of the story itself.
2. Metalepsis is the enactment of the "moving but sacred frontier between two worlds: the world where narration takes place and the world which is narrated" (Genette 1972: 245).[7] The first world is the world in which the communicative situation of the narrative is located; the second world is the fictional world of the story.

Both distinctions can be reproduced on the levels of embedded stories.

These two different definitions which Genette gives in *Narrative Discourse* refer to two different dimensions of metalepsis. The first definition refers to narrative roles of author and character, their functions and capabilities; the second definition refers to the worlds fictions create (see Herman 1997, who describes them as formal features and world-creating functions). In terms of the narrative roles of fiction, an author explicitly interfering with the events befalling the characters, like Diderot suggests for Jacques' master, ends up leaving the narrative level of the teller and puts himself on the narrative level of the story itself, because otherwise he

6 "Le passage d'un niveau narratif à l'autre" (Genette 1972: 243).

7 In the original: "frontière mouvante mais sacrée entre deux mondes: celui où l'on raconte, celui que l'on raconte" (Genette 1972: 245).

could only report it but not interfere with it. In terms of the world-creating function of fiction, such a metalepsis is described as the author entering the fictional world.

The first definition makes clear that the fictional world is not simply couched in the narrator's discourse, but produced by it. The second definition highlights that the narrator's discourse is not necessarily noticeable in fiction. Especially in the visual narration of films, TV and comics, there is no narrator unless it is specifically cued in formal devices like voice-over narration or captions (see Bordwell 1985: 61ff.; see also Sarkhosh, Feyersinger and Keazor in this volume). The fictional worlds in these media are created from visual and verbal clues on the screen or the page, which are not necessarily a narrator's discourse. In the interest of our transmedial approach to metalepsis, we opt for the term 'world' over 'narrative level'. However, when narrative levels become relevant in the discussions of our case studies, they are addressed as modifying properties of the 'worlds' of metalepsis (see for example Sarkhosh's contribution to this volume).

a. Worlds

As a work of fiction begins, readers imaginatively enter its fictional world, or storyworld.[8] It can begin *in medias res*, dramatising readers' orientation in the fictional world, or it can begin by providing a smooth introduction into this fictional world. Such introductions can be detailed accounts of the setting, for example, a remark about the weather as in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, a socially typical utterance as in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* or the description of a character's looks as in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Any of these cues helps readers imagine the fictional world in which the story takes them by providing an entry point into this world. In films, TV and comics, a sweeping establishing shot of the venue or a close-up, which is then pulled back to reveal more of the storyworld, fulfil the same narrative function.

In a narrative without any frills and whistles, such as metanarration, mise en abyme or metalepsis, readers will not leave this fictional world as long as the story unfolds. With metalepsis, however, readers are reminded either that someone is telling the story or that there is a reality 'outside'

8 See Herman 2002 for the term "storyworld." In this introduction, I use the term "fictional world" consistently to mark the opposition to the real world. Some of our contributions use the Genettian distinction between intradiegesis, extradiegesis and hypodiegesis. Since the diegesis is the (main) fictional world, intradiegesis translates to "fictional world," extradiegesis to "(representation of) the real world" and hypodiegesis to "fictional world embedded within a fictional world."

the fictional world. In the first case, the narrative level of the teller, whose discourse produces the fictional world, comes to the fore and intervenes with this fictional world. In the second case, the real world outside the fictional world is revealed in its own representation.

The basic underlying assumption of fiction is that the fictional world is produced by an author (or creative team) in the real world. This brings both aspects of metalepsis together. The author as a producer of the fictional world is connected to the real world. When an audience is reminded that there is an 'outside' to the fictional world, the real world is revealed. The 'author' (or, more precisely, readers' mental representation of the author) can take the guise of the narrator in verbal discourse or of a production context in the case of film, video or comics. The transgressions of metalepsis can take on many different guises. However, the basic function of metalepsis remains a crossing of the border between the fictional world and (a representation of) the real world.

The two worlds relevant for metalepsis are thus the 'fictional world' and the 'real world'. The 'fictional world' is the world created by the story. Fictional worlds and their mimesis, i.e., readers imagining them to be a convincing narrative reality, have been discussed in narratology in terms of possible-worlds theory (see Doležel 1998; Ryan 1992; but also Herman 2002). Possible worlds are projections of alternative states of affairs from the actual world. In fiction, they lose the pristine logical clarity of philosophy and are extended into fully-fledged fictional worlds. Like the possible worlds of philosophy, however, fictional worlds depart consistently from the actual world and allow the human mind to indulge in imagining alternative states of affairs such as the English country gentry of the 19th century in Jane Austen or the trials and tribulations of a superhero in Grant Morrison's *Animal Man*. Fictional worlds can aim for realistic representation, and from this complicated discussions of what is 'fictionality' ensue (see Walsh 2007 or Mikkonen 2006 for recent overviews), but generally fictional worlds portray possible rather than actual states of affairs.

The 'real world', on the other hand, distinguishes itself from fiction in that it is an actual rather than a possible state of affairs. If metalepsis refers both to the real world and to a fictional world, how can it reconcile the actual and the possible state of affairs? Basically, there are two options. One option is to work through deixis: characters can address (implied) readers in their speech asking them to close the door as in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67/1980: 4) or, in visual narration, they can look out of the image, film or stage by breaking the fourth wall. The fictional text thus deictically addresses the real world in which we actually read it. The second option is to represent the 'real world' in the fictional text. As an image of the painter's hand reaches into the cartoon image in Tex Avery's *Dan-*

gerous Dan McFoo, a representation of the real world interacts with the fictional world. With the help of Tex Avery's cartoons, Jean-Marc Limoges will complicate the simple distinction between the fictional world and the real world in his contribution to this volume.

We have now distinguished "two worlds: the world where narration takes place and the world which is narrated" (Genette 1972: 245), i.e., the 'real world' and the 'fictional world'. The fictional world is the world we imagine as readers and audiences as the story unfolds. The 'real world' is the world outside the fictional world, where readers and authors are located. In most media, the 'real world' is largely a mental construction.[9] As metalepsis crosses the boundary between these two worlds, it signals to readers the existence of the real world by addressing it deictically or representing it in the text.

b. Boundary

The boundary which metalepsis transgresses is generally that between (a representation or mental construction of) the real world and the fictional world. These two worlds are on different ontological levels, because the fictional world refers only to a possible state of affairs, whereas the real world refers to the actual state of affairs. Going back to Genette's narrative levels, the real world produces the fictional world and it is thus endowed with different powers and possibilities. Even though it is also just a representation, the real world in metalepsis is considered as crucially different from the fictional world. This notion of difference is fundamental to the boundary or frontier of metalepsis.

The distinction between the fictional world and the real world is reproduced whenever a fiction 'jumps across' the boundaries between embedded fictional worlds. As characters within fiction read a novel or watch a film, the boundary of metalepsis can move to the distinction between the fictional world and the fictional world which is imagined by the characters. The distinction between the fictional world and the real world is reproduced in fiction, when characters become readers and authors within their own fictional world and produce a secondary fictional world. For the more visually minded, the contributions of Klimek and Limoges provide diagrams of the possible relations between 'real worlds' and 'fictional worlds' in metalepsis.

9 In some cases, even a transgression between a fictional world and the real, actual world is possible, as Hofer discusses for holograph projections for example.

Moving this boundary of metalepsis within fiction can lead to nightmarish mise en abymes, but it does not change the nature of the boundary as long as the new level remains hierarchically different from the previous level and thus reproduces the fiction-reality distinction (see Ryan 2004a for the "stacking" of narrative levels and McHale 1987 for hierarchies of narrative levels). However, a different kind of boundary has been identified in studies of metalepsis: that between different fictional worlds. Sophie Rabau calls this "heterometalepsis" (2005) and Frank Wagner calls it "intertextual metalepsis" (2002). Fictional worlds have boundaries which distinguish them from the real world and from each other. Even though both the English countryside of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* are fictional, they are distinct fictional worlds. Heterometalepsis asks us to consider what would happen if one of the characters, say Dorothea, leaves the fictional world of *Middlemarch*, not to address the readers or George Eliot herself, but to join Jane Eyre for a cup of tea at Thornfield. There is a transgression of the boundary marking off distinct fictional worlds, but it is not the boundary to the real world or a representation of it. Does this also qualify as a metalepsis?

The hierarchical relationship between the two worlds is crucial for metalepsis, and including the jump across fictional worlds as "heterometalepsis" or "intertextual metalepsis" is problematic if we want a coherent notion of metalepsis. Yet for keeping the distinction between real world and fictional world alive, for keeping the 'right' boundary to be crossed, we could argue in favour of an intertextual metalepsis between fictional worlds along the following lines: both Dorothea and Jane Eyre are iconic characters of Victorian fiction. Simply by mentioning their names alone, this generic and discursive context of the real world is evoked. 'Jane Eyre' is obviously a character, no matter whether mentioned in an academic essay or any piece of fiction. This contextual dimension of the characters reminds readers of the real world. Thus the transgression of the boundary between the fictional worlds of *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch* has metaleptic qualities in that Jane's tea party refers back to the boundary between the fictional worlds and the real world. Feyersinger's discussion of metalepsis and crossover in his contribution to this volume diversifies the argument around intertextual metalepses.

c. Transgression: Its Types, Effects and Functions

The boundary which is transgressed in metalepsis runs between the fictional world and the real world, and the real world is then represented in fiction. Fiction facilitates this transgression in different ways: the trans-

gression can be a quasi-physical translocation of authors, narrators and characters, in which case we find an "ontological metalepsis"; or it can be a mere address of these acteurs across the metaleptic boundary, in which case we find a "rhetorical metalepsis." Not only the nature of the transgression, but also its direction helps us distinguish between different types: as characters leave their fictional worlds, they move up a narrative level into the real world, i.e., the world in which they were invented, and therefore we speak of "ascending metalepsis." As authors and narrators enter the fictional world, they move down one level and therefore we talk of "descending metalepsis." John Pier develops this distinction in his account of metalepsis (2005).

The direction and the nature of the transgression in metalepsis help us draw up a basic matrix of types which is coherent and applicable across media, because it is not bound to verbal narrative discourse. A metalepsis can be both ascending and rhetorical if a character addresses the readers or the author by verbal deixis or by looking out of the frame, thereby breaking the fourth wall. It is ascending and ontological if the character actually steps out of this frame and enters a representation of the real world encountering readers and the author. Descending metalepses can be both ontological and rhetorical. Authors can address their characters or even enter the fictional world to interact with them. Readers can enter the fictional world as well and perform a descending ontological metalepsis, but they almost never address characters in what would be a descending rhetorical metalepsis. If the boundaries of fictional worlds are represented in fiction, then Jane Eyre can address Dorothea across these boundaries and invite her over for tea in an intertextual rhetorical metalepsis. Dorothea can leave the world of *Middlemarch* for Thornfield in an intertextual ontological metalepsis.

The research on metalepsis yields a good many more types of metalepsis than the ones I have just outlined. The case studies in this volume will also propose more types of metalepses than the six types of my basic matrix. As the saying goes, whenever a critic has defined the novel, some author comes along and writes a text which is clearly a novel, but defies the critic's categories. The same is certainly true for metalepsis and its pervasiveness across the media. In their investigation of specific texts, the articles in this volume expand this basic matrix of types for the media they discuss. However, the types they find are always types of transgressing the boundary of the fictional world and they therefore do not distort but complement this basic set of terms for analysing metalepsis in popular culture.

As characters, authors and readers move across the boundary of the fictional world, most critics of metalepsis talk of 'transgression' and we are

no exception here. 'Transgression' seems to be something subversive, a kind of rupture, and indeed metalepsis is generally considered as such. Metaleptic "intrusions disturb, to say the least," as Genette puts it (1988: 88). Debra Malina diagnoses a "violent streak" in metalepsis (2002: 3) in the fiction of Beckett, Brooke-Rose and Angela Carter and relates its transgression of boundaries to rupture and violence. It is a "breach in narrative structure that undermines the narrative's illusions" (Malina 2003: 138) for the mimesis of the story, but it also deconstructs the subject according to Malina. Werner Wolf does not claim the same social significance for metalepsis, but for him as well its transgressive quality is essentially subversive. This notion is important enough for him to include it in his minimal definition of metalepsis: *"a usually intentional paradoxical transgression of, or confusion between, (onto-)logically distinct (sub)worlds and/or levels that exist, or are referred to, within representations of possible worlds"* (Wolf 2005: 91; emphasis in the original; see also Wolf 2009: 50). The key word here is *"paradoxical."* Because metalepsis goes against the expectations of readers to have a single fictional world, it goes against the 'doxa', the way things usually work in fiction, and it is thus para-doxical, literally 'outside the convention' (Wolf 2005: 9). Because the fictional world is closely tied to mimesis, showing its fictitiousness ultimately disrupts the immersion of readers in the story and creates a "strong *anti-illusionist effect"* according to Wolf (2005: 103).

Metalepsis disrupts the readers imagining the fictional world and their immersion in it. Its effect, if not necessarily its intended function, is therefore thought to be anti-illusionist. However, the question arises as to whether this is necessarily always the case.

Metalepsis seems to be essentially anti-illusionist because it destroys the coherence of the fictional world by transgressing its boundary. Contributing to the persuasive power of this assumption is certainly the perceived rise of metalepsis (and other means of metareference) in the disruptive and deconstructive narratives of postmodernism. But metalepsis is a much older phenomenon than the postmodern crisis of representation and its attacks on the realist novel, as we saw with Genette's classical examples and as some of our case studies show (see Kukkonen, Hofer or Limoges in this volume). Brian McHale states that love and death are both the basic principles of fiction and the basic principles of life (1987: 220). Readers long to be seduced by the text and authors love their characters (1987: 222). Death comes "with the end of discourse and silence" (1987: 228). According to McHale, these relations of love and death, which underlie all fiction because of the basic communicative situation they imply, are already metafictional. Postmodern fiction brings them to the fore with its self-reflexivity and enacts them in metalepsis.

In fact, we could even claim that metalepsis is inherent to the entire communicative situation of fiction. Towards the end of his recent account *Métalepse*, Gérard Genette draws a similar conclusion: "Actually, fiction is fed and peopled by elements, material and mental, hailing from reality all the way […] All fictions are woven through with metalepses" (2004: 131).[10] Reality informs fiction, and therefore referring across the boundary between the fictional world and the real world implicitly takes place all the time. Hans-Georg Gadamer's merging horizons of text and reader, as well as the literary criticism engaging with his hermeneutics (e.g., Jauss 1984, but see also Iser 1993) has often discussed this constant interaction between fiction and reality. With metalepsis, it becomes explicit.

Fiction – and this takes us back to rhetoric—is intertwined with the basic communicational situation: readers assume that someone communicates the story to them. In verbal narrative, it is usually the narrator who produces the discourse. In visual narrative, such a narrator is often not discernable. Nevertheless, the visual and verbal information films communicate is carefully managed, and we can thus discuss narration and communicative situation in visual media, even though they have no narrator (see Bordwell 1985). On the basis of this communicational situation, fiction can be enmeshed with reality both in the implicit communication between author and readers and in the knowledge they share. Jean-Marie Schaeffer shows how immersion in fiction oscillates constantly[11] between moments of mimetic illusion and moments of metaleptic realisation of the real world (2005: 333). For him, metalepsis is an enactment of immersion, because it reproduces the transgression between the fictional and the real worlds, which underlies immersion at large.

The boundary between the fictional world and the real world might not be generally as watertight as basic narrative analysis makes it out to be. Maybe the 'doxa' of oblivious immersion in the fictional world makes us forget important aspects of what it means to read fiction, such as the communicative situation and the merging of horizons between reader and text. Suffice it to say that transgression in metalepsis can have disruptive and deconstructive effects, if the immersion in the fictional world is ruptured, and that it can have illusionist effects, if it successfully reproduces the basic interaction of the communicational situation of fiction.[12] There

10 "En vérité, la fiction est, de part en part, nourrie et peuplée d'éléments venus de la réalité, matériels et spirituels […] Toute fiction est tissée de métalepses." (Genette 2004: 131).

11 In the orginial: "dynamique tensionelle" (Schaeffer 2005: 333).

12 Along this line of reproducing the communicative situation and artfully changing it in fiction runs the distinction between natural and unnatural narration (see Fludernik 1996 for natural narration and Richardson 2006 for unnatural narration; see Thoss (forthcoming) for a discussion of unnatural narration and metalepsis).

is no essential effect in metalepsis—only effects that arise out of the larger narrative contexts.

If there is no essential effect of metalepsis, we need to start wondering what the functions, the intentionally engineered effects, of metalepsis in popular culture are. The dichotomy between immersion in the fictional world and the anti-illusionist rupture of immersion gives rise to one set of functions. In the literature of the fantastic, texts make readers doubt for a moment whether what they read is real.[13] Fantasy literature, on the other hand, allows readers to immerse themselves in the fantastic fictional world and makes use of metalepsis to this end (on fantasy, see Klimek in this volume). In comedy, the fictitiousness of the fictional world or the blandness of the real world can be comically revealed (on comedy, see Sarkhosh in this volume). Such revelations of the fictional onto the real or the real onto the fictional world can also lead to epistemic functions of doubt and detection (see Lutas in this volume). As we can see from these tags, the narrative function of metalepsis is often tied to a genre such as the fantasy novel, comedy or crime fiction. The case studies of Klimek, Sarkhosh and Lutas will focus on these three genres and elaborate how they accommodate different functions of metalepsis. Ben-Merre and Turk show how the relation between audience and text established through metalepsis can engender effects of immersion, authenticity and self-reflexivity. The entire collection of case studies in this volume will show how broad a spectrum of effects and functions metalepsis in popular culture can have.

2. … in Popular Culture

So far, we have been talking about metalepsis without addressing to any large extent which kinds of texts it appears in. Looking at the texts which Genette, Herman, Fludernik, McHale, Ryan or Malina discuss in their accounts of metalepsis, we find that they are largely high-culture or avant-garde literature such as Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* and the fiction of Beckett, Brooke-Rose or Angela Carter. The material of these basic accounts of metalepsis, which are central to the illumination and definition of the concept, are limited in two ways: first, they address only high-culture or avant-garde texts; second, they focus on written narratives. Some of the essays in Pier and Schaeffer's *Métalepses* (2005) already include popular texts of different media. Our volume on *Metalepsis in Popular Culture* aims to remedy these limitations on

13 If we accept Todorov's definition of the fantastic, then the fantastic lies in the moment of doubt (1970: 29) while immersion leads to the marvellous.

a broader scale by offering a series of metaleptic case studies in popular texts of different media.

Metalepsis is a ubiquitous phenomenon in today's popular culture. It is seen when TV characters snatch remote controls to have a say in the events of their stories, when a superhero embarks on a quest to meet his maker or when detectives reveal that there is a real world beyond the fictional world in which they live. Metalepsis is certainly not limited to high culture or avant-garde literature and, in order to gain a broader understanding of the phenomenon of metalepsis, the case studies in this volume analyse its different aspects and occurrences in different media across popular culture.

Pier and Schaeffer have assembled a volume which bears testimony to the pervasiveness of metalepsis in our cultural expression, featuring various articles on metalepsis in film and popular fiction. Wolf has attempted to provide a systematic transmedial account of metalepsis in his article of 2005. Our volume follows their trail by providing a coherent account of metalepsis across media— an account which features case studies and extensive discussions of the specific limitations and possibilities of metalepsis in the various media employed by popular culture.

The focus of our volume is on the narrative mechanisms of metalepsis. In order to connect these to texts of popular culture, we have to answer two questions: first, how does the status of 'popular culture' influence the effects and functions of metalepsis we are talking about? Are the metalepses of high culture texts more deconstructive and critical of ideology? Are the metalepses of popular culture tied to genre effects? Second, how do the limitations and possibilities of specific media, their affordances, affect the worlds, boundaries and types of transgression in metalepsis? How do visual and audio-visual media expand our understanding of worlds, their boundaries and transgression? In the following, I will outline the general problems of 'popular culture' and 'media affordances' in metalepsis before our case studies elucidate these aspects for specific media of popular culture.

a. Popular Culture

Words are used with different intentions and are thus ascribed different meanings and values. The tag 'popular culture' is a textbook example of this basic truth of pragmatics; of how context contributes to meaning. The term 'popular culture' can refer to cultural expressions such as films, TV series or comics, implying that they are "well-liked" by the majority of people, but it can also imply that they are "inferior" in quality and taste

(see Raymond Williams' entry "popular" in his *Keywords*; Williams 1976: 198–199). The first meaning, "well-liked," would be the stance taken by proponents of cultural studies. Being popular, i.e., well-liked, does not imply that a cultural text is less complex or interesting than avant-garde literature. The second meaning, "inferior," would be the stance taken by cultural critics who address how the culture industry lulls and dumbs down the population to keep it from political participation (for a classic account of this stance, see Horkheimer and Adorno 1969). From their perspective, texts of popular culture are inferior, since their stories, characters and messages are streamlined and schematised, the generic expectations are always fulfilled and their plots offer easy and gratifying answers.

Over the last forty years, critics of culture, society and media have repeatedly shown that this distinction between popular culture and high culture is not grounded in any essential difference between popular and avant-garde texts, but in ascribing these tags to the texts (see Frow 1995). Shakespeare's plays were popular entertainment in Elizabethan and Jacobean times, Dickens' novels were published in much-anticipated instalments in the newspapers of Victorian England, and the classic film *Casablanca* was produced in the assembly line fashion of the Hollywood cinema studio system. None of these texts themselves changed over the years:—only the tags in the cultural value system of popular and high culture were exchanged.

However, even though it is easy to show that popular culture is largely a tag in our cultural value system, the influence of the tag in shaping our expectations towards the texts is real nonetheless. Expertise in reading and contextualising high culture texts adds to the "cultural capital" of bourgeois education, as Bourdieu points out (1978/1984). This kind of expertise in both popular and high culture not only helps us to understand the texts, but it also sets our expectations of what texts of either group will be like and of what kinds of readerly involvements they provide. The average popular culture text, according to such expectations, will be entertaining by providing a rollercoaster ride of emotions and by gratifying the audience's desire for (happy) closure. Providing a critique of ideology, questioning narrative structures or jarringly bringing the audience's immersion to a halt is not on the menu in popular culture.

Needless to say, there is an ample pool of popular culture which criticises ideological involvements, experiments with narrative structures and disturbs the audience's immersion in the fictional world. However, the expectations towards popular culture still determine our understanding of how these texts are to be read, and they tell us which functions and effects of metalepsis to look for in them.

Metalepsis transgresses the boundaries of the fictional world and makes readers aware of the real world. As we have seen in our previous discussion of the functions and effects of metalepsis, this can disturb or reinforce readers' immersion in fiction. If metalepsis disturbs immersion, then its function may be to destabilise narrative structures or to provide fuel for ideological critique. Because these functions are not what we expect of popular culture texts, such metalepses would lead us to question whether the texts are actually 'popular' or whether we need to extend our notion of what is popular. If metalepsis reinforces the immersion of readers, this would tend to reinforce the stereotype of popular texts. As Turk's case study in this volume shows, fan fiction and vidding are areas of popular culture in which immersion and escapism are extensively discussed.

Such binary reasoning along the lines of the popular/high culture distinction is rendered more complex by the specific generic functions and effects of metalepsis. This is due to the fact that genres determine sets of expectations vis-à-vis a text while at the same time they can cut across the expectations pertaining to the distinction between popular culture and high culture. Metalepsis in comedy, as our case studies of comedy film, animation and fiction show (see Thoss, Sarkhosh and Feyersinger in this volume), reveals the real world and disrupts the immersion of readers in the fictional world without necessarily providing an ideological critique or openly experimenting with narrative structures. Comedy toys with something being hilariously amiss, with readers knowing more than the characters or vice versa. In popular culture texts these effects may be relayed by metalepsis, but they do not necessarily imbue the text with avant-garde qualities. Neither does the epistemic scepticism of the detective, which is extended in metalepsis in crime fiction, lead to the text's involvement with high culture. In fantasy fiction, the escapist popular genre par excellence, metalepses can reinforce the readers' immersion.

The genre expectations of comedy, detective and fantasy fiction influence the effects readers perceive of metalepsis. These expectations can correspond to the set of expectations we have in popular culture texts or they can be at cross purposes with them. The popular culture status of the texts discussed in the case studies of *Metalepsis in Popular Culture* certainly influences the expected functions and effects of the metalepsis in these texts. However, these expectations always interact with expectations readers have in particular genres. At the end of the day, the effects and functions of metalepsis depend on the larger narrative contexts in which it occurs. These contexts, and thus the effects and functions, are shaped by readers' expectations.

b. Media Affordances

Having considered the popular culture status of the texts discussed in the case studies in this volume, we turn now to the affordances of the various media employed by popular culture in order to see how they shape the depiction of worlds and their boundaries as well as the transgression of these boundaries in metalepsis. Written literature, published on paper between the covers of a book, has very different limitations and possibilities for representing a story than do film, comics or performances. These limitations and possibilities of representation in specific media are called the "media affordances" (see Jensen 2008 or Ryan 2004b) and they clearly affect the ways in which metalepsis can occur across media.

We can distinguish between media which (by and large) employ one mode of representation, such as the written language of literature or the images of paintings, and media which employ more than one mode of representation. Comics use the modes of written language, images and panel sequences; films use the modes of spoken language and sound as well as photographic images. Sometimes, in subtitles and inserts, films also use written language. Such media, employing several modes of representation, are called "multimodal media" (see Jensen 2008). Popular culture is full of multimodal media such as films, comics, or videos. With the rise of digital cultural forms such as hypertexts, virtual realities and computer games, multimodal media in popular culture have grown in number over the last decades.

Each mode has its affordances. Images can do things that words cannot do. Images are much more detailed and precise than words, whereas words can be more general and can negate things. The BBC TV version of *Pride and Prejudice* casts for example the British actor Colin Firth as Mr Darcy. The face and figure of Colin Firth is obviously more precise and detailed than Austen's description of the character in the novel. In a visual medium it is not conceivable to express a negative, but Austen could have written "and he looked not like Colin Firth at all" (see Worth). Film adaptations of novels are indeed often hampered by the different media affordances of written and visual storytelling.

Media affordances also affect metalepsis. For representing the transgression of the boundaries of the fictional world, words can employ the verbal deixis of 'dear reader' and of characters addressing their author. Ben-Merre's case study in this volume shows which kinds of metaleptic confusions can arise from deixis when it is not clear who is addressed by the verbal "you." Words can also describe how a character escapes a fictional world and how an author enters the train compartment his character is travelling in, as in Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Images can

show the boundary between the fictional world and the real world as a frame or dividing line, and they can distinguish between them by representing the real world as photographic reality and the fictional world as a cartoonish world reduced in detail and texture, as for example in the cartoons by Tex Avery.

As each mode of representation has its own affordances, these affordances multiply and interact when they are brought together in multimodal media. The TV series of *Pride and Prejudice* not only works through the modes of images and spoken words, but also through the mode of the performance of their actors. Performance is particularly rich in possibilities for metalepsis, since actors use their flesh-and-blood bodies in order to represent the actions of a character in a fictional world. The role of Mr Darcy has left its mark on the public persona of the actor Colin Firth, as he has repeatedly mentioned in interviews (see Teeman 2007). The connection between the actor Firth and the character Darcy becomes topical in the *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the film version of Helen Fielding's retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* in which Firth plays the character Mark Darcy. Hofer explores the metaleptic potential of performance and public personae further in her case study.

The written, visual and performance modes, to mention only three possible modes of the multimodal media of today's popular culture, shape the worlds, boundaries and transgressions of metalepsis in particular ways. The types of transgression are of course influenced by the modes of representation in turn: ascending and descending metalepsis can mean a character literally moving up, as in *The Truman Show*, or an author literally descending into the fictional world. We should not take the direction too literally for visual media, however, since in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* the actor descends from the screen into a representation of the real world, which is technically an ascending metalepsis.

Verbal media can describe ontological metalepsis and directly represent rhetorical metalepsis. Visual media can represent both. In fact, works of fiction sometimes employ their very medium for a metalepsis. When Tristram Shandy tells readers to "[s]hut the door" (1759–67/1980: 4), the original edition of the novel had a marbled page for readers to turn. The marbled page, due to the printed nature of the novel, represents the door Tristram refers to, and readers actually 'close' it as they turn the page.[14] Tristram's address to readers can be seen as a rhetorical metalepsis, whereas the readers turning the page, and thus "closing the door" in response, would be ontological. Taken as one instead of two metalepses,

14 David Ben-Merre pointed out this example from Richard Macksey's introduction to Genette's *Paratexts* (1987/1997).

however, this instance of *Tristram Shandy* is not clearly distinguishable as either rhetorical or ontological. It might represent a special kind of metalepsis which is based on the actual interaction between the text and the reader. Further narrative research into hypertext forms, digital media and video games will certainly reveal a wealth of what I would call "interactional metalepses" in popular culture.

* * *

Metalepsis is proliferating in today's popular culture. The term refers to the transgression of the boundaries between a fictional world and the real world. This border between the fictional and real world can be reproduced within a fictional world in a mise en abyme. Metaleptic transgressions can be categorised into different types, and they can have different effects and functions for the story and our understanding of it. Transgressing the boundary from the fictional world to the real world is an ascending metalepsis; transgressing from the real to the fictional world is a descending metalepsis. We can further distinguish between transgressing the boundary rhetorically or ontologically. The basic matrix of types of metalepsis thus takes direction (ascending—descending) and nature (ontological—rhetorical) as its variables. The effects of metalepsis unfold along the question of whether metalepsis disrupts the readers' immersion in a fictional world or whether it naturally mimics the readers' double awareness of fiction and reality during the reading process. In the first instance, the effects or function of metalepsis would be anti-illusionist; in the second instance, they would be strongly illusionist.

When discussing metalepsis in popular culture, we need to be aware of how the 'popular culture' status of our texts shapes our perception of these effects. The expectations towards texts of popular culture are predictability and escapism. If metalepsis disrupts the immersion of readers, it seems to work against the predictability and escapism ascribed to popular culture. If it reinforces the readers' immersion, it becomes complicit with popular culture's presumed escapism. However, the generic expectations of comedy, detective fiction or fantasy can complement or contradict the expectations elicited by popular culture. *Metalepsis in Popular Culture*, as our case studies will show, not only questions the high culture—popular culture distinctions but it also teaches us about its dynamics.

Furthermore, media affordances, i.e., the possibilities and limitations which a particular medium brings, shape metalepsis in popular culture. Metalepsis in popular culture occurs in a variety of multimodal media, i.e., media employing different modes of representation, and each of these

allows for different ways of depicting the fictional and the real world, of drawing and identifying the boundary between them and of realising different types, effects and functions of the transgression of these boundaries.

Even though the critical discussion of metalepsis is rooted in the instances of avant-garde literature, our foray into popular culture has shown that it holds an exciting repertoire of metalepses. They need to be analysed on the basis of a consistent set of terms while keeping the expectations tied to their status as popular culture and the media affordances of the texts in mind. As you, dear readers, close the door on this introduction, and open the next, you will find that a rich array of case studies of metalepsis in popular culture awaits you.

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Metalepsis in Fantasy Fiction

Metalepses in the different arts and media are based on different medial circumstances. Thus, the details of the definition of the term "metalepsis" can vary from one medium to another and may be characterized differently depending on the medium—concerning, for example, the different possibilities of 'framing' a fictive world within the artefact, 'introducing' the extra-medial (that is, our) reality within the artefact (e.g., by showing an actor's body in a film), or 'transgressing the frontiers' between two different fictive (sub-)worlds (i.e., by the voice of the narrator).

The aim of this paper is to elaborate our basic definition of metalepsis for written narrative texts, to develop a practical scheme of such metalepses and to explore their effects in the genre of fantasy fiction. I have chosen the popular genre of fantasy fiction because this genre has shown a remarkable richness of different types of metalepsis during roughly the last three decades.[1] Fantasy fiction as a narrative genre provides examples of many forms of metalepsis, which can be grouped into a scheme of three larger categories—ascending, descending and complex metalepsis. As this scheme is being developed inductively from a variety of examples taken from the fantasy genre, the categorisation of metalepses may have to be modified in order to make it applicable to the study of metaleptic devices in other media. Nevertheless, fantasy fiction as a genre including paradoxes and marvellous elements also includes parts of 'realist' narration. Therefore, the choice of fantasy fiction allows an examination of all forms of metalepsis in narrative texts, whereas the choice of a 'realistic' genre (as for example the 'naturalistic' novels of the late 19th century) would not have included examples of complex forms of metalepsis because they undo the realist paradigm (see below).

This scheme, therefore, should be complete for narrative texts in general, though it is not the only possible categorisation of the phenomena in question. Additionally, this scheme should enable not only a purely structuralist analysis of categories of metalepsis in narrative texts, but also a

1 See also my thesis, Klimek (2010).

wider exploration of the historical and philosophical backgrounds of each of the three main categories.

Fantasy fiction is (along with detective stories and self-help books) one of the most popular genres on the contemporary book market. It is often regarded as a purely escapist genre (see Bonacker 2006) that fulfils no other function[2] than entertainment. The present paper will show that this is not true: even in popular fantasy fiction, we find reflections of the great philosophical traditions, such as scepticism and the question of whether transcendence exists, enrobed in a teasing plot and written for the huge audience of readers that live in the postmodern media society at the turn of the millennium.

The texts designated by the term "fantasy fiction" are not necessarily as questioning as what Todorov described as "littérature fantastique" in 1970. For Todorov, the "fantastic" is defined by the perception of ambiguity that the implied readers feel for the told events of the diegetic world,[3] a kind of "hesitation" as to whether or not fantastic elements are possible in the story's diegesis. But metalepses can also occur in texts that begin with such a "hesitation" and clearly finish as texts presenting the marvellous as a part of their reality system (see Durst 2001: 80: "Realitätssystem"). Those texts were labelled "le fantastique-merveilleux" by Todorov (1970: 49). In this paper, the English term "fantasy fiction" does not only refer to those texts subsumed by Todorov under "fantastic literature," but—as it usually does in the English language—to all texts that present strange elements differing from 'realistic' aesthetics, with no regard to whether these "phantasms" (see Antonsen 2007: 228: "Phantasma") are true for the diegetic world or whether they remain doubtful to the reader. Therefore, "fantasy fiction" includes many more texts than Todorov's more narrow definition of the "fantastic," especially popular works of 'sword and sorcery' or 'heroic fantasy' or fantasy stories for children and young adults. Even in these supposedly 'non-intellectual' works, we find reflections of philosophical thought, adequately treated for readers without special philosophical training.

Metalepsis as a Transmedial Phenomenon

Metalepsis is usually regarded as a case of "transmediality" because "similar phenomena occur in more than one medium" and there is supposedly

2 For the differentiation of internal functions and external effects, see Jean-Marc Limoges' footnote on this topic in his paper in this volume.

3 "Le fantastique […] se définit par la perception ambiguë qu'a le lecteur même des événements racontés" (Todorov 1970: 35f.).

no single medium from which an "'intermedial transposition' […] into another medium" took place (see Wolf 2005: 104). For the term 'narrative metalepsis' to be applicable to transmedial phenomena of the same basic structure, two criteria must be fulfilled:

1st There must be a sort of 'mise en abyme',[4] a nested structure, for example a novel within a novel, a picture within a film, a play within a television series, or any other representation of a fictive world within an artefact (whether the nested representation is in another medium or the self-same medium). This nested structure describes the relation between the two 'worlds' within a text: the level of representation (the world "où l'on raconte" / *in* which one tells) and the level of what is represented (the world "celui que l'on raconte" / which one tells; Genette 1972: 244f.).

2nd The hierarchical levels of representation and of what is being represented must be mixed up in a paradoxical way.[5]

In principle, the transgressions of narrative metalepsis can go in two different 'directions': in 'descending metalepsis', things or characters from the level of representation introduce themselves on the level of what is represented. By analogy, one might use the term 'ascending metalepsis' to designate the phenomenon of fictive things or characters coming to life on the level that includes the representation of their own fictive world.[6]
My basic scheme (see fig.1 below) differentiates the distinction between the 'real world' and the 'fictive world' from our introduction on the basis of Genettian terminology: the "extradiegetic level" corresponds to the representation of a world that is regarded as 'real' within the novel. From this 'real world' the "intradiegetic level" emerges, which is regarded as a 'fictive world' within this reality. This relationship can repeat itself in a mise en abyme when the "intradiegetic level" serves as the representation of the real world and the "hypodiegetic level" is the embedded fictional world. In contrast to the introduction by Karin Kukkonen, my scheme

4 See also Fricke's paper in the present volume. We both refer to Dällenbach (2001: 11–14), who distinguishes three types of 'mise en abyme': "réflexion simple" refers to a nested structure, such as the 'Binnengeschichte' (inner story) in a 'Rahmengeschichte' (framing story). When this structure is seemingly endlessly repeated, he talks about "réflexion à l'infini." The third type is the paradoxical variant of a 'mise en abyme', the "réflexion aporistique, c'est-à-dire l'auto-inclusion qui boucle l'œuvre sur soi" ("the self-inclusion of a piece of art that mirrors the artefact within itself"). As a basis for metalepsis, only a "réflexion simple" is necessary.

5 For a more detailed list of criteria for a paradoxical phenomenon in the arts to become a metalepsis, cf. Wolf (2005: 89–91).

6 See also Pier (2005). The use of the terms is nowadays usually the reverse of Genette's use of it because his location of the extradiegetic level beneath the intradiegetic level is no longer accepted by international narratology.

conceptualises these as "levels" and not "worlds" because I engage exclusively with written and not visual fiction.

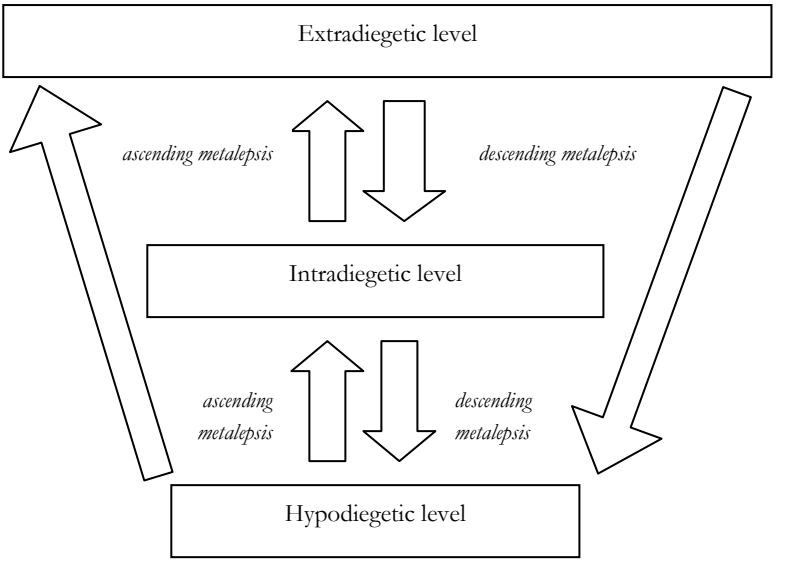

Fig. 1: Scheme of simple forms of metaleptic transgressions in fictional texts

In addition to 'métalepses ascendantes' and 'métalepses descendantes', there have been attempts to create a third category: the term 'horizontal metalepsis' was coined for transgressions involving two parallel worlds, "d'un ordre donné à un autre ordre également donné qui se situent sur un même plan narratif" (from one world to another that is situated on the same diegetic level), as Meyer-Minnemann (2005: 140) puts it.[7]

The establishment of this third category forces a decision on the scholar: if we include transgressions between two parallel worlds under the term metalepsis, we must give up Genette's definition, in which the transgressed frontier must be that between the world of representation and the world of that which is represented, "le monde où l'on raconte" and the one "que l'on raconte" (cf. Genette 1972: 244f.)—a definition that clearly excludes 'horizontal' jumps. And there are good reasons to restrict the use of the term metalepsis to Genette's initial definition of 1972, al-

7 This idea was first put forward in Wagner (2002: 247).

though since then the definition has sometimes been widened,[8] narrowed[9] or revised altogether: if the criterion is simply that the border between any worlds is transgressed, this would include 'horizontal' metalepses, but in this case, the metalepsis would no longer be a paradoxical phenomenon in the strict sense of defying formal logic (that is, the logic of representation); it would defy only common sense.[10]

Like my earlier contributions on metalepsis (see Klimek 2009a and 2009b), this paper is a plea to respect Genette's initial definition, even if it might seem to exclude some interesting metalepsis-like phenomena from our focus: if we restrict the use of the term 'metalepsis' to vertical transgressions of different levels of representation (i.e., fictive sub-worlds) within the work of art, metalepsis remains a distinct paradoxical phenomenon, violating the 'sacred' frontier between the level of the signifier ("le signifiant," i.e., the world of the creator where the act of representation takes place) and the level of the signified ("le signifié," i.e., the fictive world that is created within the artefact).

In the case of metalepsis, the transfer of terminology from narratology to other art forms has made it possible to "highlight formal, functional and historical similarities" in the different arts and media, as Wolf (2005: 104) puts it. But the process of 'exporting' the term 'metalepsis' from narratology into other fields of art also gives rise to several problems related to, for example, the transgressions between a work of art and the world of its author or recipient (see Wolf 2009: 50–56). When an actor in a play hurts himself and cries out in actual pain in his own person, not as the stage character he plays, the cry is clearly a paradoxical transgression between the level of representation (the performance) and the level of what is represented (the play). This example shows that metalepses in different media can occur in different forms. The fact that performance is an inherent element or characteristic of some art forms makes possible these kinds of transgressions between the real and the fictional world. However, with the exception of performing arts, metalepsis (understood in the strict Genettian sense) only involves fictional levels of representation.

In contrast, narrative fictions are not able to produce metalepses that include 'our' reality: Even if an actual author (e.g., the German writer in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Jean Paul) invents a character, giving him his own name (i.e., "Jean Paul"), his own looks and his own background,[11] this character within the text is not the 'real' author. A literary

8 E.g., Genette (2004); Herman (1997); Bal (1977: 24).
9 E.g., Nash (1987: 95); Häsner (2005).
10 See for example Limoges' contribution to the present volume.
11 See Jean Paul (1797/1969: 455).

character is merely what Gabriel (1991: 143) called "[ein] nur anhand des entsprechenden Textes zugängliche[s] Sinngebilde"—a character represented only within a fictional text and only imaginable by means of the information given in the text—while the author always remains a human being outside the artefact. The body of the actor in a play has a different status, being at the same time the body of a real person and the representation of a character's body within the play. Yet, apart from such special cases of metalepses in the performing arts, metalepses can only appear *within* artefacts, creating the impression of a transgression between a fictive and a real world, concealing the fact that the level of what seems to be 'real' is merely a part of the artefact, not of the reality outside the artefact.[12] Popular fantasy fiction provides a wealth of examples of such transgressions within the artefact, both of the descending and the ascending type.

"Descending Metalepsis" in Fantasy Fiction

One such example can be found in Walter Moers' fairy-tale travesty *Ensel und Krete—Ein Märchen aus Zamonien* (2000), in which the title refers to the famous tale about "Hänsel und Gretel" by the brothers Grimm. Moers does not appear as the 'author', but merely as the 'translator' of a book written by the celebrated dinosaur writer Hildegunst von Mythenmetz, living on the (fictive) continent of Zamonien. After having written a sad ending for the two little children who got lost in a forest, the narrator (Mythenmetz) addresses his readers in a direct way: "Was wollen Sie denn von mir? Was soll ich machen? Etwa mit dem größten Tabu der zamonischen Literaturgeschichte brechen? Nur in den Groschenromanen […] triumphiert am Ende das Gute über das Böse […]" (2000: 200).[13] Obviously, Zamonian fairy tales have no happy ending.—While this comment is directed from the extradiegetic level of storytelling to the also extradiegetic entity of the implied reader, the further contemplation of the poet-dinosaur is clearly a descending metalepsis from his extradiegetic world into the fictive world of the tale: "Vielleicht sollte ich auf die zamonische Märchentradition pfeifen?" (2000: 201).[14] Then Mythenmetz decides to write a new ending to the old Zamonian fairy tale, thus showing his power as an author within the fictive world, just as the narrator in Diderot's novel *Jacques le fataliste et son maître* does (see Genette 1972: 244).

12 For these paragraphs, see also Klimek (2009a).

13 "What do you want from me? Shall I break the most important taboo of Zamonian literary history? Only in pulp fiction does good triumph over evil in the end." (My translation)

14 "Maybe I really should break with Zamonian fairy tale tradition."

Such "metalepses of the author" are used in parodic fantasy fiction as well as in ironic highbrow literature to break the aesthetic illusion, thus producing a comic effect.

A more complicated example of descending metalepses can be found in Tom Holt's novel *My Hero* (1996). The book is a pastiche of several episodes that take place in the worlds of different works of world literature. The story is about an author called Jane Armitage who is currently writing an adventure novel (which means that this novel is for us, the readers of *My Hero*, a book within a book, a simple form of 'mise en abyme'), while Skinner, her fellow writer, gets lost in the world of his own fiction through a tragic 'descending metaleptic' accident. From within the fiction, Skinner communicates with Jane: "All [the hero of your book] needs to do is get me out of this book and across the county line into one of your books, and then you can write me home from there" (Holt 1996: 29). Jane tries to do so by using several further descending metalepses: she writes the hero of her own novels into the world of Skinner's latest novel and lets him find the missing author there. Then she makes the two men read a book (see 1996: 74f.) in order to make them slip into the diegesis of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. There the two characters manage to steal an edition of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and thus to enter the world of the play (that is, a play within a book within a book; see 1996: 85f.). So now the intradiegetic hero and the extradiegetic author are on a hypo-hypo-hypodiegetic level, but not yet in one of Jane's novels. Several further descending metalepses and Jane's own immersion in the fiction finally allow her to save the author who had been 'lost in a book'. This wording shows that the metaleptic descent of authors or readers into fictional texts is the result of a 'defamiliarisation'—in the sense of 'foregrounding' the material of the artefact (as explained by the Russian Formalists)[15]—of highly automated idiomatic speech. Reading or writing fictional texts normally creates a psychic immersion called 'aesthetic illusion'; contemporary fantasy fiction literalizes the idiomatic speech describing this mental process, 'defamiliarising' it and using it in its literal sense as a part of the fantastic story.

In this case, descending metalepses are examples of the temptation that authors, like readers, are faced with while reading or writing fiction: the temptation to immerse oneself in a fictional story, to be completely absorbed into the fictive world.[16] The emotionally positive effects of immersion on the mind of a reader are clearly meant to stimulate fantasy and to enable experiences that everyday life cannot provide. Nevertheless, a

15 See Schmid 2005 and Karin Kukkonen's paper in this volume.

16 See also chapter 4 of my thesis, "Absteigende Metalepsen (Kategorie 1) und ästhetische Illusion. Der Wunsch nach dem Eintauchen in fiktive Welten" (Klimek 2010: 219–246).

prolonged stay in a fantasy world also poses the psychopathological danger of a loss of reality. Tom Holt's fantasy novel *My Hero* treats this general problem of fiction with parody, irony and humour within a fictional text itself.

"Ascending Metalepsis" in Fantasy Fiction

The second form of metalepsis, ascending metalepsis, is illustrated by a theme that occurs frequently in fantasy fiction: the magical power of words. This can be demonstrated in Alan Dean Foster's fantasy novel *Spellsinger* (1983), where the student Jon-Tom Meriweather is displaced by an illusionist into a magical Otherworld. This change of place cannot be called a metalepsis because the Otherworld is not a hypodiegesis (i.e., a novel or a film within a novel) but merely a parallel universe of Jon-Tom's world; the transgression of the border between these two worlds is therefore horizontal, not vertical. But there is also a vertical transgression. In the Otherworld, Jon-Tom learns that he possesses a special gift: he is a "spellsinger," "a wizard who can only make magic through music" (Foster 1983: 149) and who can make things happen and make characters come alive through his songs. This coming-to-real-life of characters constitutes an ascending metalepsis, a leap out of the story world of the song into the frame world where the song is sung.

Another variation on the theme of the power of words appears in Gillian Cross's young adult fantasy novel *The Dark Behind the Curtain* (1982). During the rehearsals of a school production of *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*,[17] the spirits of the characters acted on stage become alive and continue to fight their cruel play-war in reality. This happens because the teacher wants the children to play their parts with passion, to immerse themselves in the play: "I want you all to feel that you're in league, held together by fear and hatred. It must come across to the audience like a great black wave" (1982/1985: 52). Once again, we find metalepsis linked with the theme of immersion in fictive worlds. Encouraged by the teacher, the children identify completely with their roles; as they do so, their words take on the power of spells. The first ascending metalepsis happens when a boy, Colin, tries to play the part of the murderous barber on his own (see 1982/1985: 44). Suddenly, invisible hands begin to damage the room. Colin notices that his speech must have trig-

17 The play is set in the Victorian Age (see 1982/1985: 143) and hints at the literary character of the murderous barber with the same name that has appeared in several horror novels and films since the 19th century.

gered this: "There had been anger at work in the library, from the very moment he had started to speak Sweeney Todd's words" (1982/1985: 49).

The story is narrated heterodiegetically (in Genette's terms) and focalised primarily through Colin, but also includes several extracts from the diary of Ann, one of Colin's female classmates and also an actor in the play, in order to confirm the reliability of Colin's perceptions. These diary pages show that Ann is soon convinced that their classmate Marshall's remarkably vivid impersonation of Sweeney Todd has brought the real murderer back to life and that his ghost now controls the actor. As Ann is very sensitive to the fears and sorrows of the people tortured by Sweeney in the play, she decides to kill Marshall on stage in order to get rid of the ghost.

The end of the novel confirms that the spirits of stage characters have indeed been summoned by the passionate acting of a play. The world in which Colin, Ann and Marshall live no longer follows the rules of a realistic novel; the ascending metalepses of stage characters as spirits that possess their actors is a fact in the story world of *The Dark Behind the Curtain*. Following the terminology of Todorov (1970: 49), the text has proven to be "fantastique-merveilleux" (in which the reader realises that miracles are possible in the story world) instead of "fantastique pur" (in which one can never be sure whether the supernatural is real or just a misapprehension of one of the characters). The metalepsis in this novel shows that intense immersion in fiction cannot only force an author or a reader into the fantasy world (via descending metalepsis) but can also create the impression of giving breath to the fictions themselves, animating them, bringing them to 'real' life and drawing them into 'our' reality (via ascending metalepsis).

Another form of ascending metalepsis related to the theme of the magical power of the word is the coincidence of the reading act and of what happens in the text that is read. This is the case when the content of a hypodiegetic story comes alive on the intradiegetic level at the moment a character reads the text. In Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), we meet with this kind of strange coincidence between fiction and reality: the autodiegetic first-person narrator is reading aloud to the psychotic Roderick Usher a paragraph of the romance 'Mad Trist' by Sir Launcelot Canning. A strange noise is described in this text. At the very same moment, a strange but quite similar noise is heard in the mansion where the narrator and Lord Usher are sitting together; the two characters are frightened by this coincidence. For André Gide, this sequence is the prototype of a 'mise en abyme'.[18] However, Scheffel

18 See Ricardou (1967: 172f.).

(1997: 77) denies that this example is a 'mise en abyme' because the event that seems to be projected from one level of representation to the other is not really the same. The impression of a narrative metalepsis arises only from the fact that the protagonists 'translate' parts of the story into their own world ("Teile des Gelesenen […] in den Kontext der Rahmengeschichte 'übersetzen'" 1997: 77). So Gide's paradigmatic example of a 'mise en abyme' is rather a misunderstanding on the level of the story and no metalepsis at all.

Equally problematic is the case of another well-known example regarded as a typical ascending metalepsis in fantasy fiction. The phenomenon in question appears in Julio Cortázar's short story "Continuidad de los Parques" (1956) which, since Genette's discussion of it in "Discours du récit" (1972: 247), has become quite well-known. The story is narrated in internal focalisation through an intradiegetic character who is reading a book. Sitting in a green armchair at his country estate with his back facing the door that leads to the garden he is deeply absorbed in the plot of the hypodiegetic story he is reading: "[L]a ilusión novelesca lo ganó casi en seguida. Gozaba del placer casi perverso de irse desgajando línea a línea de lo que redeaba […]. Palabra a palabra […] fue testige del último encuento [...]" (Cortázar 1956/1969: 9).[19] At the end of the story, the man reads about a hypodiegetic character who creeps through a park towards a country estate at dawn. He breaks into the house and sneaks—a dagger in his fist—towards a man who is sitting with his back towards the door, reading in the green armchair. At this moment, the story "Continuidad de los Parques" abruptly stops. Genette assumes that the hypodiegetic burglar must have come via ascending metalepsis onto the level of the intradiegetic reader of his book and, once there, assassinated the reader at the very moment he is reading this passage. According to this theory, the 'discours' of "Continuidad de los Parques" ends because the person on which it is focussed has been killed.

Nevertheless, the readers of "Continuidad de los Parques" cannot know whether this mysterious metalepsis has in fact occurred: since there is no hint of what might happen in the intradiegetic world one second after the story ends. The suggested correspondence between intra- and hypodiegetic story could be purely accidental, as in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher." Does the title of the story prove that the two parks are 'continuous', that they are meant to be understood as the same park where the hypodiegetic and the intradiegetic levels blur? This is a valid sugges-

19 In English: "The illusion of the novel immediately caught him. Gonzaba enjoyed the nearly perverse feeling of tearing himself away from what was around him, line by line. […] Word by word […] he witnessed the last meeting […]." (My translation)

tion, but not proof. In the case of "Continuidad de los Parques," the reader cannot determine whether a metalepsis exists or not. The strictly internal focalisation of the story makes the text what Todorov (1970: 49) calls the "fantastique pur," in which events cannot be conclusively explained either as real or as supernatural, and therefore the hesitation between the two explanations cannot be resolved.

As these examples show, we must not be too hasty when classifying literary phenomena as ascending metalepsis: not every hypodiegetic circumstance or character that suddenly reappears on a higher diegetic level has necessarily moved there via ascending metalepsis. In the cases of Poe and Cortázar, readers might fall for a certain metaleptic effect because both stories deal with the strong immersive potential of narrative fiction. Nevertheless, in "The Fall of the House of Usher," it is just a subjective interpretation of the intradiegetic narrator to identify what he reads with what he actually hears—an interpretation that is immediately proved wrong by Lord Usher—whereas in "Continuidad de los Parques," there is not even a hint at such an identification within the text itself.

Another problem for metalepsis arises when the story that constitutes the hypodiegetic level within the intradiegetic level is not fictional but factual (within the world of the story). In this case, the transgression of the border between these two levels is not paradox, even if Genette's criterion of a transgression between a world "que l'on raconte" and "[celui] où l'on raconte" is satisfied. In Achim von Arnim's novel *Isabella von Ägypten* (1812), for example, the old gypsy tells a story about a mythic man named "Bärnhäuter." Just as she finishes her tale, the "Bärnhäuter" knocks at the door and walks into the room (see Arnim 1812/1963: 481). This is not a case of ascending metalepsis because the gypsy's tale was factual. Even though she thought she was telling a fairy tale, the plot of this story really happened in her own world; the "Bärnhäuter" was simply a real man, not a mythic creature, so he could easily enter the room without stepping over a diegetic border. Nevertheless, the surprising effect of his sudden appearance remains.

Unlike Arnim's text, contemporary fantasy fiction often uses ascending metalepsis to let hypodiegetic characters come alive in the intradiegetic world of their (fiction-internal) creators. A famous example is Cornelia Funke's Tintenwelt trilogy, begun with *Tintenherz* (2003) and continued with *Tintenblut* (2005) and *Tintentod* (2007), published in English as *Inkheart*, *Inkspell* and *Inkdeath*. In the first book, 12-year-old Meggie and her father discover their magical ability to 'read into being' characters from fairy tale books. As in Foster's *Spellsinger*, where Jon-Tom has to sing, in Funke's *Tintenherz*, the magical power of the written words of the texts alone is not

enough; the words must be read aloud (see Funke 2003: 212). Neither Meggie nor her father can control this power, and the storybook villains they accidentally bring to life soon begin to terrorise the inhabitants of the 'real' world and must be fought by Meggie and her friends.

Fantasy fiction frequently explores this frightening potential of ascending metalepses. Nevertheless, fictions that become 'real' and defy control by their creators are more than just a subject for nightmares. In the Tintenwelt trilogy, some of the characters are aware that they live only in fiction and that they are neither 'real' humans nor 'real', meaningful lives (see Funke 2003: 233 and 2005: 12). The readers who read about characters who are aware that they only live in fiction may begin—as a result of the 'mise en abyme'—to think about their own ontological state. Readers may begin wondering why it is not possible that they themselves might one day discover that they, too, live only in a novel, written by a hidden poet on a higher level of reality.[20] Thus, they might themselves speculate about 'ascending' to this higher level, like the characters being read out of their book in Funke's Tintenwelt trilogy. Might there be a creator, a writer of one's own world? —These reflections are nothing less than a popularised version of the old philosophical problem of scepticism and metaphysics, reflected in contemporary fantasy fiction by ascending metalepses and written for an audience with a taste for the marvellous and for exciting stories.

Complex Forms of Metalepsis in Fantasy Fiction

The previous sections have discussed the simple forms of metalepsis in fantasy fiction. To study the more complex forms of metalepses, Wolf (1993: 361) introduced a third category of metalepsis, calling it "Komplexionsform" or "Möbius strip story." This is a term from geometry applied to literature by Jean Ricardou (1971: 153–155) in order to indicate a paradoxical short circuit between the level of the story and the level of storytelling. Wolf (1993: 368) suggested that the 'Möbius strip' combines ascending and descending metalepsis in a recurrent way, thus establishing a quasi-logical circle-hierarchy of narrative levels.

A striking example of such a 'Möbius strip story' can be found at the end of Georg Kreisler's novel *Der Schattenspringer* (1996), where the main character, an author called John Greenway, begins to write down his own life—that is, the story of the book that the reader is just about to finish

20 See also chapter 5 of my thesis, "Aufsteigende Metalepsen (Kategorie 2) und die Frage nach 'höheren Wirklichkeiten': Der Zweifel an der 'Echtheit' der eigenen Welt" (Klimek 2010: 247–379).

reading. Greenway's hypodiegetic novel uses exactly the same words as the actual text; thus, the extradiegetic level of the discourse becomes a hypodiegetic embedded story within itself. In the case of *Der Schattenspringer*, the paradox of the 'Möbius strip' story is obvious. Greenway, as a character in the story with a limited knowledge of the events, could not, in a realistic story, write down all the events mentioned in the text of *Der Schattenspringer* because the novel's narration is omniscient, not focalised solely through Greenway; he could not know about many events because he was not there when they occurred. For example, he tells the reader about how a murder was carried out (see Kreisler 1996/1998: 52–55), but this knowledge could only be known to Mona Baker, the murderer herself, not to Greenway. This detail is key to the point of *how* paradoxical the 'Möbius strip' metalepsis is.

In addition to 'Möbius strip' metalepsis, there is another type of complex metalepsis that completely destroys the hierarchical relationships between the different levels of story and storytelling within fictional texts. I use the term "tangled heterarchy" for situations in which a single diegetic level becomes at the same time the result of a higher, representing level and the reason for representation of this higher level. McHale (1987: 120) took the term "heterarchy" from information science, where it is used to indicate "a multi-level structure in which there is no single 'highest level'." This leads us to a (as far as I can see: complete) scheme of metalepsis in narrative texts: there are simple forms of metalepsis (descending metalepses, category 1; and ascending metalepses, category 2) and complex forms of metalepsis ("Möbius strip" metalepses, category 3a; and "tangled heterarchy" metalepses, category 3b):

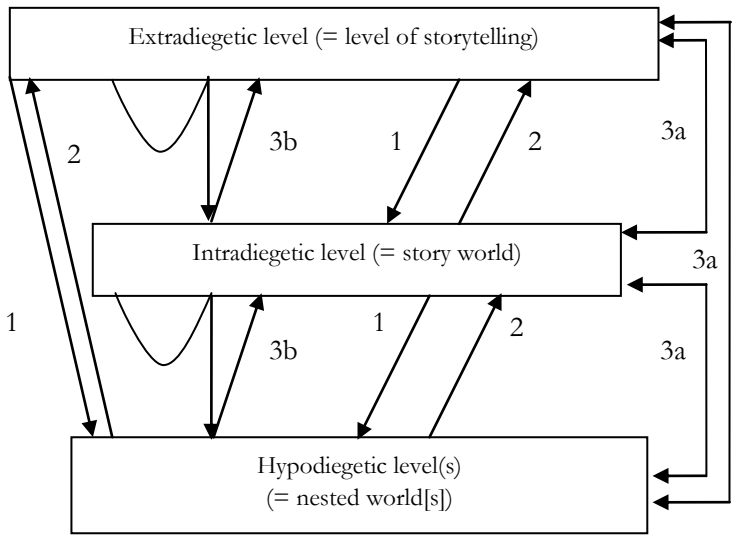

Fig. 2: Scheme of all possible forms of metalepses in narrative texts

A striking example of such a "tangled heterarchy" metalepsis can be found in Jonathan Carroll's fantasy novel *The Land of Laughs* (1980). At the beginning of the novel, the hierarchy of narrative levels seems quite clear: there is the extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator Thomas Abbey who tells a story from his earlier life. Within this factual story, there is a book called 'The Land of Laughs' (a book within the book), written by the celebrated author of fantasy fiction, Marshall France (see Carroll 1980/2000: 4). At first, we seem to be dealing with a realistic novel in that Thomas tells how he moves to France's former hometown Galen to write France's biography. Soon, he comes to believe that France's literary characters must have been inspired by the real inhabitants of Galen (see 1980/2000: 98). This would not be too implausible, but in the second half of the novel, the genre of the text suddenly changes: magic things happen. For example, a dog talks to Thomas.[21] Thomas has to accept that magic is real, and the readers have to realise that they are actually reading a fantasy (see Todorov 1970: "le fantastique-merveilleux") rather than a realistic novel. Now, Thomas learns from France's daughter who still lives in Galen that her father had been not only a successful but also a very gifted author who

21 See Carroll (1980/2000: 162): "I thought he was just having another Nails nightmare. Then he spoke. 'The fur. It is. Breathe through the fur.' A chill needle ran up my spine to my neck. The fucking dog talked. The fucking dog talked. I couldn't move. I wanted to hear more, I wanted to run like hell."

gained power over the people in his surroundings: "Marshall France had discovered that when he wrote something, it happened: it was: it came into being. Just like that" (Carroll 1980/2000: 172). The people now living in Galen are not real humans, but the characters in France's novels that came out of the books by ascending metalepsis (see 1980/2000: 183).

To become immortal, France had written that after his own death, someone would come to Galen to write his biography, thus enabling him to come to life again via metalepsis from his own biography. Again, it is France's daughter who explains to Thomas:

> He was convinced that since he had been able to create the people in Galen, then if he died, someone somewhere would be able to recreate him […]. Yes, he believed that […] if his biographer was good enough, then he could bring Father back to life if he wrote the story of Father's life the right way. (1980/2000: 190)

Indeed, Thomas seems to have the power to write France back to life: whereby at the same moment he writes in his France-biography about France's first arrival at the station of Galen, all the inhabitants of this town assemble at the station to greet their master whom they expect to arrive (see 1980/2000: 236f.). Thomas Abbey is no longer needed: the people of Galen try to murder him, but at the last moment, he manages to escape. As a result, the reader never learns whether France's re-naissance really happens or not. Thomas, the homodiegetic narrator, leaves the scene and therefore does not witness the (expected) return of the dead author.

If we take it for granted that France really is given back his life through the power of the words written by Thomas Abbey, this metaleptic rebirth of France is not a simple ascending form, like the metalepsis of the people of Galen out of France's own books. Within the story world, France is not a character but a real person, now dead, who is the subject of a factual biography. He was not 'invented' by an author, but rather, it was the real France himself who wrote that someone (that is, Thomas) would come to write his biography. So France used his writing-power to make a person of his own diegetic level (Thomas) make *him* (France) a character in a hypodiegetic story (the biography) through which he can, after his death, come to life again. This results in a blurring of diegetic levels.

Complex metalepses like this completely destroy the type-theoretic distinction between the levels of representation and of what is being represented (type-token differentiation).[22] Who is the creator of whom in Carroll's fantasy novel? Is France's level superior to Thomas' level? Is France the creator of Thomas? (How else could he have the power to

22 See Fricke (1977: 188–201) and Fricke (1981: 54–62).

make Thomas write his biography?) This cannot be the case; the two characters are living in the same world, since Thomas meets France's daughter. So are Thomas and France on the same diegetic level? But then how could France write that Thomas would write his biography? How could Thomas resurrect a man from death with the help of written words? As we can see, then, the metaleptic structure in *The Land of Laughs* creates a "tangled heterarchy" of unsolvable paradoxes. Everyone in this strange fantastic world seems to be ruled by mysterious powers, all united by a spell of words. Thus, this novel celebrates the creative powers of human imagination and at the same time explores the scary potential of this world-creating force.

* * *

The magical power of imagination created by storytelling that follows no rules, not even the type-theoretic logic of separating the levels of representing (the signifier) and represented (the signified), is the main subject not only of Carroll's novel, but of all forms of metalepsis in fantasy fiction in general. When faced with the collapse of their reality system and with the complete blurring of the boundaries between 'reality' and 'fiction', characters often succumb to a general scepticism, wondering whether they are real at all, or whether their whole world could not just be a gigantic simulation. Indeed, as part of the fictive world of the text, they are merely part of a large representation, but from their own level of fictionality characters cannot possibly know this. This knowledge is restricted to us, the empirical readers. Normally, the aesthetic illusion veils this knowledge, but metalepses can produce an anti-illusionist effect that brings this knowledge back into the mind of readers. Thus, descending, ascending and especially complex metalepses are able to introduce in a popularised form philosophical problems such as scepticism and the question of whether there is a 'higher reality' (that is, transcendence) into a suspenseful plot that can be understood by the average reader without special training in philosophy. They celebrate the magical power of fantasy and enchantment through (written, read or sung) words and thus work towards the effect of immersion, but they can also explore the scary potential of the creative power of human imagination: where the rules of logic are broken, nothing stays fixed, nothing can be known for sure. Contemporary popular fantasy fiction uses metalepses in order to combine both: the basic idea of philosophical scepticism and the thrill of teasing plots.

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Narrative Metalepsis in Detective Fiction

How would we react if a fictional character just disappeared from the book we are reading? We most certainly would be shocked, since our Western episteme ascribes such events to the supernatural and the fantastic. Such transgressions of the boundaries between the fictional world and the real world, so-called metalepses, certainly have no place in detective fiction, a genre which relies on reason and deduction—the very opposite of fantasy.

How are we then to interpret the fact that in Jasper Fforde's *The Eyre Affair* (2001), detective Thursday Next has to solve the mystery of the disappearance of Jane Eyre from Charlotte Brontë's novel? Can we accept that a detective can enter the world of *Jane Eyre* in order to protect the heroine? Does it challenge the idea that the novel is detective fiction? Or can we reconcile metalepsis with the conventions of detective fiction?

Such questions have become more and more relevant since the narrative metalepsis has begun to find its way into today's detective fiction. Not even popular detective fiction, which normally follows a very conventional model, has been spared from this development, as is shown by Fforde's novel. In this article I will analyse *The Eyre Affair* and three other examples of works in which the narrative metalepsis has an important place: Arturo Pérez-Reverte's *The Flanders Panel* (1990), Hiber Conteris's *Ten Percent of Life* (1986) and Stephen King's "Umney's Last Case" (1993).

For my discussion of metalepsis in detective fiction, I am going to outline which worlds are represented in the examples mentioned above and how the metaleptic transgression of the boundary between these worlds takes place. As popular detective fiction often follows a strong and entrenched genre model, we need to address the effects of metalepsis—do they work as immersion or rupture? Especially the representation of the reading and writing process in my examples provides interesting insights into the effects of metalepsis.

1. Theoretical Prolegomenon

The use of the narrative metalepsis in detective fiction has not been the object of any literary study yet. This can be due to the fact that, since its essence is the transgression of the boundary between different worlds, metalepsis has ontological implications which seem to make it incompatible with a genre like detective fiction. Detective fiction as a popular genre is interested in providing reassurance and epistemological certainty, whereas metalepsis transgresses boundaries of beings and often destabilises the stability of the word. Brian McHale for example explains that the dominant in detective fiction is epistemological (2001: 10).[1] Its interest in interpretation and in finding a solution to "what really happened" entails that detective fiction concentrates on "this world" and on the ways of knowing it. Metalepsis, on the other hand, clearly addresses what McHale terms the "ontological dominant," because it highlights ontological differences of narrative levels or fictional worlds.

It is true that the detective novel, especially in its popular form, is one of the most easily recognisable genres of literature, especially because of its strong generic conventions. Its basic structure is very simple: "A conventional detective story," as Stefani Tani, one of the best known theorists of the genre, puts it, "is a fiction in which an amateur or professional detective tries to discover by rational means the solution of a mysterious occurrence—generally a crime, usually a murder" (1984: 41). On the other hand, the simplicity of this basic structure is one of the reasons why detective fiction can appear in so many different forms, or sub-genres. Tani himself points out a number of the different forms that the detective fiction has taken along the years, starting with Edgar Alan Poe's stories, continuing with the traditional British detective stories in the nineteenth century, followed by the American hard-boiled school and concluding with a split between "a popular and mass-produced current and an intellectual current" (1984: 17).

Moreover, detective fiction is generally seen as a formally very rigid genre. According to Tzvetan Todorov for instance, detective fiction does not allow many deviations from its simple generic rules without losing its essence. "Detective fiction has its norms," claims Todorov in his *Poetics of Prose*. "To 'develop' them is also to disappoint them; to 'improve upon' detective fiction is to write literature, not detective fiction" (1971/1977: 43).[2] The use of an ontologically destabilizing and literarily sophisticated

1 The concept of dominant is used by McHale according to its definition by Roman Jakobson. A dominant according to Jakobson is the focusing component of a work of art, the component which guarantees the integrity of the structure.

2 See also Linda Hutcheon (1980/1991: 71).

technique as the narrative metalepsis is probably one way of "developing" these norms beyond the genre's limit.

In the intellectual forms of detective novels, such as the sub-genres Tani calls the anti-detective novel and the metafictional anti-detective novel, the author allows himself or herself a larger freedom with the generic conventions, using them to other ends than in the traditional forms. In some of the works that Tani includes in these intellectual sub-genres, especially in the works pertaining to the metafictional anti-detective novels, one can find examples of narrative metalepses. Examples of authors of such literature are Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Vladimir Nabokov, the early Alain Robbe-Grillet, Umberto Eco, Thomas Pynchon, etc.[3]

The presence of the narrative metalepsis in metafictional anti-detective novels is not really surprising, since metalepsis has a natural affinity with metafictional literature. However, it is arguable whether these novels really are to be considered pure detective fiction. What they do, as Tani argues, is that they use the form of detective fiction as a "platform for more ambitious, more 'literary' fiction" (Tani 1984: xii). More specifically, they use the basic structure of the detective novel for metafictional purposes, such as the problematisation of the relationship between the author, the text and the reader. In this process, the detection aspect often becomes secondary, and not even the basic structure of the detective novel is respected. As Tani observes, "anti-detective" novels generally lack a solution, thus frustrating the expectations of the reader (1984: 40).[4] What is surprising is that, in spite of its generic rigidity, detective fiction seems to suit very well the purposes of such frame-breaking literature. Or could it be that it is the rigidity that explains this compatibility? As many critics have noted, the strong generic conventions that I mentioned as typical of detective fiction could very well be one of the reasons why postmodern writers use the genre; the subversive techniques are more conspicuous when there is a clear frame to be broken.

However, this is not the only reason why detective fiction and metafictional postmodern literature can be compatible. The act of detection itself could be the reason why the detective novel is sometimes used as a mould for self-reflexive literary works. Two of the major characteristics of

3 For more examples and a further analysis of this kind of detective novels, see the essays of Patricia Merivale, Jeanne C. Ewert and Susan Elisabeth Sweeney in *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story From Poe To Postmodernism*, where they call these novels "metaphysical detective novels" in order to avoid Tani's "deliberate negation" of the detective genre.

4 There are though some critics, such as Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (1999: 3), who claim that the lack of closure is not as important as Tani claims in this form of detective fiction.

detective fiction, according to Linda Hutcheon, are its self-consciousness and its connection to the hermeneutic act of reading (1980/1991: 106). As Joel Black claims, detective fiction, being "the hermeneutic genre *par excellence*" (1999: 78), is very appropriate as an allegory of the interpretative strategies inherent in the act of reading. "The detective," says Black, "becomes a romantic projection of the critic qua analyst or of the analyst qua critic" (ibid). With Michel Sirvent's words, "the writer is certainly the author of the crime and the reader the detective of the text" (1999: 162). Such an analogy is constructed on the fact that, after all, the enigma that the detective has to solve is a text, since the events have to be put into words. The access to events in the past can never be direct, only mediated, in this case by language. As Steven Marcus writes in his introduction to a collection of Dashiell Hammett's stories, "What he [the detective] soon discovers is that the 'reality' [...] is in fact itself a construction, a fabrication, a fiction" (Marcus 1974: iv). Seen from this perspective, all detective fiction is metafictional.

For the anti-detective novel or the metaphysical detective fiction, such a degree of hermeneutic self-reflexivity is perhaps not much of a surprise, but what about the distinctly popular incarnations of the detective novel?

One could think, with Francisco G. Orejas, that the aim of popular literature is to accomplish a mimetic illusion and to conceal the act of narration in order to catch the attention of the reader for the story that is related.[5] Exposing the act of narration would obstruct the "pleasure of the text" and the reader's immersion. Popular literature is a clear instance of what Barthes calls "readerly texts," that is texts that do not challenge the subject position of the reader.[6]

Nevertheless, even in works that would undoubtedly pertain to popular detective fiction, such as the novels of Agatha Christie, there are metafictional elements. Christie's use of explicit intertextuality as a key to the enigma, for example in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd,* or her use of nursery rhymes, alphabetic order or numerical series as ground for a narrative structure, as in *The ABC Murders* or in *Ten Little Indians,* are techniques that are very close to those used by some of the writers pertaining to the French "Nouveau Roman" movement.[7] Such techniques are metafictional because of the way they reveal the artificiality of the text, risking thus to break the mimetic illusion. On the other hand, the effect of these tech-

5 "Consumption literature," writes Francisco G. Orejas, "has traditionally restrained itself to recognizable models, which have proved efficient in capturing the reader's attention to the story that is being narrated, without letting the technique interfere in it" (2003: 539; my translation from Spanish).

6 See Barthes (1973/1975).

7 See for instance Annie Combes (1989: 10–12).

niques is less shocking than the effects more commonly associated with metalepsis, which could be a "strangeness, either funny or fantastic" (in French "bizarrerie soit bouffonne soit fantastique") according to Genette (1972: 244), or fear and vertigo (in French "angoisse et vertige") according to Cohn (2005: 129). Genette claims that such effects are due to the fact that the reader starts questioning the objectivity of his real world, which could, after all, be the creation of a writer, and the reader just some fictional characters in the writer's diegetic creation.[8]

Metalepsis brings such questioning to a crisis when it reveals the difference between the fictional and the real world, and it enacts their difference when it transgresses the boundaries between them. As we have seen, questioning and the suspicion that what we held to be real is only fabricated are embedded in the genre of detective fiction. It seems that the drive to immersion and textual pleasure in popular fiction and the rationalist heritage of detection suppress such questioning and suspicion which would give rise to metalepsis. However, in recent years, popular detective fiction has engaged with its metaleptic undercurrent and I will explore four works in the following, discussing the worlds, boundaries and effects of metalepsis in detective fiction.

2. Worlds and Boundaries

The Spanish writer Arturo Pérez-Reverte has written several novels in which he combines elements from different popular genres, such as detective fiction. In spite of their complicated structure and often erudite motifs, his novels, especially *The Dumas Club* from 1993, have become best-sellers Pérez-Reverte's novels often feature metafictional themes.[9] *The Dumas Club* is a novel about a novel, that is about Alexandre Dumas's *The Three Musketeers,* and the narrator frequently comments on literature in general. *The Dumas Club* is self-reflexive on the level of discourse.[10] In *The Flanders Panel,* Pérez-Reverte's novel from 1990, the metafictional tech-

8 Genette's words about this in French are: "Le plus troublant de la métalepse est bien dans cette hypothèse inacceptable et insistante, que l'extradiégétique est peut-être toujours déjà diégétique, et que le narrateur et ses narrataires, c'est-à-dire vous et moi, appartenons peut-être encore à quelque récit" (1972: 245). Certainly, the "narrataires," or the implied readers, should not be equated to the empirical readers of the book. But this does not invalidate Genette's point, which is that the boundaries between different worlds are blurred.

9 One of the critics who find it surprising that Pérez-Reverte's novels have become best-sellers in spite of their complicated metafictional aspects is Francisco G. Orejas (1984: 539–540).

10 Dorrit Cohn for example distinguishes between metalepsis on the level of discourse and metalepsis on the level of story (2005: 121–122). I will focus my discussion on the latter.

niques are more audacious. As we will see, there are three or even four different worlds which seem to communicate in very intricate ways: the world of the fictional novel, the real world of the author/narrator of the novels, the world of the painting and the world of the chess game.

Starting at a discursive level, self-reflexive devices or comments are to be found in *The Flanders Panel* too, as in Pérez-Reverte's other novels. For instance, when the main character, Julia, says that her whole adventure is like a detective story, César tells her: "I'm afraid, my dear, that's exactly what it is" (1990/1994: 98). This can be read as an allusion to César's implication in the events, but also, indirectly, to the book that we are reading. Likewise, Menchu, her friend, makes another comment that could be interpreted as self-reflexive when she says: "Agatha Christie could have made a blockbuster out of this" (1990/1994: 104).

The Flanders Panel is narrated by a heterodiegetic narrator in the third person. The narration seems to follow the pattern of a chess game that is played in a painting by the 15th-century Flemish painter Pieter van Huys. The characters, Julia, who has commissioned the renovation of the painting in view of its subsequent selling, her former boyfriend Álvaro, an art expert, her friend Menchu, an art dealer who is responsible for the selling of the painting, and César, another art dealer who has been a sort of paternal figure for Julia since her father died, get entangled in a series of events that follow the movements on the chess board in the painting. In order to save themselves, the characters have to get involved in the game and to interpret the movements of the invisible player who has the black pieces. That is why they ask a chess expert, a certain Muñoz, for help. Consequently, the characters become detectives themselves, more so than the actual detective of the novel, inspector Feijoo, who is not even close to solving the case on his own. The act of detection here reproduces the act of interpretation of a story: the story of a chess game.

Admittedly, a game of chess is not a narrative, but the way in which it influences the lives of the characters in the novel makes it a sort of embodiment of a story, if by story we mean the chronology of the events as they actually occurred in the diegetic world. The characters' analysis of the game of chess being played becomes thus a parallel to the process of interpretation of a story, which involves, among other things, the reconstruction of the story, of the events that had occurred in the diegetic world of the narrative being read. This analogy is at its clearest in the way Muñoz tries to reconstruct the earlier movements in the game starting from the position of the pieces in the painting. Besides, as it appears later on in the novel, the movements of the chess pieces correspond to the events taking place in the characters' lives. The black queen's taking of

two pieces in the chess game is for instance followed by the death of Álvaro and Menchu in the diegetic world.

This unexpected parallel between a game of chess and events in the characters' lives is metaleptic in its analogy to the act of the creation of a fictional work. The characters' feeling that some kind of mechanism, maybe a god, is controlling their destinies is metaleptic, since it is presented as if the characters themselves are becoming aware of their fictionality. "She sensed," says the narrator about Julia, "the board had ceased to be simply a succession of black and white squares and become instead a real space depicting the course of her own life" (1990/1994: 143). The movements of the invisible chess player who plays with the black pieces become actual events in the reality of the characters, as if the chess player were a god, or an author, playing with the world that he had created.[11] Admittedly, this interpretation is invalidated by the end of the novel, where it is revealed that it was one of the characters themselves, César, who was the invisible player and who actually committed the murders.

Even though the events turn out to be not the machinations of an author or god from beyond the fictional world, both the characters and the reader have had the impression that a metaleptic transgression was actually occurring throughout the novel. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the story that is depicted in van Huys's painting has strong connections to the events in the fictional world. To start with, there is a relation between the story of the three characters from the painting and the game of chess. Such a relation is even alluded to, when Muñoz states that "any imaginable world, like this picture, for example, is governed by the same rules as the real world" (1990/1994: 95), or when Julia has the feeling that she has become the female character in the painting (1990/1994: 244–245). It is true that this relation is inversed compared to the relation between the chess game and the events of the fictional world. The lives of the three characters in the painting are not affected by the chess game, as it is the case for the characters in the novel. The chess game is represented deliberately in the painting as a key to the solving of the murder of one of the characters inside the painting, a murder that had already been committed a couple of years before the painting was even started. Nevertheless, there are some strange resemblances between the world depicted in the painting and the diegetic world of the novel. The painting appears thus as a parallel story, or a story within the story, a *mise*

11 The view of the author as a god and of the character as his creature is an ancient topos which has been exploited in many different ways in contemporary literature, as is shown by Christine Brooke-Rose (1991: 214).

en abyme, that is a reduplication of the story of the novel, with Lucien Dällenbach's words.[12]

Also the boundaries between the world of the picture and the world of the novel seem to be transgressed. At first, this happens in certain episodes that are presented in a fantastic mode, with the narrator manifesting a hesitation about their real occurrence. Thus, Julia's entering the world of the painting (1990/1994: 120–122) is presented as an uncertain event, a fantasy that could have been caused by Julia's "dizziness" or by the darkness in the room. But, to judge by the way in which this event is presented, it appears as a transgression of the boundaries between the worlds, in other words as a metalepsis: "The Venetian mirror and the painted mirror framed Julia in an imaginary space, blurring the boundaries between the two surfaces" (1990/1994: 121). This imaginary space makes one think of what Sophie Rabau writes about the narrative metalepsis and its hermeneutical aspect: the representation of a space where the author, the characters and the reader can meet and discuss can be seen as the concretisation of the act of interpretation of the literary text.[13]

Having said this, I must nevertheless admit that it is difficult to conclude whether *The Flanders Panel* is primarily a metafictional text about the act of reading, where the detection theme mainly parallels the reading process, or if it is a detective novel where the metafictional elements, especially the metalepses, are mainly keys for solving the enigma. The ending, which reveals that the culprit was no god at all, but just one of the characters who had staged the whole thing in order to imitate the movements in the game of chess from the painting, could be an argument for seeing the novel as a simple detective story.

What complicates things though is that the last three pages of the novel (1990/1994: 293–295) are narrated from a point of view of the diegetic world of the painting, from the perspective of the young woman painted by van Huys. What is narrated there from that woman's perspective is how she becomes aware of her being a character in a painting. Still, the narration of this final metaleptic turn is marked by hesitation: "suddenly she seems to hear the voices of two men sitting at a table" (1994:

12 This form of reduplication corresponds to what Dällenbach calls "mise en abyme de l'énoncé," that is a reduplication of the story, the other two types being "la mise en abyme de l'énonciation" and "la mise en abyme de la poétique," which have to do with the form of the novel being reduplicated. See Lucien Dällenbach's doctoral thesis on this subject (Dällenbach 1977). For a newer version of Dällenbach's classification of the different types of "mise en abyme," see Nourissier (2001: 11–14).

13 The text in French is: "Représenter un monde où se côtoient et dialoguent l'auteur, les personnages et le lecteur, reviendrait, en d'autres termes, à se donner une manière d'utopie qui pousserait à l'extrême la démarche de toute interprétation du texte littéraire" (Rabau 2005: 61).

295), and "if she turns round, she will see […] an old man with a grey beard" (ibid). This makes me conclude that despite its strong engagement with metafictional undercurrents of the genre, *The Flanders Panel* is primarily a detective novel containing metafictional elements. Different worlds are introduced and embedded into each other as fictive and real worlds, yet Pérez-Reverte hesitates to present a crossing of the boundaries between them explicitly. In the following three novels, the metalepses and their transgressions are actual events in the fictional world and we will turn to them for our discussion of the effects of metaleptic transgressions and their effects.

3. Metaleptic Transgressions and Their Effects

Even though the two novels discussed here enact the transgression of the boundary between fictional world and real world, being popular detective fiction, they still aim to reduce the disruptive effect of their metalepsis. Both in Hiber Conteris's *Ten Percent of Life* and in Stephen King's *Umney's Last Case*, deduction is presented as an allegory of the production/reception process. Both novels feature a metaleptic meeting between the author and the character that he created. I will compare the way the meeting is narrated in these two cases with one of best known novels where such a meeting was staged: Spanish writer's Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla* from 1914. The main character in *Niebla,* Augusto Pérez, meets his creator and finds out that he is merely a character in a work of fiction. This leads to a destabilizing discussion of the uncertainty of human existence and of the connection between fiction and reality that helps us understand how Conteris's and King's novels aim to reduce the disruptive effect of metalepsis.

* * *

In Uruguayan writer Hiber Conteris's novel *Ten Percent of Life,* the American writer of detective fiction Raymond Chandler and the main character of Chandler's novels, private detective Philip Marlowe, appear as characters. But the fact that a well known person from the real world and a character from the fictional world of another novel appear in a novel would not constitute an example of metalepsis worth discussing in this context, given the triviality of the procedure. What distinguishes Conteris's novel is that the author and his character meet on the same diegetic level, enjoying equal status as characters. Moreover, though he appears in the same world

as his creator, Marlowe is aware of his being a character in Chandler's novels. He is even reading Chandler's latest novel, commenting on its implausibility: "The things Chandler thought up were impossible," says Marlowe, "his detective would never have been able to solve a mystery in real life" (1986/1987: 44).[14]

It is hard not to react to the mentioning of real life in the quotation above, by which a distinction between the fictional world and a so-called real world, which in fact is nothing else but another diegetic world, is established. Marlowe appears as a character who has transgressed, in a metaleptic fashion, the boundary that confined him to Chandler's novels. He actually becomes the narrator in Conteris's novel, and considers himself as belonging to the real world. In fact, the roles are inversed in a certain way through this metaleptic device, since Chandler is seen from Marlowe's perspective. Thus, in Conteris's novel, Marlowe actually becomes more "real" than his creator.[15] What we have here is not only a levelling, but an inversion of the hierarchy between author and character.

As in Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla,* the author and the character created engage in a dialogue, in which both of them show that they are conscious of their respective statuses. And again as in Unamuno's novel, the dialogue touches literary themes, becoming thus a metafictional comment on a general literary level. However, in this dialogue, unlike in the dialogue between Augusto Pérez and Miguel de Unamuno, the created character, that is Marlowe, does not express any worries about his actual existence. The metaleptic meeting in Conteris's novel is not used for an analysis of the ontological status of the character, but rather, as Marcie Paul suggests, as a means of questioning "authorship and authority" (1990: 56). The use of certain names from Chandler's novels that no longer refer to the same characters, the fact that Marlowe becomes the narrator, and this narrator's criticism of Chandler's literary work provoke a subversion of the author's unified, authoritative voice. Such subversion could be viewed as an attempt to give a demystified view of the writer, who, according to postmodern literary theory, does not have total control and possession of his text.

But the metaleptic device in *Ten Percent of Life* is not only used for commenting on the writing process. As in *The Flanders Panel,* the detection work is connected to the reading process. This is done on a general level, since the detective has to solve a mystery, reproducing thus, as we have mentioned earlier, the hermeneutic activity of a reader. But in Conteris's novel, the detective is also a reader: he is reading the story written about

14 This can also be seen as an example of the funny strangeness of metalepsis that Genette stated. See Genette (1972: 244).

15 See also Marcie Paul's commentaries on this inversion (1990: 54).

himself, in a process described as comparable to the process of acquiring self-insight: "I was curious about how far you'd taken your study of me" (1986/1987: 83), says Marlowe when he admits that he started reading Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*. However, Marlowe's reading does not only lead to a self-discovery, but also to a criticism of Chandler's work, a criticism which is not exempt at all from a literary dimension. The detective becomes thus more than the symbol of the reader who has to interpret the text. He becomes the literary critic, the professional interpreter searching for a hidden sense.

What is noteworthy about the metalepses in *Ten Percent of Life* is the fact that they are not presented as shocking. Compared to the meeting between Augusto Pérez and Miguel de Unamuno, where the character of the novel is completely destabilized, Marlowe remains unaffected when meeting his creator. On the contrary, it is Chandler that utters his surprise when seeing his protagonist: "Now I believe it—Philip Marlowe in person. [...] My God" (1986/1987: 82). This lack of shocking effect on Marlowe could be due to the fact that these metalepses have a very definite function in the novel: they contribute to a reflection on the writing and reading processes, which seems to be the novel's overall goal. Actually, the solution of the actual crime is less important in the novel than the relationship between Chandler and Marlowe, and consequently the demystification of the authorial figure.

Accordingly, *Ten Percent of Life* is more a metafictional novel than a work of detective fiction, even though Marlowe actually has to solve a crime: the murder of Chandler's literary agent. Following this line of thought, it is not surprising that Marlowe actually does not solve the case at the end, something that could also be seen as a way of subverting the detective genre's basic structure. Actually, Marlowe abandons the case and decides to retire (1986/1987: 215), thus heeding a piece of advice he got from Chandler a little earlier: "you're much older than you once were," said Chandler, "Why don't you get another job?" (1986/1987: 83). Does this mean that the writer has the final word in this conflict between author and character? Or is Marlowe's failure to solve the enigma to be understood as the reader's failure to interpret the text? These are questions that are difficult to answer in the light of a novel that is characterized by ambiguity. But what appears as undoubted is that the novel's main subject is the complexity of the relationship between the author and the reader. *Ten Percent of Life* is consequently more of an allegory than a detective novel, something that would explain why the metaleptic encounters are not ex-

perienced as shocking by the characters.[16] They contribute rather to an anti-illusionistic effect, by foregrounding the production process that lies behind all works of fiction.

* * *

In contrast with the meeting in *Ten Percent of Life,* the meeting in "Umney's Last Case" is presented as a real shock for the protagonist, private detective Clyde Umney, who lives in a fictitious version of Los Angeles in the 1930s. I will here look into the reasons why the metalepsis in this work has a shocking effect, focusing especially on the generic aspects.

To begin with, the metalepsis is anticipated by a series of unusual events that underline its strangeness. These events are not supernatural, but for the character they appear as irrational, since they break the status quo that characterizes his world. Thus, just before the metaleptic meeting takes place, Umney's neighbours are gone all of a sudden. Peoria Smith, the blind paperboy, claims he won a lottery and will stop selling papers and have surgery to get his eye-sight back, and he tells Umney he does not like him; two men are painting the hall at the entrance of his office without his permission, and his secretary has disappeared, leaving him a note of complaint. Later on, Umney and the reader will find out that these events were incorporated in the story by the writer, a certain Samuel D. Landry, in order to prepare his character for his metaleptic intrusion into the fictional world (1993: 525).

Things get even stranger when Samuel Landry enters Umney's office. To start with, Umney has the feeling that he knows who the person is even before looking at him: "I had the strange idea that I already knew who it was" (1993: 517). He also recognizes the stranger's step, scent and voice, even though he is sure he never actually experienced them before (1993: 517–518). This paradox of the familiarity of the unfamiliar is strongly reminiscent of the uncanny—*das Unheimliche* in German—as defined by Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, the uncanny is the feeling of uncomfortable strangeness which results when something is experienced as familiar, yet foreign at the same time.[17] Many contemporary

16 According to Todorov (1970), the fantastic is incompatible with an allegorical reading, since the reader neglects the literal sense of the text in favour of the allegorical meaning. A person reading a text as an allegory, says Todorov, does not get shocked by the supernatural events in the text, but tries to interpret their meaning on the allegorical level.

17 For Freud's analysis of the concept, see his essay *Das Unheimliche* from 1919, in an English translation made by Mark Taylor, to be found on the Internet at http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/uncanny.html (retrieved on 29 Nov 2009).

theorists of the fantastic consider the uncanny close to the fantastic effect,[18] something that could be supported by one of Freud's own commentaries in his essays: "an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality."

The kinship between the uncanny and the fantastic effect is underlined in "Umney's Last Case," where the uncanny feeling of familiarity with the stranger is followed by a number of supernatural events that take place during this meeting. For instance, the office darkens even though the day is perfectly clear (1993: 519), the whole world outside the office freezes, like in a "Kodak snapshot" (1993: 531), the pictures on the walls are suddenly replaced by other pictures when Landry writes that on his computer (1993: 524) and the stranger has objects that Umney does not recognize, but that the reader knows are from the future: a pair of Reebok sneakers and a Toshiba word-processor. The fantastic effect is even clearer in the description of Umney's reaction when he looks at Landry and realizes that he is facing himself, but in a fifteen years older version.[19]

The supernatural events get their explanation when Umney realizes that he is only a character in a fictional world created by Landry. However, the fantastic is far from being eliminated by this explanation, which is all but rational. In any case, the meeting is much more destabilizing for Umney than for Marlowe in Hiber Conteris's novel that I analyzed above. Umney reacts much more like Augusto Pérez in Unamuno's novel *Niebla*, and even admits that he is frightened (1993: 535). Like in *Niebla* and unlike in *Ten Percent of Life,* the character of the author in "Umney's Last Case" appears to have control over the text, even being called God (1993: 519). But, also like in *Niebla,* the character of the author does not have total control over his character. The character has opinions of his own, expressing for instance his contempt for his creator when he calls him "a bush-league version of God" (1993: 530). Like Augusto Pérez in *Niebla*, Umney even surprises the author: "I saw an expression of alarm dawn in his eyes" (1993: 527), says Umney right after having planned to leap on Landry and kill him. Alarm is actually exactly what the character of Unamuno feels when his character starts gaining certain independence: "I

18 Examples of theorists who have analysed the relation between the uncanny and the fantastic effect are Jean Fabre (1992: 73–78), Irène Bessière (1974: 229–233) or Rachel Bouvet (1998: 70–74).

19 It can be mentioned in this context that the double is one of the most usual themes in fantastic literature. See among others Jean Fabre (1992: 235).

asked him, alarmed to see him achieve a life of his own" (Unamuno, 1975: 149).[20]

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the plot is of little importance in Conteris's novel, the detective even abandoning the case he was working on. What resulted was a highlighting of the allegorical aspects of the meeting between the author and the character. This is not what happens in "Umney's Last Case." Indeed, after some parts where this meeting is discussed from different perspectives, the ending brings the story back on the track of the thriller. After having been forced to change places with the writer and to live his life in the so-called "real" world, the character starts planning a way to get back into his fictional world from where he has been rejected in order to avenge himself. The ontological implications of the metaleptic events that occurred are thus abandoned for the sake of the plot.

"Umney's Last Case" is rife with intertextual references to other literary works. I already mentioned the relationship with Unamuno's novel *Niebla,* but the link to Raymond Chandler's detective stories is even clearer, and has a more conspicuous metaleptic touch. This link is even mentioned in the short story, by Landry, who admits he has borrowed some names from Chandler's detective novels, among which the name of the main character himself, "Clyde Umney" (1993: 526). There are also some self-reflexive comments, which give a strange impression that both Umney and Landry are conscious of their being characters of another work of fiction: the book that the reader has in his hands. Umney even mentions, for instance, the title of the story, "Umney's Last Case," making reference to the work that Landry is supposedly in the process of writing (1993: 533). There are also comments on the possible generic classification of the story, comments that express the difficulty to determine the genre: "I come from the future," says Landry, "Just like in a pulp magazine story. […] But not *exactly* like a pulp fiction story" (1993: 521–522). Landry also makes a literary analysis of the character he created: "You've grown a lot more complex and interesting. You were pretty one-dimensional to start with" (1993: 524).

There are also some reflections on the process of metaleptic transgression in "Umney's Last Case", for example when Landry explains to his character how he managed to transgress the boundary between the real world and the fictional world. However, his apparently rational explanation is not especially convincing. Rather than having found Umney's weak point, that is his relationship with the blind paperboy, and having started

20 My translation. In the Spanish original, the text reads: "le pregunté, alarmado de verle recobrar vida propria" (Unamuno 1975: 149).

from there to tear apart the whole diegetic world in order to make himself a place in it (1993: 534), it seems as if Landry were literally absorbed by the story. Accordingly, his actual intrusion into the novel could be seen as the realisation of the proper sense of a metaphorical expression, something that is used quite frequently in fantastic literature according to Todorov (1970: 83).

An argument for such an interpretation is the fact that what Landry seeks in the novel is a form of escape from his miserable real life, like the readers of the so-called escapist literature, but in the literal sense of the word "escape." "Here's a world," Landry says, "where I'll never get any older, a year where all the clocks are stopped at just about eighteen months before World War II, where the newspapers always cost three cents, where I can eat all the eggs and red meat I want and never have to worry about my cholesterol level. […] In this world, beloved sons never die of Aids and beloved wives never take overdoses of sleeping pills" (1993: 534).

Umney too is reflecting on the actual consequences of the author's metaleptic intrusion into the fictional world. He explains the fact that all life outside the office has stopped by the argument that the author lost his interest in the plot and in the setting: "Its creator," says Umney about Sunset Boulevard outside his office, "could not be bothered with animating much of it" (1993: 531). This metalepsis is a specific type of paradoxical narrative device, the "narrative syllepsis." This is a form of synchronization between the diegetic world and the extradiegetic world of the narrator, which could be illustrated by a technique that was very frequent in 19th century literature: when the narrator seemingly stops the action in the novel in order to make a digression or to give some explanations.[21] In King's short story, this stopping of the action is more than a rhetorical figure, since it appears as an actual event from the point of view of the character from inside the diegetic world, something that underlines its metaleptic character.

As the detectives meet their authors in *Ten Percent of Life* and "Umney's Last Case," their reactions to this transgression of the boundary between the fictional world and the real world differ. Marlowe sees it as a journey of self-discovery. Umney feels that the experience is uncanny. Both novels

21 For more details on the narrative syllepsis, see Genette (1972: 121) and Lang (2006: 32–36). Genette does not analyze the syllepsis in the chapter dedicated to the metalepsis, that is under the category of "narrative voice," but in connection with the prolepsis and the analepsis, which are analyzed under the category of "order." However, there is a metaleptic element in all syllepses, since the extradiegetic narrator literarily transgresses the boundary between his world and the diegesis in order to stop the course of action there. Some of Genette's own examples of metalepsis could also be classified as a syllepsis. See also Ben-Merre's contribution to this volume.

renegotiate the popular in the detective novel, *Ten Percent of Life* by casting Marlowe in the role of the critic and "Umney's Last Case" by foregrounding the plot. Another strategy for recuperating the popular immersion after its metaleptic disruption is presenting metalepsis as an allegory of the reading process.

4. Allegory

The Eyre Affair is the clearest example of a popular detective work of fiction in my sample, because the basic structure of the main story follows the conventions of the genre very closely: a detective searching for the solution of a crime during the entire novel and succeeding in getting the culprit at the end. However, even in Fforde's novel there is a detail that could complicate the generic aspect. Rationality, the main strategy of detective work, as Tani claims (1984: 41), is put to a harsh test by the methods used by the criminal and by the many supernatural events occurring in the novel. As an example, authorities have to deal with temporal distortions where people can get stuck as in black holes (2001: 271). Thus, in a memorable scene, Thursday Next meets her future self gets some important piece of information about the future (2001: 278). It is consequently possible to consider *The Eyre Affair* as pertaining to the fantasy genre, or a sub-genre thereof, but also, as we shall see, to science fiction, if one considers some of the parallel stories going on in the novel.

In terms of generic loyalties, *The Eyre Affair* appears to be also a metafictional novel in the proper meaning of the word: a novel about fiction. But this does not stand in contrast to the detection aspect of the novel. On the contrary, the metafictional aspects are the main subject of the plot, since a metaleptic transgression is the mystery that the detective must solve.

The main character, a 36-year-old woman by the name of Thursday Next, is a detective working at "SpecOps-27." "SpecOps-27" deals with crimes committed in the field of literature: counterfeiting, theft of original manuscripts, illegal trading, copyright infringements, etc (see 2001: 1–2). Literature consequently becomes an important subject in the novel, which is filled with references to literary works, in particular to classics like Shakespeare's plays, Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" and of course Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. In addition to this, literature is an extremely important phenomenon in the fictional world of Fforde's novel, which is an alternative version of contemporary Britain where the gangs fight and people murder just to settle literary questions, such as Shakespeare's authorship. Nevertheless, the "LiteraTec," that is

the literary detective division, is only the twenty-seventh division in the hierarchy of the "Special Operation Network."

The Eyre Affair is arranged in such a way as to give the impression that the novel is a compilation of other texts and documents of its own fictional world. The chapters have epigraphs of quotations from other documents that have supposedly been written about the events taking place in the story. Certainly, those documents are made up by Fforde, but the fact is that they exist outside the actual text of the novel, on a web site that recreates the world of the novel.[22]

In fact, it could be argued that metalepsis is the main subject of *The Eyre Affair,* since the main crime that Thursday Next has to solve is the literal kidnapping of the character of Jane Eyre from the original manuscript of Charlotte Brontë's novel. The author of this crime is Acheron Hades, a man who appears as the incarnation of evil and is the third most wanted criminal in the world.

However, the narrative metalepsis, as exemplified by the kidnapping of a character from a novel and by the intrusion of readers into the world of the novel and their interaction with the characters, is not only the main part of the plot. It is also a subject of discussion and analysis inside the novel. Different aspects and consequences of the intrusion of real people into the fictional worlds of the novels are analyzed in interesting and original ways. For instance, when Thursday as a little child glides into the narrative of *Jane Eyre*, the distinction between the plot, that is the events that are mentioned in the text, and the story, that is the logical chronology of the events as they happened in the diegetic world, is highlighted. Thursday's intrusion does not affect the plot, since the text does not mention all the events of the story. Thus, Rochester's dog, Pilot, which discovers the little girl, "knew that he could stretch the boundaries of the story a small amount, sniffing along one side of the lane or the other since it wasn't specified; but if the text stated that he had to bark or run around or jump up, then he was obliged to comply" (2001: 67). Likewise, Rochester knows that he is free to do whatever he pleases in the world of the novel as long as he is not confined by the text itself. "I am not featured again in the book so we may do as we please," he tells Thursday when she enters the novel as grown-up with the help of the "prose portal," at the point in the book when Jane is about to save Rochester from the fire (2001: 317).

Nevertheless, in some cases, the metaleptic intrusions of real people affect the actual plot. The most obvious case is when Thursday chooses to influence the relationship between Rochester and Jane Eyre. Her interven-

22 See http://www.jasperfforde.com/.

tion changes the end of the novel, so that instead of leaving for India alone, Rochester marries his beloved Jane. The novel consequently ends as it actually does in Brontë's original, since Rochester moving to India was only Fforde's invention. This ontological consequence for the actual world of the reader, that is our world, could lead to an effect on the reader that could be compared to the fantastic effect or to the fear and vertigo that, as we have already mentioned, can be the result of narrative metalepsis (see Cohn 2005: 129).

However, Fforde does not really intend to create such an effect. He plays down the effect of the metalepsis by mentioning for instance that the readers are less shocked by the intrusion than by the ending itself, reacting not with fear or vertigo, but with delight. "In a recent survey," says one character, "ninety-nine out of a hundred readers who expressed a preference said that they were delighted with the new ending. Jane and Rochester married! Isn't that wonderful?" (2001: 361).

Moreover, the metaleptic intrusions are often narrated in a rather humorous tone that diminishes their fantastic effect.[23] For instance, when Thursday meets a Japanese woman guiding a man inside the metadiegetic world of *Jane Eyre,* her comment as a narrator is: "I shook my head sadly. It seemed there were very few places that the tourist business hadn't touched" (2001: 325). Rochester's comment about the metaleptic intrusions of this woman is perhaps even more comical. He tells Jane that he does tours for her and her clients, since "it is extremely lucrative. Country houses are not cheap to run, Miss Next, even in this century" (2001: 331).

In other words, *The Eyre Affair* is an even more revealing example than "Umney's Last Case" of how generic conventions influence the effects of metalepsis. A greater focus on the plot draws the reader's attention from the disturbing aspects of the narrative metalepsis. Moreover, the use of metalepsis as an allegory of the production process or of the reading process also is of great importance in Fforde's novel.

The reading process is for instance allegorized by the way the readers can enter the world of fiction. One way of doing that is by using a special technical device, invented by Thursday's uncle Mycroft, a machine called the "prose portal." The other possibility is to get literally absorbed by the novel by reading very attentively, as does the Japanese woman I mentioned above. "How do you manage it?", asks Thursday. "I just can—she answered simply—I think hard, speak the lines and, well, here I am"

23 Admittedly, in *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1983/1988: 87), Genette corrects his earlier statement from 1972, considering that the metalepsis does not have to create either a fantastic or a funny effect, but a mixture of the two, as in Borges's stories or in Woody Allen's short story "The Kugelmass Episode." Still, I argue that the shocking effect is at least diminished if a metalepsis is narrated in a funny fashion.

(2001: 325). Once again, we have here the realisation of the proper sense of the expression "absorbing the reader." The Japanese woman has developed this capacity to get literally absorbed by the text, succeeding to control it. Something similar happened to Thursday too, when she was a child, but in a way that she couldn't control. Besides, it was an event that she even starts doubting if it really happened, writing it off "as the product of an overactive imagination" (2001: 69).

Also in Jasper Fforde's novel *The Eyre Affair*, a character which presented as a real person enters the fictional world of a novel.[24] In "Umney's Last Case," it was the author who entered his own fictional world to make himself a home there. In *The Eyre Affair*, it is the readers, as the novel actualises the metaphorical expression "being absorbed in the text."

But *The Eyre Affair* also contains examples of characters from the world of fiction entering the so-called real world, or the extradiegetic world.[25] The direction of the transgression is thus reversed. When these transgressions do not occur through the prose portal, they cannot be explained, and they could obviously not be interpreted as allegories of the disappearance in a text that absorbs the reader. For example, when Rochester once appears in front of Thursday, he says: "I don't know how I managed to get here or even how you managed to get to me" (2001: 189). These multi-directional metaleptic transgressions make the boundaries between reality and fiction appear permeable. This is even expressed in the novel, by Victor Analogy, one of Thursday's colleagues: "The barriers between reality and fiction are softer than we think; a bit like a frozen lake. Hundreds of people can walk across it, but then one evening a thin spot develops and someone falls through" (2001: 206).

These interactions between the fictional world of Jane Eyre and the projected real world in which it is embedded lead to a number of far-reaching consequences: when Jane Eyre is abducted from her manuscript into the world of Thursday Next and Acheron Hades, all the printed text vanishes from the *Jane Eyre* novels in that world. Thursday finds a logical explanation to this apparently supernatural event: she makes an analogy to the genetic code of the mammals: "When the original changes, all the others have to change too. If you could go back a hundred million years

24 The theme is important in Fforde's other novels about Thursday Next too, that is: *Lost in a Good Book* (2002), *The Well of Lost Plots* (2003), *Something Rotten* (2004) and *First Among Sequels* (2007). I choose to concentrate on the first one of his novels, since an analysis of all the novels would require a separate monograph.

25 Genette calls this phenomenon "antimetalepsis." The term in French is antimétalepse. This is how Genette defines it in his latest work on the subject: "Puisque la théorie classique n'envisageait sous le terme de métalepse que la transgression ascendante, de l'auteur s'ingérant dans sa fiction […], et non, à l'inverse, de sa fiction s'immisçant dans sa vie réelle […], on pourrait qualifier d'antimétalepse ce mode de transgression" (Genette 2004: 27).

and change the genetic code of the first mammal, every one of us would be completely different" (2001: 208). Even though the explanation seems ridiculous when applied to the printed text, whose physical disappearance of course cannot be explained in such a manner, it appears as more relevant if one considers the literary text, as do certain literary theorists, as a dynamic, non-closed entity, as in constant production rather than a finished product, subject to continuous changes and different interpretations.[26]

The text of *The Eyre Affair* is in itself a very good example of an open text, thanks to the inclusion of parts of some texts that, as I mentioned earlier, exist outside the actual novel, on the Internet. The dynamic dimension of the literary text as an interplay between author and audience, teller and tale, as well as throughout textual traditions is reflected in many ways in *The Eyre Affair*. For example Thursday and her boyfriend, Landen assist at a highly original performance of Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, where the actors are chosen from the audience since they knew the play "back to front" (2001: 180). The audience is thus not only assisting, but is allowed to interact and to suggest changes to Shakespeare's text, something that is so appreciated that the play has been performed continuously every night for fifteen years. This could easily be seen as a reflection of the act of reading according to modern reception theory, as represented by Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, where the reader is seen as something more than a passive receiver of a ready-made product. It presents the literary text as an organic entity that is open to changes.

The chapter headings of *The Eyre Affair* refer to the two different fictional worlds and thus reflect on the process of telling a tale, "our book" refers to the fictional world of Thursday Next and "their book" refers to the embedded fictional world of Jane Eyre. The collective pronoun "our" could include, besides Thursday herself, who is the narrator of the novel in the first person, her fellow characters, in which case Thursday would exhibit a metaleptic consciousness about their fictionality. But "our" could also include the reader on the same diegetic level as Thursday. According to this interpretation, Thursday would break her confinement to the fictional world in order to address the reader on an extradiegetic level. These examples of metalepses are rather of the discursive type, according to Cohn's distinction between metalepses on the level of story and metalepses on the level of discourse, but they contribute to the novel's overall play with the boundaries between fiction and reality.

26 I am thinking of theorists like Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva or Jean Bellemin-Noël, who question the notion of text as a finished product. The terms are Julia Kristeva's (Kristeva 1969).

In spite of its metafictional dimension, created by the frequent use of different types of metalepses and by the many interesting theoretical comments about them, *The Eyre Affair* is, as already mentioned, primarily a popular detective novel. The detection aspect remains central in the novel, despite the various excursions into the fantastic. Fforde's novel enacts escapism and immersion when characters cross the boundaries between the fictional world of Jane Eyre and the world of Thursday Next, but it chooses to alleviate the disruptive effects of such metalepses by inscribing them into an allegory of the reading process and by presenting the workings of open texts and textual traditions as events in the story.

5. Conclusion

I have focused my discussion of metalepsis in detective fiction on two aspects: the impact of detective genre conventions on the effects of metalepsis and the strategies of recuperating immersive effects through allegory. In terms of genre, it is primarily the epistemological essence of detective fiction that has an effect on the metalepses. Each of the novels I discuss finds its own balance between the rationality of the detective's work and the fantastic and irrational nature of metalepsis. It can be concluded that a great focus on the detective plot diminishes the shocking effect of the metalepsis. Thus, the ontological effect of the metalepsis seems to be less important in popular detective fiction, where the solution of the mystery and thus the plot are of great importance.

However, the use of metalepsis does not remain without consequence in these novels: first of all, the rationality that characterizes the detective's work loosens up because of the occurrence of an irrational event that rather belongs to fantastic literature. However, this depends on the way the metaleptic transgression is treated. If it is narrated as a natural event in the fictional world, an event that does not shock the characters, its irrational aspect is of lesser importance. This is particularly well illustrated by *Ten Percent of Life,* where no reaction whatsoever is expressed when the author meets his character. In *The Eyre Affair,* the metaleptic transgressions are just another strange event among others in a parallel world with its own rules, while in *The Flanders Panel* the final, rational, solution means that no metaleptic events really occurred. The disruptive effect is undoubtedly more important in "Umney's Last Case" but is subordinate to the plot. The other consequence of the use of metaleptic techniques seems to be a shift of focus from the actual plot to the allegorical meaning, which in the case of the detective novel could be the reproduction of the reading process. This self-reflexive dimension is present in all the four

analyzed works, being dominant in *Ten Percent of Life* and of great importance in *The Eyre Affair*.

The analysis has also shown that the use of metalepsis in all the four works has been influenced by the more so called serious metafictional literature, such as Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla,* the French Nouveau Roman or what Stefano Tani calls "metafictional anti-detective novels." On the other hand, as I mentioned earlier, all these types of literature had borrowed in their turn the basic structure of the detective novel and used it in their frame-breaking activity. This illustrates Patricia Merivale's and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney's theory that there is a reciprocal invasion between erudite fictional genres and more popular genres (Merivale and Sweeney 1999: 5). Thus, after having supplied highbrow literature with the raw material that has been used as a model for experiments, popular detective fiction could nowadays incorporate those formal experiments, be it in a lighter fashion, since the mainstream audience, which is becoming used to new forms of texts and interactive reading in the age of the Internet, may be ready for them. In conclusion, it can be said that not even popular detective fiction is immune from the importance of self-reflexivity in today's literature. As Jean Ricardou puts it in his well known quotation: a novel today isn't the writing of an adventure any longer, but the adventure of writing.[27]

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27 Ricardou's quotation in French is: "Le récit n'est plus l'écriture d'une aventure, mais l'aventure d'une écriture" (1967: 111).

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"I'm so vain, I bet I think this song is about myself": Carly Simon, Pop Music and the Problematic "I" of Lyric Poetry

1. Metaleptic Narratives

Pop music is by its very nature a metaleptic form, and one which can shed light on a problem of lyric poetry. This article will explore the underlying metalepses of Carly Simon's 1972 hit song "You're so vain" in order to unlock the more general metaleptic features of pop music, specifically its rhetoric and effects of immersion and authenticity. Simon's song is a perfect enactment of a spurned woman not wanting to give her "vain" former lover the time of day even in the testimonial that decries him. "You're so vain/You probably think this song is about you," the speaker accuses her lover, referencing him as listener, and thereby both conflating and seemingly denying any conflation between real and fictional worlds. Through these lyrics, listeners are put in the awkward position of being asked to believe that the person to whom the song is addressed is not the person to whom the song is addressed. This shifting "you" of the song mirrors the shifting "I" of the lyric speaker, and both represent a sort of vanity: the lover, because he seems always to be looking at himself, and the speaker, because she thinks she can control each referential instance of the "you," as though the "you" has become part of her song. And yet this cannot be the case, as the speaker still does not seem to understand, for the song was never about her.

The speaker's metaleptic act is about taking control. For many musical critics, such transgressions across the boundary of the actual and the imaginary already comprise the space of popular music. The language of "authenticity" is what seems to sell popular music and ground it in reality (albeit a rhetorical one). What makes this genre metaleptic and not just naturalistic is the ability to step outside its own frame, by naming it and, as we hear in Carly Simon's song, by naming listeners and speakers too.

It is not unique to Simon to maintain a simultaneous foot in each narrative world. I metaleptically want, for a moment, to step outside my

own critical frame, and return to another authorial metalepsis brought about by another narrative immersion in another time and place, specifically a few days before a Dickensian Christmas in the fictional nineteenth century of Mr. Pickwick and company. I take you to Chapter 28 of *The Pickwick Papers*—the briskly titled "A Good-Humoured Christmas Chapter, Containing An Account Of A Wedding, And Some Other Sports Beside: Which Although In Their Way Even As Good Customs As Marriage Itself, Are Not Quite So Religiously Kept Up, In These Degenerate Times"—where we meet Pickwick as he is about to head off on his pre-Christmas jaunt:

> As brisk as bees, if not altogether as light as fairies, did the four Pickwickians assemble on the morning of the twenty-second day of December, in the year of grace in which these, their faithfully-recorded adventures, were undertaken and accomplished. Christmas was close at hand, in all his bluff and hearty honesty; it was the season of hospitality, merriment and open heartedness; the old year was preparing, like an ancient philosopher, to call his friends around him, and amidst the sound of feasting and revelry to pass gently and calmly away. Gay and merry was the time; and right gay and merry were at least four of the numerous hearts that were gladdened by its coming…
>
> We write these words now, many miles distant from the spot at which, year after year, we met on that day, a merry and joyous circle. Many of the hearts that throbbed so gaily then, have ceased to beat; many of the looks that shone so brightly then, have ceased to glow; the hands we grasped, have grown cold; the eyes we sought, have hid their lustre in the grave; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowd upon our mind at each recurrence of the season, as if the last assemblage had been but yesterday! Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!
>
> But we are so taken up, and occupied, with the good qualities of Christmas, who, by the way, is quite a country gentleman of the old school, that we are keeping Mr. Pickwick and his friends waiting in the cold, on the outside of the Muggleton coach, which they have just attained, well wrapped up, in great coats, shawls, and comforters (Dickens 1836–1837/1998: 334–335).

Grand in its scope and yet slow in its design, the final joke depends upon a momentary failure of the narrative—that it, like us, can lose its place. The narrator gets so wrapped up in describing the spirit of the season, that he ends up "keeping Mr. Pickwick and his friends waiting in the cold," as if they were listening to him tell his tale. What makes this passage so humorous is the matter of narrative overstepping—the conceit that Pickwick and his cohorts really had to wait for the narrator to finish reminiscing, as though they were right there with the reader turning pages,

waiting "outside" not just the Muggleton coach but the frame of the narrative itself. This passage from *The Pickwick Papers* refigures a formal concern (one within a type of conceptual space) as a temporal matter: the narrative itself is supposedly atemporal in its position. No time ought to pass while the narrator narrates a fixed scene.

As a result of this narrative malfunction, two things occur. The first is that the narrator—supposedly in control of the story—can get so wrapped up in his own narrative that he would forget just where he was—that he was "outside" the story and not "inside" it. And the second, even more absurd perhaps, is the contention that the characters, inside the narrative frame, would be depending upon this narrator, lost in his remembrances, to get them out of the cold. In the playful manner of much twentieth-century fiction and reminiscent of 18th-century fiction—the most notable being Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*—Dickens conflates embedded narrative levels, casting his characters into our world and ourselves into theirs.

Bringing together different theoretical levels of the narrative act, Dickens "transgress[es] the boundaries between the world *in* which one tells and the world *of* which one tells" (Hollander 1993: 760). It is a good example of what Gérard Genette calls narrative metalepsis, or "[t]he transition from one narrative level to another […] consist[ing] precisely of introducing into one situation, by means of a discourse, the knowledge of another situation" (1972/1980: 234). There is a level of comfort in narrative borders; they delineate the scopes of stories, allowing us to feel at home in our knowledge of insides and outsides. Metaleptic narratives destroy this sense of security, continually reminding us of William Shakespeare's "all the world's a stage" and our own subject positions as "merely players"—as presumably we wouldn't like it.[1] In Genette's terms, metalepsis allows extradiegetic narrators (those outside the narrative frame) and readers to be thrown into a diegetic world (the fictional universe of the story) and diegetic characters to be cast off into an extradiegetic space. Characters would be able to see themselves not as people but as characters, as though they were readers of the novels of which they are a part. This, however, is not the most disconcerting aspect of metalepsis. "The most troubling thing about [it]," Genette writes, "indeed lies in this unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extra-diegetic is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narratees—you and I—perhaps belong to some narrative" (1972/1980: 236).

1 The oft-quoted Shakespeare line is the opening of Jaques's monologue from *As You Like It*, Act II, scene vii.

There were two other aspects of the Dickens passage to which I wanted briefly to allude, because they will come up again in the following sections: the first is a temporal concern and the second is a (false) distinction between popular culture and what is often termed "literature." The merriment that Dickens's narrator has toward Christmas is not just in the smiling faces, the jest, and the hospitality of the season. He is also captivated by the season's ability to conjure old memories: "the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowd upon our mind at each recurrence of the season." The familial bond knows neither geographic nor temporal boundaries; as easy as a flash of the mind can the "now" of writing return the narrator and others to the memories of "then," "recall[ing] to the old man the pleasures of his youth […] transport[ing] the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!" I have already discussed how Dickens's passage introduces us to a narrative frame, conceptually outside time. Here, we are introduced to a temporal frame, conceptually outside space, in the guises of a "now" and a "then" which mediate how we think of the given space and those subjects and objects within it. Certain objects, like the "I" and the "you" and the deictic "this," can only be problematically recalled from afar, because their narrative frames challenge the very notion of inside and outside.

The other concern I wanted to raise has to do with a "now" and a "then" of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* itself. This novel, originally not a novel, wasn't read in today's classrooms as a piece of great literature, but was instead circulated in 1836–37 as one of the most popular serials of its day. The frame in which we read literature today, in which each word is supposed to shrug off superfluity, doesn't make as much sense for a novelist who was getting paid by the word. This extra-textual concern might introduce a whole other level of metaleptic delay for Mr. Pickwick in getting from point A to point B. On a more serious note, and one which I will discuss further in a few pages, the distinction between the popular and the literary usually assumes (in error) a difference between types of cultural objects rather than the interpretive subjects or communities which give such objects their meanings. Oddly, in this aesthetic equation, it is ourselves as mediating subjects who are getting lost.

Just as we forget, in our revelry of Christmas, that we were all along supposed to be speaking about Pickwick, we might forget that, in our revelry of Dickens, we were all along supposed to be writing about Carly Simon. The following section will return to Simon's popular song, but

first, let me offer one concluding remark. Metalepsis, not so secretly, involves a struggle for authority. According to Genette, this means the "taking hold of (telling) by changing level," whether by a diegetic character or an extradiegetic narrator (1972/1980: 235 n.51). Such manner of "taking hold"—getting to tell the story—is really the central space of power in a narrative form. And this "taking hold," going by the name of "vanity," is precisely what is at stake in Simon's enigmatic song.

2. Carly Simon and "you"

Put simply, "You're so vain" is about a spurned lover still beset by her rejection.[2] She spends the length of the song describing in detail the degree of her former lover's vanity, a man who, as she puts it (and he seemingly would), "had [her] several years ago." He is an affluent and voyaging man, full of moxie and charm, and intrigue and deceitfulness. While his rhetoric in the end might not be real, he certainly possesses the pecuniary means to back up his voracious appetite. His worst attribute seems to be his sense of entitlement—that the whole world, the eclipsing sun included, revolves around him. The absurdly comical extent of his self-centeredness comes through in the opening stanza, where we are shown how his gaze remains fixated solely upon himself—one eye hides behind his hat, as the other watches himself dance. As another song might have put it, he only has eyes for himself.

The chorus introduces us for the first time both to the homodiegetic speaker (in Genette's terms), who happens to be one of this man's former lovers, and to one of the most famous refrains of popular music:

> You're so vain
> You probably think this song is about you?

In total, counting this chorus which is repeated 4 times in the song, there are 69 instances of "you" or "your" or "you're" or "yourself." Nine of these instances occur in the first eight lines of the song, and it is not until line fifteen that we get a line without a "you." On top of all this, we hear the lines "You're so vain/You probably [or "I'll bet you"] think this song is about you" a total of twelve times. The "you're/your" homonym brings together an ontological proposition with the subject of ownership—that "being," in a sense, means being possessed, here, by a vain lover who can think only of his own gratification. On the one hand, the repeated "you-

2 The specific genders of the players are never mentioned. While I don't want to assume a socially-gendered hetero-normative identity for each role, for the sake of convenience I will refer to the speaker of the song (the "I") as gendered female and her addressee (the "you") as male, in keeping with most understandings of the song, the writer's included.

you-you" of these lines mirrors the "me-me-me" of the lover's self-entitlement. On the other hand, though, the repetitiveness rhetorically presents a speaker who cannot seem to get over being the spurned lover.

Because the act of addressing a "you" transgresses the supposed boundary between the real and fictional world, fusing the role of character and audience, it can be said to be metaleptic. The song begs the question of whether the "you" is a projection of the former lover or a projection of the speaker, a question which turns on this metaleptic moment and which, Genette would remind us, depends upon who gets to be in control.

The opening lines of the chorus introduce this metalepsis and the famous paradox of the song: "You're so vain / You probably think this song is about you." With the phrase "this song," the speaker names the narrative of which she is a part. Whether or not her former lover is also a part of the song becomes the lyrical paradox. The paradox depends upon the deictic "you" and how it changes or does not change in the course of the speaker's utterance. The lines reference the "you" three times, with the understanding that the "you" of the opening is no longer the "you" of the closing... if you take the speaker at her word, that is. The listeners are asked to accept that the addressee is no longer the addressee—a "yous" as directed, if you will. Earlier, the speaker condemned her lover for "[giving] away the things he loved." Here, we have the speaker ridiculously trying to "give away" the "you" she loved. The absurdity of it all comes out in the final lines "Don't you? Don't you? Don't you?", where we don't know whether the "you" is the "you" the speaker is speaking to or the "you" the speaker isn't speaking to, as though the latter were a real possibility. The lines alternatively needn't be read as a paradox. "I'll bet you think this song is about you," the speaker reminds us again. It seems easy to understand the line rhetorically as a speaker claiming that her song isn't about him, but he is too vain to think otherwise. And yet, if we were literally to believe the speaker regarding her lover's vanity, he would take her bet. Ironically, she would lose this bet if she hoped to win it, and would win this bet if she hoped to lose it.

Since the song's release many have sought the identity of Carly Simon's elusive "you," as if the whole thing were a riddle poem or, more likely, a race at Saratoga and everyone were searching for an inside tip. It has become a cult question of postmodern proportions which wonderfully captures (while also missing) the point of the whole enterprise. In seeking this identity, the cultural bookies have necessarily disregarded the words of the song which claim the identity lies elsewhere. The mythology of this "you" has far outpaced its illogicality. The two biggest candidates have been the actor Warren Beatty and the singer Mick Jagger, who are both

notorious for their sexual exploits. "The narcissistic movie star" (Beatty), as Greg Haymes writes, is an "obvious choice" as is the singer (Jagger) who happened to sing back-up vocals on the record. In addition to these two frontrunners, Simon's husband James Taylor gets a post, as do Kris Kristofferson and Cat Stevens, each a former lover of Simon. Even Oprah Winfrey, a whimsical candidate suggested by Simon herself, makes the race, as does the tongue-in-cheek dark horse, Mark Felt (Haymes; "Carlysimon.com").

In response to an interview question by *The Washington Post* in 1983, asking if the mystery man were Warren Beatty, Simon answered that "it certainly sounds like it was about Warren Beatty. He certainly thought it was about him—he called me and said thanks for the song" (qtd. in "Carlysimon.com"). Metaleptically speaking, Beatty could be seen as acting out the part. Seventeen years later, however, Simon would deny that the song is about either Beatty or Jagger, only to then partially deny her denial. Thirty-five years' worth of interviews, and Simon plays coy each time. The consensus is that the "you" is a composite of Beatty, Jagger, and others. The whole point, though, seems to be in pinning down a "you" who cannot be successfully pinned down. Accordingly, the song has received a type of popular immortality based upon the fact that the bigheaded celebrity has no face.

One day Simon will probably reveal the identity of this enigmatic "you." It is my contention, notwithstanding, that we needn't follow such a disclosure. In identifying the song's "you," I will not play the theoretically undemanding and overly democratic card of insisting that the song is about anyone and everyone who would occupy such a vain position. At the conclusion of this paper, I will choose a side, a metaleptic one, and insist, at least in formal terms, that the "you" is the "I"—Carly Simon's speaker herself.

For now, I want to introduce the next section by way of offering another possibility for the song's vanity. There is an odd yet persuasive sense that the celebrity-hunting afterlife of the song has nothing really to do with the what is at stake in the song. It is this contention, a type of "vanity" often attached to the aesthetic artifact, which leaves us believing that the essence of an artwork revolves solely around itself. The promise of the aesthetic object is the apparent rejection of a metaleptic space—the object is no longer bounded by its historical, cultural, or material frame. And this is where the implications of the pop music genre of Carly Simon's song come into focus.

3. The Popular Song

In a moment of either admiration or frustration, the speaker of Simon's song states, "[w]ell, you're where you should be all the time." The line seems ambiguously to suggest two things: on the one hand, that the lover maintains a sense of duty or belonging and, on the other, that he is just a lucky guy. The first might be the correct literal rendering, but it just does not make sense in the context of this song. Personally, I am interested in this line, because it seems allegorically to distinguish between "high" art or "Literature" and its other, popular art, which always seems to gesture toward an outside contextualization. While this is not the place for a comprehensive commentary on the questions, issues, and theories of popular music, I will provide for a brief overview of such matters and how they have changed over time, before looking at two interrelated concerns: 1) whether pop music gains aesthetic legitimization by allowing for social critique, and 2) how such legitimization gets caught up in the question of realism.[3]

Much of the early criticism on popular music had to contend with an institutionalized vanity, which, though in different guises, boiled down to the assertion that popular music just wasn't serious "Art."[4] With its roots in musicology and sociology (and the eventual ethnomusicology), popular music studies began to get its footing in university settings in the 1970s. The establishment of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) in the early 1980s brought together many of the early cultural critics of popular music, such as Simon Frith, Charles Hamm, Richard Middleton, John Shepherd, Philip Tagg, and others, who had been publishing during the 1970s and 1980s.[5] In the following decades, publications redoubled, fostered not only by the fueling of the celebrity marketplace but by the academic institutions and their university presses which began to take popular music studies seriously. The work of

3 For a wonderful introduction to the ins and outs of the field of pop music studies, see Griffiths (1999: 389–435).

4 As David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus write, "The pioneers of popular music analysis spent many years having to justify paying serious attention to a cultural form and medium of communication which was often dismissed for its association with entertainment and pleasure. But now university courses and units in popular music and proliferating, and the study of popular music is an established, though still relatively marginal, academic area" (1).

5 See Richard Middleton, *Pop Music and the Blues* (London: Gollancz, 1972) and *Studying Popular Music* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1990); Simon Frith, *The Sociology of Rock* (London: Constable, 1978) and *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politcs of Rock 'n' Roll* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: Norton, 1979), *Music in the New World* (New York: Norton, 1983), *Putting Popular Music in its Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); John Shepherd, *Music as Social Text* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

Susan McClary and Sheila Whiteley added much needed gender critiques of popular music, and that of Robert Walser stressed the importance of cultural contexts.[6] As it happened, with the turn to cultural studies in the humanities, it only made sense to study the popular art form that had the most impact on mediating subjectivities. The importance, today, of studying popular music within the classroom has led to an outpouring of critical books and anthologies by scholars such as Frith, Middleton, Georgina Born, David Brackett, Reebee Garofalo, David Hesmondhalgh, Allan F. Moore, Keith Negus, Roy Shuker, Sarah Thornton, and Peter Wicke.[7] Popular music studies, in turn, has gone through all of the major philosophical "schools" that literary criticism has gone through: formalist, structuralist, dialogical, Marxist, gender, reception-theory, Birminghamian, Žižekian (!), etc., etc. And, just as literary critics are still trying to understand the dialectic of text and context, so are their musical-theorist counterparts; for the latter, the question is how 1) the sounds of music

6 See Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1991); Sheila Whiteley, *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1997) and *Women and Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 2000); Robert Walser, *Running With the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England [Wesleyan], 1993).

7 This exhausting list is by no means exhaustive. See Simon Frith, "Towards an aesthetics of popular music" in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception*, edited by Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989); Frith, *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988; Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, 1989, (London: Routledge, 2000); Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996); Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, (New York: Cambridge UP, 2001); Richard Middleton, *Voicing the Popular: On the Subjects of Popular Music* (New York: Routledge, 2006) and his collection of essays from *Popular Music*: Middleton, ed., *Reading Pop: Approaches to Textual Analysis in Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000); Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2000); David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); Brackett, *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates* (New York: Oxford UP, 2005); Reebee Garofalo, *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the U.S.A.* 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007); David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus, *Popular Music Studies* (London: Arnold, 2002); Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* 1993; Moore, ed., *Analysing Popular Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003); Moore, ed., *Critical Essays in Popular Musicology*, (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007); Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England [Wesleyan UP], 1996); Roy Shuker, *Popular Music: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2005); Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture*, 3rd. ed. (London; Routledge, 2008); Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996); Peter Wicke, *Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics and Sociology* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1990). The recent proliferation of popular music studies makes a comprehensive bibliography a tricky task. But see also Roger Beebe, Denise Fulbrook, and Ben Saunders, eds., *Rock Over the Edge: Transformations in Popular Music Culture* (Durham: Duke UP, 2002); Andy Bennett, Barry Shank, and Jason Toynbee, eds., *The Popular Music Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006).

and 2) the real historical, social, and political frameworks of music mediate the understanding of each other. According to David Brackett, "[t]he problems encountered may indeed stem from the occasional tenuousness of the difference between musical events and musical practices, from the difficulty of studying events/practices as forms of 'meaningful, activity, and from trying to understand musical gesture as social practice" (2000: xii). Again, this is not just a problem with which musical theorists alone struggle, but one which crosses the humanities in general. As Richard Middleton writes, "[t]o locate music's meaning in its objectively constituted sound-patterns, regardless of its cultural contexts, social and emotional effects, and the bodily movements which accompany and perhaps generate it, is in origin part of a broader Transcendentalizing tendency within post-Enlightenment bourgeois aesthetics […] an ontology which would exclude the secular life-processes of the pop song" (2000: 4–5).

It is this predicament-turned-paradox of aesthetics that causes many current popular music critics to frame their questions by returning to the work of Theodor Adorno. Adorno did not care for popular music; he labeled the popular culture industry "the swarming forms of the banal" (1938/1982: 274). He "rejected popular music utterly," Elizabeth Eva Leach notes, "as regressive and oppressive, since it cheats the listener with its 'pseudo-individuation,' depriving him/her of authentic emotion, and causing him/her to love his/her deprivation" (2007: 542). The problem, for Adorno, was the mass mediated form—in terms of both production and consumption—because, as Charles Hamm puts it, "capitalist production negates 'authentic' expression" (1995: 25). Adorno's critique was leveled at the fascistic tendencies always at play in mass culture, where, as Middleton writes, "social control of music's meaning and function become[s] absolute, musical form a reified reflection of manipulative social structures" (1990: 35). Avant-garde art, Modernist art, on the other hand, embodied a type of "authenticity," because it could not be so easily consumed. Modernism, a type of "negative knowledge" of the actual world, did not allow for an easy resolution to the dialectical, but instead challenged audiences, readers, and listeners to re-examine the limitations of their own social environments (Adorno 1961/1980: 160).

Ironically, Adorno's condemnation of mass culture re-performs the criticism he leveled at György Lukács regarding Modernist art, but, here, we find Adorno occupying the other's role. Adorno's critique of mass culture is not quite hypocritical, but perhaps it is a bit perfunctory for a man who ridiculed Lukács for forgetting "that in an individualistic society loneliness is socially mediated and so possesses a significant historical content" or for overlooking the fact that in writers such as James Joyce

"we do not find the timeless image of man […] but man as the product of history" (Adorno 1961/1980: 158–159). That the mass-circulated popular art form was historically mediated and thus part of the dialectical process should have gone without saying.

In order to move forward, popular music studies needed to rebalance itself against Adorno's considerable critique. It was not enough simply to say that Adorno ended up fetishizing the "autonomous" work of artists he adored. There had to be a type of Benjaminian defense of mass culture, of the technically reproducible object, because, in the end, social progress depends more upon the autonomy of mediation itself than upon the autonomy of the individual artwork. Musicologists began reading Adorno-contra-Adorno, embracing his method without subscribing to his ultimate conclusions regarding the mass-mediated form of art. As Dai Griffiths faithfully puts it,

> At university, with pop music firmly excluded from academia, and hanging out with non-musicians, I tended quickly back again towards pop music; and with punk, pop music was, irrespective of the apparent fact that we all idealise the music of our early adulthood, in a tremendous phase […] there was the faint sense that some left-field pop music could, at least in theory, do the work of modernism better than modernism itself. (1999: 67)

Or, in Richard Middleton's terms, if "jazz and rock *are* accepted as potentially 'authentic' […] we [would] have examples of avant-garde commodities—a combination which, according to Adorno, is impossible" (1990: 43). At the heart of the matter is whether pop music is a critique or a symptom of late capitalist bourgeois culture. For those musicologists on the other end of the spectrum from Adorno, the cultural materialism of Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and critics at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (CCCS) provided the solution. The musical wing of "subcultural studies," following the work of Dick Hebdige and others, insists that pop music forms an oppositional style, able to critique the cultural narratives of the dominant or "mainstream" class.[8] And yet, critics such as Sarah Thornton have pointed out that such oppositional behavior is produced, marketed, sold, and consumed just like any other product of the culture.[9] Or, as Adorno puts it,

8 See: Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen 1979); Sheila Whiteley, *The Space Between the Notes: Rock and the Counter-Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992); Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England [Wesleyan UP], 1994); Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England [Wesleyan UP], 1994).

9 Middleton writes, "The weakness of 'consumptionism' is its assumption […] that the listeners are completely free to use and interpret music as they wish—an assumption which, commonly, goes on to link freedom with 'resistance' (to the bland homogeneity attributed to the received meanings of commercial cultural provision" (2000: 9). The

recognizing the vicissitudes of the debate, "what appears as spontaneity is in fact carefully planned out in advance with machinelike precision… [as a] more or less feeble rehashing of basic formulas" (1967/1983: 123).[10] The whole tricky matter of ideology may, in a sense, be recast as a narratological problem: are we given real metaleptic moments or false ones? Can the culturally-mediated song really step outside the frame of the culturally-mediated song and thus have a vantage point from which to offer a valid, ethical, and politically viable cultural critique? Or are we, like Mr. Pickwick, listening to the rhetoric of a master narrator who always seems to keep us in the cold? Buying into a counter-culture still means buying what has been pre-packaged for easy consumption—and that is authenticity.[11]

"Despite the passage of some pop music styles since the 1970s through various aesthetics of irony and self-destruction," Richard Middleton writes, "the discourse of authenticity within music culture still holds much of its critical primacy, as dismissive response to turn-of-the-century 'manufactured pop' and 'corporate hegemony' makes clear" (2006: 203).[12] Authenticity is marketable. It sells so well, because it fits in

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Thornton quotation comes from: *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996); see also: Angela McRobbie, "Settling accounts with subcultures: a feminist critique" and Gary Clarke, "Defending ski-jumpers: a critique of theories of youth subcultures," in Frith (2001): 55–67, 68–80.

10 Simon Frith calls the popular song "a mass-produced music which carries a critique of its own means of production" (qtd. in Hesmondhalgh 2002: 6); Michael Hoover and Lisa Stokes read this all in terms of a dialectic between "cultural pessimists" like Adorno and "cultural populists."

11 The question of "authenticity" seems to come up in every discussion of popular music, even in those who seek to shift the discussion of it to the audience, like Simon Frith or Sarah Rubidge, or those, like Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh who argue that it "has been consigned to the intellectual dustheap" (qtd. in Middleton 2006: 30). As Allan Moore writes: "'Authentic.' 'Real.' 'Honest.' 'Truthful.' 'With Integrity.' 'Actual.' 'Genuine.' 'Essential.' 'Sincere.' Of all the value terms employed in music discourse, these are perhaps the most loaded" (2007: 131). For more on authenticity see: Simon Frith, "'The Magic that Can Set You Free': The Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community," *Popular Music* 1 (1981): 159–168; "Playing with Real Feeling—Jazz and Suburbia" in *Music for Pleasure*, 45–63; Sarah Rubidge, "Does authenticity matter?: The case for and against authenticity in the performing arts," in *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, edited by Patrick Campbell (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996), 219–233; Reebee Garofalo, "How autonomous is relative: popular music, the social formation and cultural struggle," *Popular Music* 6:1 (1987); Elizabeth Eva Leach (2007); Richard Middleton (2006), 199–246; Allan Moore, "Authenticity as authentification," in Moore (2007), 131–145; and, for a discussion of authenticity in poetry and popular song, see Stephen Burt, "'O Secret Stars Stay Secret': Rock and Roll in Contemporary Poetry," in Weisbard (2004): 200–211.

12 For David Brackett, the songs and persona of David Bowie would be an example of a non-authentic or ironic aesthetic. Brackett writes of "Bowie's unabashed acknowledgement that his performances present him as an actor playing a part. This apparent distance from his persona places him at the opposite end of the authenticity spectrum from singer-

seamlessly with that individualistic narrative of late capitalism. Pop music helps sell this narrative and this narrative helps sell pop music. This is not to say that such authenticity is false, only that it is principally an advertisement wherein one mistakes the rhetoric of confession for confession and the noise of expression for reality. Authenticity, in whatever guise it appears—the "keepin it real" of gangsta rap, the hair and tattoos and leather jackets of heavy metal, or the Indie bands who won't "sell out"—becomes the selling point of popular music.[13] And this is nowhere more notable than in the personae of the singer-songwriters and what David Brackett calls their "sound[s] of autobiography." Brackett notes how Carol King, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor, and Carly Simon "released influential albums between 1970 and 1972 that were recognized as introducing a new 'introspective,' 'intimate' quality into 'rock' music […] And their lyrics were heard as somehow referring to their own lives: Critics frequently introduced biographical elements into articles and reviews as important information that might explain the meaning of the songs […]" (2000: 237–238).

The music journalist Chuck Klosterman explains the autobiographical imperative as "The Carly Simon Principle": "If a musical entity aspires to unconditional greatness—be it a song, a band, or an entire aesthetic—it has to be grounded in some kind of espoused reality. And I'm pretty sure pop music is the only artistic idiom where this is true […] in film, literature, television, painting, and sculpture, and just about everything else that's viewed as artistic, 'greatness' is derived from how creative something is; in modern pop music, greatness is derived from how creative something *isn't*" (2004: 259).[14] For Klosterman, it all comes down to "replicating sincerity," "forc[ing] our understanding of what a song is supposed to mean *into* its notes and lyrics" (2004: 263, 260; my emphasis). What is "outside" moves "inside." This "self-perpetuating" audience-driven realism runs counter to the narrative of the aesthetic/literary object, which is valued for its supposed promise to be not "outside" itself but "outside" its own historical frame.

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songwriters, who had made self-revelation the cornerstone of their art" ("I Have No Message Whatsoever," in Brackett 2000: 276–282).

13 See "Keepin It a Little Too Real," in Brackett (2000: 417–421).

14 He continues "knowing who that song is about"—speaking of Eric Clapton's "Leyla"—"doesn't improve how it sounds, but it alters the perception of why it's worth listening to (or talking about)… From what I can tell, 'real' translates as 'great.' Rock writers see those two words as synonyms. [Kurt] Cobain wore a flannel shirt, which is what normal people in Seattle wear, so he was real (and therefore great). Run-D.M.C. wore Adidas, which is what normal ghetto kids wore, so they were real (and therefore great)" (Klosterman 2004: 260–261).

Popular music is essentially a metaleptic form. It links "musical and extramusical discursive spheres [such that] not only are musical meanings (and hence also the structures of subjectivity associated with them) *constituted* in (extramusical) discourses, they are also *constitutive* of such discourses…" (Middleton 2000: 10–11).[15] Pop, as per Eric Weisbard, "is music that crosses over, that has qualities that reach beyond the context in which the sounds originated […] Pop *is* a hybrid, a category fouler" (2004: 4–10).[16] It is not just the looking to reality or the looking outside—themselves facets of realism—which makes pop a metaleptic form.[17] The distinction may be subtle, but there is nonetheless a difference between a realism which asks that we know what flying a "Lear jet up to Nova Scotia" entails and a metaleptic narrative which asks us metaphorically to fly up to Nova Scotia also in order to identify the person capable of sending his own Lear jet. Pop music is metaleptic not because it says *look at me, I am singing about the world*, but because, once we assume authenticity is naïve, it says *look at me singing about the world.*

Naively or not, we already take for granted a close relationship between the singer and speaker of a song, so that when the knowledge of one level dips into another the framing essentially becomes lost. What makes Carly Simon's "You're So Vain" atypical—what gives it not just the gesture of a metalepsis but the metaleptic situation itself—is the knowledge of the instrument and medium of discourse—the "this song," an irony which espouses that, in order to point outward, we must look inward.

4. The Lyrical "I"

Not surprisingly, the final lines of the chorus to "You're So Vain" invoke the mysterious "you": "I'll bet you think this song is about you / Don't you? Don't you?" The lines are repeated again at the end of the song, but with one difference: there is a third "Don't you?" I am interested in this third "Don't you," because it smacks of authenticity. The "ohs" and the "ahs" and the "yeah"s and the "baby"s—these are the sounds of pop that often don't make it onto the score. This rhetoric of variation, this rhetoric

15 See also Walser (1993: 26–34).

16 For Weisberg, the matter goes to disciplinarity itself: "[Pop's] study should make university departments and genteel publications a bit uncomfortable. The thrust should not only be interdisciplinary but also extradisciplinary and quite possibly antidisciplinary" (2004: 10).

17 So that when Richard Middleton argues that the "central thrust" of the genre is "the attempt […] to locate the texts as species of musically specific human activity, inextricably entangled in the secular life-processes of real people," he is noting how pop is specifically a realist form, but not necessarily a metaleptic one (Middleton 2000: 16).

of the moment, is a media affordance which gives pop music its authenticity and pushes us, in "You're So Vain," to mistake the discarded lover trying hopelessly to rescue a sense of agency from her situation for the singer-songwriter Carly Simon.[18] I would argue that we ought to acknowledge a "you" turn—fans and critics have continually asked *who is this "you"?* when all along they should have been asking *who is this "I"?*

There are two ironies to this song, or perhaps one paradox and one irony, which, taken together, make this song doubly interesting. The first is the overt identity problem brought about by the metaleptic phrase "this song" which insists one "you" ought not be the same as another; the second is more subtle, based upon an unmentioned yet all-too-palpable role reversal. The speaker, courted by the lover, would assume that the lover's words—his song—were about her. Her response, an exhilarated happiness, is only later shown to be a mistaken "vanity." The trick of the song is that the speaker—the "I"—assumes the metaphorical role of the lover—the "you"—who sang to the speaker his song of courtship, which was all along never really about her. The vanity of the lover, who seemed always to have "one eye in the mirror," gets reproduced as the vanity of the speaker, who thinks she can control each referential instance of the "you." She becomes so "vain," in a sense, because she is acting "in vain," seemingly still for the only man who wouldn't care why he is being addressed, only that he is.

"You" and "I" are deictics, Émile Benveniste would remind us, words which need a gestural pointing in order to have any meaning, because they have no referent outside the particular speech act in which they occur.[19] "[T]he instances of the use of *I*," he writes, "do not constitute a class of reference since there is no 'object' definable as *I* to which these instances can refer in identical fashion. Each *I* has its own reference and corresponds each time to a unique being who is set up as such… What then is the reality to which *I* or *you* refers? It is solely a 'reality of discourse.' […] *I* signifies 'the person who is uttering the present instance of the discourse containing *I*'" (1971: 218). In order to give meaning to her romantic life, Simon's speaker needs to give meaning to her song, and that means contextualizing the deictic. The reality of the "reality of discourse" in Simon's song is a speaker speaking to herself, unsuccessfully

18 On another metaleptic level, as international property laws, which do not allow me to quote more than 4 lines of the song, make clear, the singer-songwriter Carly Simon is very much in charge of her words.

19 They are like Otto Jesperson's linguistic "shifters." For a useful introduction to "shifters," see Michael Silverstein, "Shifters, Linguistic Categories, and Cultural Description," in *Meaning in Anthropology*, edited by Keith H. Basso and Henry A. Selby, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 11–56.

hoping to conjure the presence of the "you" by referring to it. By naming this absent "you," the speaker engages in apostrophe, the trope that Jonathan Culler, à la Paul de Man, calls "not a moment in a temporal sequence but a *now* of discourse, of writing"—a reality of discourse similar to that of lyric poetry (1981: 152).[20]

Poetry cannot make something that's not there present. And yet, for someone like de Man, this is the so-called promise of lyric verse. It is also the apparent promise of the metaleptic narrative, which suggests a correspondence among writer, reader, and characters, and declares a pathway between real and fictive worlds. The metaleptic attempt to invoke the real, however, ends up invoking just another representation of the real—Dickens's narrator cannot really keep his characters in the cold, just as they cannot keep us literally warm. There's one exception for de Man, and that's apostrophe, a type of anthropomorphism, a breathing life into something that is not there. "De Man notes 'the latent threat that inhabits prosopopoeia, namely that by making the dead speak, the symmetrical structure of the trope implies, by the same token, that the living are struck dumb, frozen in their own death'" (Culler 1981: 153). On the one end, there's the fear of losing; on the other, being lost. Like lyric verse, which longs to capture the now, and like Charles Dickens's narrator who longs for "the hands we grasped [which] have grown cold," Carly Simon's song is about a desire to hold on and be held onto. This leads to a type of neurosis in the rejected lover who seeks to reverse the notion of lyric presence by displacing herself from the "you" to the "I"—a metaleptic agent, outside the story, seemingly able to control matters.

Neither the song nor the speaker can invoke an actual "you"—the "you" has left and cannot return—so it has to do one better, invoking time and again a rhetoric of the "I." The "vanity" of the lyric speaker comes with the attempt at memorializing not only her past engagement (which we see in the obsessively repeated instances of "you"), but also herself, who is mediated in this song by a past event which she cannot seem to move beyond. There is the assumption that, after inscription, the "I" of the lyric will somehow remain the "I" who set down the words. And yet, as metaleptic leveling teaches us, not even this "I" can remain stable. What happens to notions of authenticity, with every cover of the song, or when someone tries in vain to sing it at karaoke? Is it still really about Warren Beatty or Kris Kristofferson? Or, does the deictic "this

20 Paul de Man writes, "the principle of intelligibility, in lyric poetry, depends on the phenomenalization of the poetic voice [which is] the attribute of aesthetic presence that determines the hermeneutics of the lyric" (1985: 55).

song" end up invoking a new, yet fleeting, presence that has little to do with a private "I"? What we have finally is a "you" who was never a "you" and an "I" who is no longer an "I," no matter who is pointing and no manner what Simon says.

As I have argued, the introspective authenticity typical of the singer-songwriter's lyric (popular in popular music) is a type of vanity, because it focuses attention on the individual speaker in the guise of focusing attention on the song. While most popular songs do not reproduce the metaleptic paradox at the center of Carly Simon's lyrics, they do reenact a type of metalepsis by naming a "real" world and demanding its listeners look outside the text to understand it. Unlike the desire of Dickens's narrator to get so "well wrapped up, in great coats, shawls, and comforters," metaleptic narratives always seem to peek out from their blankets. The warmth of narrative immersion is replaced in popular music by a warmth of authenticity, of not only "being there," but of being there with "you." And, in order for this to occur, as Carly Simon's speaker reminds us, the "there" and the "you" must continually maintain a metaleptic foot in two very different worlds.

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Metalepsis in Fan Vids and Fan Fiction

In the decades since Gérard Genette coined the term, narrative metalepsis has generally been understood as a merging of diegetic levels, a narrative phenomenon that destabilizes, however provisionally, the distinction between reality and fiction. As discussed by Genette, this formulation assumes a certain degree of stability outside the text itself: narratees may become narrators and vice versa, but authors remain authors and readers remain readers.[1] In the context of novels and films, such an assumption is not unreasonable. But with the advent of what has been called 'participatory' or 'read/write culture' (Jenkins 1992; Lessig 2004), in which audiences become authors and textual boundaries become increasingly porous, we must consider how both the nature and the effects of metalepsis may be affected by these changes.

In this article, I will discuss metalepsis in fan vids and fan fiction, two major narrative genres of fan work in media fandom. Broadly speaking, fan works include the fiction, art, videos, songs, mix tapes, podcasts, critical commentaries, and community infrastructures (such as forums and archives) produced by and for fans of particular TV shows and films.[2] These fan works are both texts in their own right and supplements (in the

1 "Narrator" and "narratee" designate intratextual roles or constructs: within the world of the narrative, the narrator is the storyteller, and the narratee is the one to whom the story is told. "Author" and"reader" indicate extratextual individuals, flesh-and-blood people in the real world: the author creates the narrative itself (including both narrator and narratee), and the reader—or, following Rabinowitz (1987) and Phelan (1996), the "actual audience"—reads that narrative. See also Chatman (1978: 151) for a diagram of the communicative structure of narrative.

2 Following Busse and Hellekson (2006) and Coppa (2006a), I am focusing here on U.S- and U.K.-centric media fandom, as distinct from "science fiction, comics, anime/manga/yaoi, music, soap opera, and literary fandoms" (Coppa 2006a: 42), to say nothing of, for example, video game or sports fandoms. Such a distinction is inevitably somewhat arbitrary; there has always been considerable overlap between science fiction fans and media fans, and many fans currently reading and writing in media fandom also write or have written in comics fandom or music fandom (sometimes called bandom). However, these fandoms, though related to media fandom, do have their own histories and traditions, as well as (in some cases) different cultural reference points; the communities cannot simply be conflated.

Derridean sense) to the original source material: fan works supplement texts that are already complete, but always with the shadow meaning, the possibility, of adding *in order to* complete.[3] The creators and consumers of fan works expand the terms of audience engagement with the source texts they transform; they create the context for new variations of metalepsis in popular culture.

Unlike many forms of what we now call user-generated content, fan works are not new; they have been around for decades. They are compelling and useful subjects of study in part because fandom has been, as Henry Jenkins argues, "the experimental prototype, the testing ground for the way media and culture industries are going to operate in the future" (Jenkins 2007: 361). If Genette's original theory cannot entirely account for metaleptic effects within increasingly participatory cultures, fan works offer a series of sites for examining where and how that theory might require modification.

Fan fiction and fan vids

Of the two genres I will examine, fan fiction is better known outside fandom and more often discussed both in mainstream media articles and in academic scholarship. The concept of fan fiction is fairly easily grasped: fans of a particular source text write stories set in and/or featuring characters from that text's fictional world, usually in order to explore the emotions, motivations, and inner lives of familiar characters; to examine, extend, or create relationships between characters; or to put those characters in new situations.[4] These stories have been widely circulated within fan communities for decades, first in letters and zines and more recently via the Internet. Fan fiction is thus 'popular' in two respects: it engages with popular narratives and it is itself widely read.

Fan vids, even though they also engage with popular narratives, are less widely known and therefore merit additional explanation. Fan-made song videos, known within media fan communities simply as vids, are short videos integrating repurposed media images with repurposed music. The creators, called vidders, seek out or happen upon songs that fit with

3 "The supplement adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the *fullest measure* of presence. [...] But the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void" (Derrida 1976: 144–145). For more on fan fiction as supplement, see Coppa (2006b) and Derecho (2006).

4 Although the term "fan fiction" has been used to describe a broad range of intertextual works, I am using it here to refer specifically to amateur, noncommercial works. For a more detailed history of fan fiction and particularly the varying definitions and limits of the term proposed by both fans and scholars, see Derecho (2006).

their vision of a television show or movie; clip scenes or moments from that show or movie that correspond to elements of the song's lyrics and music; edit and arrange those clips; and synthesize these audio and visual elements into an original creation that interprets, celebrates, or critiques the original source. Vids therefore superficially resemble MTV-style music videos in that they require viewers to process a combination of images, music, and (usually) lyrics. However, as Francesca Coppa explains, the relationship between audio and visual elements is actually quite different: in a commercial video, "footage is created to promote and popularize a piece of music," whereas "fannish vidders use music in order to comment on or analyze a set of preexisting visuals, to stage a reading, or occasionally to use the footage to tell new stories" (2008: 1.1). In a vid, "music is used as an interpretive lens to help the viewer to see the source text differently" (2008: 1.1): the song helps guide viewers' understanding of the images, illuminating or complicating what is seen.

When Henry Jenkins wrote *Textual Poachers* (1992)—for many years the only published academic scholarship on fans and fandom to discuss vids—vids were almost entirely inaccessible to people not already involved in fan communities. Until recently, vidding has been an underground and highly insular cultural phenomenon, in part because to date it has been practiced almost exclusively by women. Vidding began in 1975, when Kandy Fong put together a slide show setting *Star Trek* stills to music (Coppa 2008: 1.4, 3.1–3.3); during the 1980s and 1990s, a relatively small number of women, often working together and pooling resources, produced vids using two VCRs and distributed them at conventions or by mail.[5] In order to watch vids, and especially to get one's own copies of vids, one had to know where to go or whom to contact: fans were most likely to see vids for the first time at a convention or in the home of a fellow fan who already possessed vid collections on tape. As non-linear editing software became more widely available to and affordable for the home computer user, and as more film and TV source texts were released in DVD format, vidding began to go digital; with the advent of widespread broadband Internet access, digital vids became easier to share with fellow fans, either by posting them to vidder-owned websites, by distribut-

5 Anime music videos, or AMVs, emerged out of the particular context of anime fandom some years later than live-action vids and are therefore different from vids in ways that go beyond merely using different source material. Among these differences: although there are many popular and influential female AMV creators, the AMV-making community has been dominated by men. While there has been considerable mutual influence and cross-pollination between AMVs and live-action vids in recent years, the two communities and their respective traditions and aesthetics cannot be treated as identical. Much of my argument here may in fact be applicable to AMVs, but it is grounded in experience with and analysis of live-action vids.

ing them via file-sharing networks or services, or, more recently, by posting streaming versions to hosting sites such as YouTube. It is now possible for fans not already in the know to find vids, as well as information and advice about how to make vids. Because of this increasing accessibility, vids are found and made by more and younger fans, and they are becoming increasingly visible to viewers outside their original audiences, including non-fans. Vids not only comment on popular or cult TV series and films but are increasingly popular in their own right; as Jenkins has observed, "there is a public interested in seeing amateur-made work almost without regard to its origins or genre" (2006), and vids, like other forms of remix video, have been one focus of this interest. In addition, as we shall see in the next section, vids self-reflexively engage with popular mechanisms of (fannish) audience response.

Textual boundaries

Genette's now-familiar definition of narrative metalepsis (1972/1980: 234–237) explains the phenomenon as a transgression of the boundary between narrative levels or narrative worlds; the transgressed boundary is that between, for example, diegesis and hypodiegesis (story and embedded story) or diegesis and extradiegesis (story and discourse). These narrative levels are, by definition, intratextual; reality—which includes the flesh-and-blood author and reader—is extratextual. When discussing the author-narrators M. de Renoncourt and Robinson Crusoe, Genette emphasizes that "[n]either Prévost nor Defoe enters the space of our inquiry"; he is interested in "the narrating instance, not the literary instance" (1972/1980: 229), and insists that "we shall not confound extradiegetic with real historical existence" (1972/1980: 230).

Further discussions by other scholars have maintained this emphasis on intratextuality. As Monika Fludernik puts it in her discussion of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, "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 storyworld at least in imagination if not in real fact)" (2003: 382). Werner Wolf defines metalepsis as "a usually intentional paradoxical transgression of, or confusion between, (onto)logically distinct (sub)worlds and/or levels that exist, or are referred to, within representations of possible worlds" (2005: 91; emphasized in the original); Wolf is thus even more explicit than Genette about the diegetic boundaries of metalepsis, the slippage between *representations of* worlds. Metalepsis, in this view, requires a text within a text; it requires a frame story, a representa-

tion of a real world, that features the rhetorical act of storytelling, whether that rhetorical act takes up a good part of the narrative, as in Sterne's *Trist ram Shandy*, or emerges in the occasional "narrative pause," as in Balzac's *La Vieille Fille* (Genette 1972/1980: 100–101). Because metaleptic transgression, so defined, is contained within the borders of the text, the boundary that is crossed is not the boundary between the actual world and a fictional world but a fictional "real world" as represented on the page or screen and another narrative level or world within that "real world."

Such a definition rests on two assumptions. The first assumption is that the borders of the text are stable, fixed, and agreed upon by authors and readers. Debra Malina has observed as much: "the rhetorical effects of metalepsis seem to rely on a firm border between the [diegetic reader] and the [extratextual reader]" (2002: 9). Even the transformative effect, which "builds upon a dissolution of these distinctions among levels of readers," relies upon this border, as the distinction cannot be felt to have dissolved unless it was felt to be there in the first place. Members of the audience may actively negotiate rather than passively absorb meaning (see Hall 1991), but they remain outside the text; their interpretations do not change the text itself. The second assumption is that the author, and specifically the intratextual narrator in the role of author's proxy, controls the metalepsis. If, as Genette describes it, "the narrator pretends to enter (with or without his reader) into the diegetic universe" (1972/1980: 101n.33), then the narrator is the significant force in the metaleptic event, the one who is free to pretend or refrain from pretending, and the reader is subject to the narrator's whim. Malina makes the reader's helplessness even more clear: "each of these authors plays a distinct game with readers, toying in different ways with readers' roles and positions" (2002: 2).

These assumptions make sense in discussions of traditional media and established genres such as literature, films, and comics, which are generally understood as self-contained texts with impermeable borders. But they do not necessarily make sense for fan works, which redefine both the boundaries of texts and the relationships between creators and audiences. If metalepsis is "the transgression of the boundary between the real world and the fictional world," the traditional understanding of the term is always intratextual in that the "real" world is in fact fictional: diegesis and hypodiegesis are both contained within the borders of the text. As we shall see, the metalepses in fan fiction and fan vids are extratextual: they employ the actual real world, not just a representation of it.

Fan works also complicate the question of what the primary diegesis is: is it the source text, the movie or television series in which the characters originate? Or is it the fan work itself? In fact, it is in some ways, and potentially simultaneously, *both*. As Coppa has argued, "the existence of

fan fiction postulates that characters [...] are neither constructed nor owned, but have [...] a life of their own not dependent on any original 'truth' or 'source'" (2006b: 230), and yet that source—the media text on which a given story is based—still exerts influence on fan works, even though it cannot define them: it acts as a sort of center of textual gravity around which a given fan work orbits more or less distantly and elliptically. These complicated relationships among texts enable an unusually diffuse set of metaleptic effects.

For fans who produce and consume fan works, the boundaries of the source text's fictional world are not fixed; rather, they are infinitely expandable. Fans' tendency to treat source texts as open rather than closed is encouraged by the ways in which media fandom is organized around, though not limited to, serial television. As Bertha Chin notes, narrative television has a special "longevity" that film typically lacks; "the character and plot development in a TV show, which can continue over years," make it "easier for fans to become emotionally attached to the show's characters and their relationships" (2007: 215). Because these characters and relationships are precisely the narrative elements that tend to interest vidders and fan fiction writers, fan works are most often based either on television sources or on movie series and franchises with serial elements: *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the Rings*, the *Harry Potter* series, Hollywood versions of superhero comics, and so on. Katrina Busse and Karen Hellekson (2006) have observed that the appeal of serial productions can be understood in terms of Roland Barthes's distinction between readerly and writerly texts. Barthes defines readerly texts as mere "products" (1970/1974: 5) that "can be read, but not written," that are "characterized by the pitiless divorce […] between the producer of the text and its user, between its owner and its customer, between its author and its reader," and that enforce upon the reader "a kind of idleness" (1970/1974: 4). Barthes values instead the writerly text, in which "the goal [...] is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text" (1970/1974: 4). Busse and Hellekson argue that, intentionally or not, "serial production is the ultimate writerly text" (2006: 6): fans gravitate towards these writerly texts and expand them still further with their own contributions.

A particular story or vid is therefore *both* an independent narrative *and* one component of a larger—often much larger—collective narrative. Busse and Hellekson elaborate:

> Fan academics have begun to think of the entirety of fan fiction in a given fannish universe as a work in progress. This fantext, the entirety of stories and critical commentary written in a fandom (or even in a pairing or genre), offers an ever-growing, ever-expanding version of the characters. These multitudes of interpretations of characters and canon scenes are often contradictory yet complementary to each other and the source text. Nevertheless, working with and

> against one another, this multitude of stories creates a larger whole of understanding a given universe. This canvas of variations is a work in progress insofar as it remains open and is constantly increasing; every new addition changes the entirety of interpretations. […] [T]he community of fans creates a communal (albeit contentious and contradictory) interpretation in which a large number of potential meanings, directions, and outcomes co-reside. (2006: 7)

For fans, the processes of fan participation and creation are important parts of the fantext; what matters is not just the extension of the universe (commercial media tie-in novels may do similar work) but the fact that the fan community, collectively, is doing the extending. In this context, the source text itself becomes, as Mafalda Stasi says of fan fiction, "a node in a web, a part of an often complex intertextual sequence" (2006: 119). Outside fandom, a film or TV show is typically perceived as an independent self-contained narrative. Within fandom, however, it is also part of a larger textual whole that includes fan contributions, or at least the possibility of fan contributions. The source text may well be treated as a privileged piece of that larger textual whole—fans use the term "canon" to refer to events represented in the show—but for fans it is nevertheless only *one* piece. It is possible, of course, for people who consider themselves media fans to appreciate a particular film or television series without producing or consuming fan works, but such fans often describe themselves as "not fannish" about the text in question, implying that to be fannish is, by definition, to desire communal exploration or expansion of a given text.

This dedication to communal exploration and expansion of shared canon means that the boundary between canon and fantext is seldom marked within the text itself. Unlike, for example, the fantasy novels discussed by Klimek (this volume), in which the line between diegesis and hypodiegesis is clear because the "real" world and the fictional world are not the same, the premise of most fan work is that the fictional world of the story or vid *is* the same as the fictional world of the original text, or rather the fan author's interpretation of that world; part of the pleasure of the text comes from treating these fictional worlds as contiguous or overlapping. At the same time, fans consuming fan works are perfectly well aware that there is in fact a boundary between the original text and the fantext. Especially in the case of fan works based on TV or film, that boundary is clearly marked by genre and medium as well as by commercial context: no one is likely to confuse a written story or a music video with a movie or an episode of TV, or to confuse a fan-made text with a professionally-produced one. The boundary between the two worlds is therefore extratextual rather than intratextual; it is understood by the audience rather than supplied by the author. And if part of the pleasure of the text comes from ignoring the boundaries between canon and fan works,

another part comes precisely from acknowledging those boundaries, from knowing that a fan work was made by a fellow fan.

Because these boundaries are typically extratextual rather than intratextual, metaleptic transgressions may take a different form in fan works than in conventional texts. Specifically, while an individual fan narrative, like any other narrative, may be intratextually metaleptic in any of the ways described by Genette, it is also and always what we might call extratextually metaleptic. The most significant boundary that is crossed in fan works is not the border of the fictional world but the border of the text itself, the boundary that separates creator and flesh-and-blood (as opposed to implied or authorial) audience: the extratextual reader or viewer inserts herself into the discourse level and becomes the narrator, the director. In the course of making a vid or writing a story, an individual fan transforms herself from being solely an audience member to being also (not instead) the creator or narrator of a related portion of the fantext. If conventional metalepsis appears to destabilize the boundary between reality and fiction, fan works effectively destabilize the boundary between audience and creator. Fan works, then, are always metaleptic in the sense that they represent the imposition of extradiegetic desires upon the fictional world and the transformation of a text in the service of those desires.

This exercise of creative agency constitutes a significant variation on audience behavior as imagined by Genette. Genette's formulation of metalepsis assumes readers who do what they're told, who are moved around (or left behind) at the narrator's discretion; fan works demonstrate that readers do not necessarily behave the way that narrators or creators want them to, and their resistance may take the form not of rejecting the text but of re-making it. In fan works, the audience takes over. As Jenkins puts it, "[f]andom blurs any clear-cut distinction between media producer and media spectator, since any spectator may potentially participate in the creation of new artworks" (1992: 246–247). The audience and the actual author (as opposed to the author-narrator) are supposed to stay outside the text; fans go inside it. This remarkably literal ontological metalepsis does not necessarily leave visible textual traces of the type we might find in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* or in the postmodernist fiction discussed by Brian McHale (1987: 119–121); instead, the vid or story itself *is* the trace of the interference.

Metalepsis in vids: "I Put You There"

Vids most often illustrate characters' thoughts and emotions, comment on their motivations, or chronicle their relationships. In doing so, a vid may

tell a version of the story very similar to that in the original source, or it may read the original story against the grain (as did, for example, the earliest vids, which made the case that Kirk and Spock of *Star Trek* were romantically involved with each other). In a sense, then, a vid combines at least two stories: the story contained within the original source text, and the story of the vidder's response to and transformation of that text at the level of narration. Whether we understand a visual text's narration as the product of a particular narrative agent (Chatman 1990: 127–131) or as "the organization of a set of cues for the construction of a story" (Bordwell 1985: 62), the narration itself consists of images and sounds that are subject to manipulation, substitution, and recombination. A vidder decides which camera angles to keep or discard, the duration of each clip, and the order in which those clips should be presented; and of course she also adds a soundtrack, usually a song that provides a voice for a character or in some cases for the vidder herself. From this point of view, a vid can also be understood as "a visual essay that stages an argument" (Coppa 2008: 1.1): it represents a vidder's collection of evidence for a particular interpretation of a visual text and her attempt, whether implicit or explicit, to persuade the vidwatcher to share that interpretation.

In one small but well-established subgenre of vids, known within the community as *metavids*, vidders tell stories or make arguments not about a particular source text but about fans, fandom, or fannish activities; these vids often have as much in common with the significant quantities of fan-generated written analysis and essays as they do with more common genres of vids such as character studies or relationship vids. Laura Shapiro and LithiumDoll's metavid "I Put You There" (2006) makes its argument through a sustained instance of what Fludernik (2003) calls ontological metalepsis, including both narratorial and lectorial metalepses; these intratextual metalepses are used to highlight the extratextually metaleptic nature of fan creations. Metalepsis, in this instance, not only structures the vid's narrative but enables the vidders' commentary on the nature of fan works and, more generally, of fannish investment in media texts.

In "I Put You There," ostensibly a vid about the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the vidders create an original animated fangirl character and endow her with subjectivity by positioning her as the narrator/singer of the song used in the vid (Mary Schmary's "I Put You There"). The vid's tagline, with its reference to "every fangirl," suggests this orientation even before we begin watching, and the first line confirms it: "This is a song about me," we hear, and the corresponding image of the animated fangirl establishes that the real center of the vid will be *this* character and

not a character from *Buffy*.[6] For audiences familiar with vids and especially metavids, the narrating fangirl is immediately identifiable as the point of the vid rather than a distraction from the "real" story. In another vid, she would be out of place both diegetically and (because she is animated) aesthetically; in a metavid, however, she becomes part of a self-conscious narrative strategy.

The vidder-created fangirl character watches *Buffy* and has a crush on the character Giles, who is positioned as the song's narratee, the "you." The nature of the fangirl's interest is signaled by the picture of Giles hanging on her wall and the lipstick marks that appear on her TV screen as it displays a clip of Giles looking especially dashing in a tuxedo and smiling at the camera. The vid tells the story of the fangirl's daily life: not only watching Giles on her television screen but thinking about him as she makes breakfast, seeing his face in the banana slices she adds to her cereal, imagining the two of them talking on the phone. The narrator knows that Giles isn't "real"; "in real life, you're somebody else," she acknowledges, as the screen bursts with images of actor Anthony Stewart Head in other roles and from magazine photo shoots. Yet she is still jealous of Giles's interactions with female characters, as we see when she defaces an image of Jenny Calendar, his love interest on *Buffy*, with graffiti scribblings. The narrator is also well aware that her relationship with a fictional character cannot be mutual: "You don't talk to me, you don't hear me / you don't smell me and you don't see me," she sings, as the vid superimposes animated images of her actions—calling on the phone, playing the guitar, offering flowers, and waving her arms—on clips of Giles failing, inevitably, to respond. She is outside the text, and he is inside; the textual boundary, it seems, cannot be breached.

But in fact, as we are reminded in the next line, the textual boundary has *already* been breached: "You're in this here song with me." The song's major trope—that the beloved can be brought into contact with the narrator/lover through the medium of the song itself—is literalized in the vid's metalepsis. The visuals reinforce this impression of boundary collapse, showing the fangirl drawing a cage to hold Giles and policing it with her pencil. Through the fantasies depicted in the vid, she has already brought Giles out of the world of *Buffy* and integrated him into her own world (lectorial metalepsis); by the end of the vid, she is actually drawing herself into the narrative of *Buffy* (narratorial metalepsis). "Here you are with me in my song," she sings, and we see her animated hand drawing over a clip

6 For a discussion of autodiegetic narration in popular music, see David Ben-Merre's contribution to this volume.

from the show, replacing Buffy's arm with her own so that the fangirl, not Buffy, is holding Giles's hand.

The narrator cannot affect the diegesis of the original source text; we see several more clips from *Buffy* play out unaffected by her attempts to make Giles notice her, for though she offers pie and signals in semaphor, nothing gets through to him. But in the final clip of the vid, the narrator asserts her agency: "You're in this here song with me, 'cause *I put you there*." Once again she draws herself into the frame, and this time she draws herself so that she and Giles are kissing. The vid constitutes a hybrid space within which the narrating fangirl can literally redraw the boundaries of textual worlds: once the narrator begins using her pencil, Giles and the narrator can coexist, hold hands, even kiss. The fangirl character has created a new narrative that allows her to direct the action and get what she wants. This creation is the paradigm for all fan works: the metalepsis within the vid represents the metaleptic creative practices of extratextual real-world fans.

Some of the vid's metaleptic transgressions are familiar, notably the dissolution of the boundary between fictional world and (equally fictional) animated "real world"; these transgressions are the source of much of the vid's humor. But in other ways the vid is significantly different from many if not most other instances of metalepsis. First, the fictional world and "real world," whose boundaries are collapsed, originate in different texts (*Buffy* and the vid itself, respectively), even different media (live action and animation), and are imagined and created by different authors. Second, the collapse of the boundary between these worlds is engineered not by the writers or directors of the original TV fictional world but by two of its viewers. The vidwatcher is therefore presented with multiple boundaries and transgressions: not just the narrative boundary between diegetic levels or even narrative and reality but the boundaries between commercial and noncommercial, creator and consumer.

Although the vid focuses on a single show (*Buffy*) and character (Giles), it is clearly intended—and has been received by many fannish viewers—as a universal rather than a specific story; it represents "a kind of love every fangirl knows," as Laura Shapiro (2006) writes in her description of the vid. It might be tempting, especially for a non-fannish viewer, to conflate the narrating fangirl with the vidders, just as a naïve reader might conflate Robinson Crusoe with Daniel Defoe, but such a conflation misses the point of the vid. For the vid to work, the narrator must be identified not with the vidders but with the audience: we are all that fangirl, and she is all of us. The vid's diegesis is an analogue of or stand-in for the extratextual real world: the fangirl, like the vid's invoked audience, watches *Buffy*, and she is clearly signaled as a paradigmatic fan both on her

tombstone, which names her simply as "fangirl," and via her t-shirt, which features the logo of LiveJournal, a social blogging platform popular among members of media fandom. Like many fans, she spends a good deal of time thinking about the characters in the shows she watches, and she collects images of the actor who plays a favorite character. The vid's authorial audience is constructed as doing, if not these *exact* things, these *kinds* of things; a fannish viewer recognizes them as activities in which fans, collectively, engage, even if they aren't activities that she herself undertakes, even if *Buffy* isn't a show that she herself watches.

And, most importantly for the vid, the narrating fangirl represents fangirls more generally because she transgresses the textual boundary and thus symbolizes our own transgressions of that boundary. The song tells a story of metalepsis; the visuals make that story a particular story; that particular story is a metonym for a more general story, the story of fans' fantasy and creativity: fans make the stories they want to see. The vidders use metalepsis to dramatize the transformation of the narrating fangirl from spectator to author—or rather her expansion of her own role to include authoring *as well as* viewing, since fan authors typically continue not only to watch the shows with which they engage (often long after those shows are off the air) but to consume fan works created by fellow fans. Over the course of the vid, the narrator begins to use her pencil—to draw, to write, even, metaphorically, to vid, as indicated by the scribbling sounds that accompany the vid's opening credits.

Many of the vidwatchers who commented on Laura Shapiro's LiveJournal post announcing the vid (Shapiro 2006) speak directly to these issues of community, universality, and metacommentary, describing the vid as "insanely apt," "so, so true," or "totally relevant to fangirl nation at large." A selection of other comments suggests the widespread community understanding of the vidders' goals: "'I Put You There,' of course, perfectly encapsulates the fangirl mind"; "I'm not a Buffy fan, but we all [intuitively understand] the sentiments in this vid"; "The next time someone asks me about fandom and what it is, I am going to show them your vid"; "This is such a perfect, funny, and entirely joyous expression of who I am. Who we all are" (Shapiro 2006). The vid can thus be understood as a specific instance of metalepsis that has resonated with vidders, vidwatchers, and the larger fannish community in part because it literalizes the ways in which *all* vids (and fan fiction, and fan art) are to some degree metaleptic: they enable viewers to intervene in the story, to have their way with the narrative.

"I Put You There" is notable in part because it is unusual: most vids are *not* ontologically metaleptic in the ways described by Genette, and certainly they are not structured around that metalepsis. Fan creators typi-

cally don't write (or draw) themselves or their communities into their narratives; their presence is felt in the shape of the fan work itself, the visual and textual traces of their narrative desires, the ways in which those desires have prompted them to retell a story, reconfigure or reinvent an existing narrative. But the vid is also notable for what it tells us about vids, and by extension about fan works more generally. The vid suggests that vids and fan fiction are the hybrid space of "I Put You There" writ large; they are the points where source text and audience desires interface. The vid acknowledges—even thematizes—the fact that Giles and the fangirl are on different diegetic levels, and the absurdity of their romance is part of why the vid is so funny: nobody really believes that a media fan could have a physical relationship with a fictional character. But the vid also registers the reality of fans' emotional response to the texts and characters we love, our investment in these stories, our urge to affect them, control them, remake them.[7]

Metalepsis in fan fiction: the Mary Sue

Like vids, fan fictions are broadly metaleptic in the sense that their very existence is the textual trace of spectators immersing themselves in a fictional world, turning themselves into creators in order to transform existing stories. Coppa has argued that fan fiction is rooted in dramatic or performative rather than narrative impulses: it "directs bodies in space" (2006b: 235), providing a script—or, rather, many scripts—for familiar bodies to perform. The reader stages these performances in her own head, drawing on her "memory of [the actors'] physicality" (2006b: 236). Through fan fiction, then, fans transform themselves from audience members into writers and directors in order to (re)write or (re)direct a story in accordance with their own vision. Once again, the audience takes control of the discourse: writers of fan fiction introduce their own interpretations and desires (including, in some cases, their sexual desires) into a shared narrative; because of the change in medium, readers of fan fiction must be active participants in the process of investing these stories with meaning.

But fan fictions are in many ways more flexible than vids, because they depend far less on what we have actually seen on screen; the ability to

7 "I Put You There" is thus an excellent example of Richard Walsh's model of the rhetoric of fictionality, in which "participation in, and consciousness of, the game of fictive discourse" are not incommensurable (2007: 172); the narrating fangirl, and by extension the vidders and the audience, engage in and are aware of the complexities of this game as both consumers and creators of fan works.

extend the breadth and/or depth of the source story is one of the primary affordances of fan fiction. Despite technical advances in editing and effects software that enable vidders to manipulate images in increasingly sophisticated ways, most vidders still rely largely on selecting, juxtaposing, and recontextualizing images and clips from the show itself, whereas fan fiction writers routinely extrapolate from what was seen on screen, offer possibilities for what happened offscreen, introduce new characters—and, of course, produce rhetorically or ontologically metaleptic effects with relative ease.

Most media fans would not use or recognize the term "metalepsis," but they are familiar with the concept of crossing diegetic or textual boundaries. The subgenre of fan fiction known as the crossover, in which characters from two or more different media sources are brought together in a single story, has existed at least since 1979 (Coppa 2006a: 52) and continues to be widely practiced; crossovers present a straightforward example of horizontal metalepsis, directed and stage-managed by the audience-turned-author. (Crossover vids exist as well, though it is of course more difficult in vids than in fiction to create the illusion that characters from different shows are interacting with each other.) But I focus here on a different type of metaleptic fan fiction, in which fan-created characters added to the source text's fictional world are perceived by readers as inappropriate impositions on or distortions of the story, and in some cases even as self-insertions by the fan author. Readers use the term "Mary Sue" to refer to such a character, and the name has distinctly derogatory connotations; authors who are perceived as writing these characters are frequently mocked.

As explained by Joan Verba (1996), the term "Mary Sue" originated in 1973 with Paula Smith's "A Trekkie's Tale," a *Star Trek* story satirizing a phenomenon that was already well-known to readers of fan fiction. The term signaled a character who "has one or more of the following elements: (1) a young—or 'youngest'—officer in Starfleet, who is (2) adored by everyone on the ship, especially Kirk, Spock, and McCoy, (3) has extraordinary abilities, (4) wins extraordinary honors, and sometimes (5) dies a tragic or heroic death, after which she is mourned by everyone on the ship" (Verba 1996: 15)—or, to extrapolate beyond *Star Trek*, a young female character,[8] invented by the author, who is the focal point of the story despite not appearing in the source text, who is possessed of special abilities or physical characteristics, who is practically perfect in every way, and

8 Although there are occasional instances of the male Mary Sue, sometimes referred to as "Marty Stu" or "Gary Stu," these instances are much less common and are usually discussed by fans only as adjuncts to the more pervasive Mary Sue phenomenon.

who is therefore beloved by the protagonists as soon as they are lucky enough to encounter her.

The popular meaning of the term, however, has changed in the decades since Smith's story. Keidra Chaney and Raizel Liebler offer a succinct summary of the current connotation: a Mary Sue "tends to bear an uncanny resemblance to her creator—only stronger, wittier, sexier, friendlier, and without the glasses and bad skin" (2006: 52); her hobbies and musical tastes, for example, may be identical to those of the author. By extension, many fans assume that any fan-created female character whom they consider unrealistically strong, smart, or appealing must be a Mary Sue.[9] And, as Catherine Driscoll explains, "the Mary Sue is generally associated with girl writers who have trouble distancing themselves from the source text enough to write about it rather than write themselves into it" (2006: 90). The presence of a (suspected) self-insertion, far from being a sign of the formal innovation and experimentation that is presumed to distinguish high culture from popular culture, is most often viewed as a sign of artistic weakness and possibly of immaturity or narcissism on the part of the author. It is worth noting that ultimately the reader, not the author, defines a Mary Sue: the character is *perceived* as an eruption of the writer—her priorities, her desires, possibly even her self—within the fictional world.

Ika Willis's reclamation of the Mary Sue figure is grounded in the political and personal possibilities inherent in the metaleptic crossing of textual boundaries. Willis offers examples from her own fiction, in which she inserts a character whom she "consciously intended […] to be a Mary Sue" (2006: 169 n.9), and explains her reasons for doing so: "It is through writing fan fiction that a fan can, firstly, make space for her own desires in a text which may not at first sight provide the resources to sustain them; and, secondly, recirculate the reoriented text among other fans without attempting to close the text on the 'truth' of her reading" (2006: 155). Writing fan fiction, she argues, is "a way of making space [in the fantext] for my own subjectivity insofar as it is invested in and partially constituted by my investment" in the original text (2006: 163). Seen this way, the Mary Sue is "an expression of agency by female authors—creating female characters who embody everything that their writers see as good and desirable and making the story turn out just right" (Chaney and Liebler 2006: 54). Any fan fiction story represents the imposition of the writer's desires on

9 The tendency of some fans to label (and thus dismiss) any fan-created female character, and especially any "strong female heroine with an interesting life" (alara_r 2003), as a Mary Sue has been both documented by scholars (e.g., Bacon-Smith 1992) and bemoaned by fans: "Can we not have a strong female character without her being labelled Mary Sue? […] I mean really, what kind of female character are people supposed to write?!" (Lothy 2009).

the fictional world; the Mary Sue personifies those desires in a particular character.

One way of understanding the fan critique of the Mary Sue, then, is to see that critique as an objection to what we might call metaleptic excess: if the story itself enacts the author's desires, then a proxy for the author within the text is unnecessary; the Mary Sue is redundant in stories that are always already expressions of fan agency. Even a Mary Sue who is not literally a stand-in for the author is arguably metaleptic. In the broadest sense, we might say that *any* fan-created characters (usually called original characters, or OCs, to distinguish them from characters established by the source text) are metaleptic whether or not they are authorial self-insertions: they are fan additions both to the story and to the discourse—the storytelling strategy—of the fantext, elements introduced from outside the source text. And indeed, in some cases, fans' preference for reading about familiar characters prompts resistance to any fan-created character: if we wanted to read about other characters, the argument goes, we'd read professionally published fiction (Gobsmacked 2009, see comments).

In practice, however, many fan readers differentiate acceptable fan-created characters from Mary Sues. This differentiation can be understood in terms of illusionist and anti-illusionist metalepsis (see Fludernik 2003): some fan-created characters enhance the realist illusion of the story, giving the fictional world depth and plausibility, but a character who "overshadows the canonical cast" (alara_r 2003) or appears to be an authorial self-insertion destroys that illusion. For a reader who wishes to immerse herself in a particular fictional world through fan fiction, a metaleptic reminder of the extratextual world or the story's constructedness "produces an effect of strangeness" (Genette 1972/1980: 235) that is distracting or frustrating rather than pleasurable.

Anti-illusionist metalepsis is acceptable under certain circumstances, however, as we can see in the *NCIS* and *Due South* flashfic self-insertion challenges (malnpudl 2007; china_shop 2008). Fan fiction challenges provide story prompts for participating writers; in these instances, the prompt was to write oneself into a story based on the TV show in question. Many of the resulting stories are deliberately (and effectively) humorous; it seems that fan writers, like Genette himself, have observed that the effect of strangeness produced by metalepsis is often comic (1972/1980: 235). The responses to these challenges also demonstrate that, while Mary Sues are frequently regarded as self-insertions, self-insertions are not inherently Mary Sues. In fact, both challenges explicitly repudiate the idea of the Mary Sue: "[I]f you Mary Sue yourself as the romantic interest of one of the NCIS folks? We reserve the right to point and laugh" (malnpudl 2007). The stories work in part because the challenges establish special

parameters for both writing and reading: normal conventions are altered or suspended for the duration of the challenge—indeed, the suspension is part of the fun. In essence, then, the challenges provide a frame, a context, that temporarily transforms the challenge community into a special space not unlike the space that "I Put You There" establishes for itself.

Fan works and the metaleptic mode

Fludernik (2003) extends "the metaphorics of metalepsis" to the critical discourse of narratology, but we might also say that the metaphorics of metalepsis extend to the discourses of fandom. Because fan works are metaleptic at the level of the fantext but not necessarily at the level of narration, it is useful to think of these works, and even of fandom itself, as operating in what Fludernik, drawing on the work of Brian McHale (1987), calls the "metaleptic mode" (Fludernik 2003). McHale argues that both authors who love their characters and readers who are seduced by stories engage in relations that violate ontological boundaries (1987: 222); this love "characterizes not the fictional interactions *in* the text's world, but rather the interactions *between* the text and its world on the one hand, and the reader and his or her world on the other" (1987: 227). As Fludernik observes, these interactions "[jump] the extradiegetic textual level" (2003: 392).

Fan works, as we have seen, also involve interactions between the spectator-turned-author and the text, interactions that, like those discussed by Fludernik, may be treated as cases of readerly immersion. Like McHale's reader, the fan is seduced by the text, though what she desires may be not so much "the consummational effects of closure" (Fludernik 2003: 392) as the ongoing erotics of continuing the story, the opportunity to extend or adapt or analyze it and/or to read and watch the extensions and adaptations and analyses produced by fellow fans; she may immerse herself not only in the original show but in some subset of the fan works engaging it. Like McHale's author, she falls in love with characters; in the case of the fan, these characters are not her own invention, but she makes them her own through her contributions to the emerging fantext: importing elements of shared media narratives into the extratextual world of her own creative impulses, using those elements as the basis for new narratives, sharing those new narratives.

For readers of fan fiction, immersion in the fantext requires not only engaging in the pretense that the fictional world of the source text is real (Fludernik 2003: 393), but also engaging in the pretense that the fictional world of the fan work is part of the fictional world of the source text

and/or that the characters in the fan work are contiguous with those of the source text. For vidwatchers, the immersion is perhaps less in the source itself than in a way of seeing: vidwatching requires the viewer to attempt to understand a particular vidder's interpretation of a source text, which the viewer may or may not share. For both readers and vidwatchers, immersion in the fantext depends on the ability to hold in one's head multiple competing and sometimes contradictory possibilities. As Coppa and Abigail Derecho have noted, fan fiction is characterized by repetition, the working-out of endless variations on the source text (Coppa 2006b: 236–238; Derecho 2006: 73–74). This insight applies to vids as well: watching vids based on a particular show or movie almost inevitably means seeing certain clips over and over again, but each time in a slightly different context, framed by different surrounding clips, seen through a different musical lens. To participate in the production and consumption of fan works is to be open to new discourse, to the possibility of literal revision: seeing the familiar in new ways.

Unlike the metaphoric transgressions defined by McHale, which affect only the individual authors and readers who engage in them, the transgressions represented by fan works can be, and indeed in most cases are meant to be, shared with fellow fans. Because a fandom is a community, or rather a series of interlinked and overlapping communities, it is not just the individual vidder or writer who participates in this metaleptic move; all fans are implicated by virtue of their imaginative work—the work of staging fan fiction and interpreting vids, of manipulating and extending the textual world. Genette locates the responsibility for metalepsis with authors; fan works show us that it can also be taken up by audiences.

The desire to immerse oneself in a text is nothing new; what is new is that more and more readers and viewers have decided to take control of that process, to appropriate and transform existing texts in order to facilitate a more complete and more satisfying immersion. The number of people participating in fannish activities and fannish readings has increased dramatically; creating and consuming fan works is no longer a fringe activity. As more and more audiences learn to treat texts as open-ended, metalepsis may no longer be "a rare, rather marginal phenomenon" (Fludernik 2003: 396). Participatory culture is inherently, if metaphorically, metaleptic; the transgressive impulse that it represents is being effectively mainstreamed. The move from read-only to read/write culture thus necessitates an expansion of our ideas about metalepsis, and indeed about narrative more generally.

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"I had the strangest week ever!" Metalepsis in Music Videos[1]

Film and Music Video: Big Brother vs. Little Sister?

"Music videos are probably the most creative filmmaking being done right now. […] That's what movies should look like." "Because of music videos, there are more cinematographers, production designers, and more thoughtful craft people now. Movies never looked better" (Swallow 2003: 21, 13f.; Reiss and Feineman 2000: 0:01:02). Statements like these by former music video and current film director David Fincher are symptomatic of an attitude towards film and music video in which the two genres are treated as close relatives, distinguished almost hierarchically, opposing film as the dignified and thus portly big brother against the quick and dirty little sister, the music video, which, despite its size and brevity, inspires its sibling time and again with bold aesthetic innovations.[2]

Since their inception, and already in the context of their early predecessors, music videos (here referred to as "video clips" or "music clips") have served as a platform for aesthetic experiments and inventions which, once developed, tested and confirmed in the cheap and short medium of the clip, could then be applied in the context of more expensive and larger-scale films:[3] Claude Lelouch, today a distinguished French film direc-

1 I am gratefully indebted to Irina Rajewesky (Berlin) for helpful suggestions and to Anthony Metivier (Saarbrücken) for not only having polished the language of my article, but also having enriched it with valuable thoughts.

2 See for this also Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 247ff.).

3 See for this Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 288ff.). Other examples of directors starting in the business of the music video and then bringing their innovative style shaped by this experience into cinema are, e.g., Michel Gondry and Spike Jonze. See for this Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 247ff.). Due to the fact that video clips are made for promotion, they share in this respect certain parallels with commercials which, especially in the 1980s, were also considered a sort of inspiration for the film industry: a filmmaker such as, e.g., Adrian Lyne started his career as a director for TV commercials which is also why his film *Flash-*

tor, for example, earned his first spurs with the making of short films for the so-called "Scopitones," a visual juke box, developed in 1960 and already then used in order to promote Jazz- and pop songs, first in Europe, then in America.[4] Not only did Lelouch, like later his colleague David Fincher, consider the production of such musical clips as his film academy,[5] he also attributes the spontaneous approach of his Nouvelle Vague films to the earlier experimentation afforded by working with high-sensitive film-materials on his promotional short films.

The topics addressed above, including the attendant vocabulary of cinematographers such as "production designers," "craft people" and "film-material," demonstrate that the innovations contributed by the music video are seemingly restricted to mere aesthetic and technical aspects without considering dramaturgical or intellectual considerations. This may be why big brother's little sister is considered not only superficial in contrast but outright cannibalistic. The music video has frequently been confronted with "Cultural cannibalization" as a reproach: even if the genre might be innovative in its visual style and its technological prowess, it nevertheless had to lift its contents from culturally "higher" art forms such as literature and film by plundering them.[6]

This seems to be confirmed when it comes to the analysis of music clips: they show a strong entanglement with film which, on the one hand, is due to their elements, since—like movies—they combine moving images and sounds; on the other hand, their genesis is already strongly linked to the history of film. A case in point is Thomas Alva Edison's "Kinetophone" from 1891, which later led to the development of the cinema, was first described by the inventor as a means to follow musical performances in an opera house conveniently from home.[7] Thus, the concepts designed in order to analyse films also seemed also appropriate on a one-to-one basis for the music clip—a position which failed to realize that both genres actually follow very different dramaturgies and which thus occasionally came up with absurd results, since it did not take into account the music for which the clips were actually made.[8]

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dance (1983) was often compared in its aesthetics to an advert or, respectively, considered as a "rock video" turned "into a feature-length film." See for this, e.g., Maltin (1998: 448).

4 Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 58f.).

5 Fincher said in an interview, "I didn't want to go to a film high school. I didn't see what sense this would have made." See Schnelle (2002: 234).

6 See for these reproaches, e.g., Berland (1993: 37) and Tetzlaff (1993). Against such a simple argumentation see Keazor and Wübbena (2006).

7 Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 57).

8 In a 1986 statement which misjudged the seemingly incoherent and therefore anarchic flow of the images in a music video, John Fiske wrote that "MTV fragments itself, fragments

Thus, when discussing the phenomenon of metalepsis in music clips, one obviously has to look towards the sibling medium of the film for the purposes of orientation and contrast, while also taking care to avoid falling into the convenient "Big Brother/Small Sister" trap discussed above.

"Thanks for coming—now go, vanish!" — Gérard Genette and *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*

Hence, this look at the film as the sibling medium of the music video will be used here in order to determine whether, how and under what conditions the concept and the notion of metalepsis are applicable to the genre of the film in the first place. We shall then go on to see whether these types and categories are also applicable to the music video.

As is well known, Gérard Genette's different types of metalepsis are based on the transgression of the boundaries between three different worlds: the fictional world, the world of narration and the real world of author and audience. Monika Fludernik has distinguished these different permutations according to the following categorization (2003: 388f.):

> Type 1: "Authorial" metalepsis (the author does not limit himself to narrating an action but controls and manipulates it pointedly).
> Type 2: "Ontological" metalepsis 1: narratorial metalepsis (the author moves himself on the plane of the narration and enters it).
> Type 3: "Ontological" metalepsis 2: lectorial metalepsis (one of the characters from the narrated story goes up a level by, e.g., listening and reacting to the narration or, respectively, by interfering with the author).
> Type 4: "Rhetorical" metalepsis:[9] discourse metalepsis (while the action goes on, the author simultaneously explains something to us as if to fill in the empty parts of the action which means that he is temporally on the same level as the narration).[10]

As can be seen by reviewing Genette's concept of metalepsis, the author of a text plays an integrative role. However, the respective definitions the

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the academic theory, fragments adulthood, zaps the White House into smithereens." This is an impression, however, that results from an approach focused entirely on the images, rather than on the underlying music that, along with the lyrics and sound, "glues" together the apparently unconnected images. See Fiske (1986: 77).

9 For this notion see especially Ryan (2005: 206f.).

10 Fludernik (2003: 388) discards a possible fifth type, the "pseudo-diegetic or reduced metadiegetic metalepsis," since, according to her, it "is only very tangentially related to a metaleptic crossing of boundaries."

author and narrator are much more complex for film than for literature. Mirroring the fact that a film is the result of a collaboration of many different constituting elements (direction, production, script for the dialogues, camera for the images, music, etc.), there has been a huge debate as to whether a film actually has "authors" and "narrators" in the proper sense of these words, and if so, how many there are, whether there is a main author[11] and/or narrator[12] and who he could be identified with.

Here, Shane Black's comedy-thriller adaptation *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005) is helpful to skip across the pitfalls connected with the cinematic narrator, since the film presents us with an easily identifiable narrator (or so it seems) who is conveniently also identical with the main character, Harry Lockhart (Robert Downey Jr). He not only verbally (through the occasional voice-over) tells the film's story,[13] but—suitably—is also in control of the flow of the images of the narration which he can present, stop, rewind and replay as he pleases: "I'll show you that in a minute," he announces (0:08:11) in a flash-back episode at the beginning of the film, which is supposed to explain why Harmony Faith Lane (Michelle Monaghan) is also at a party where he meets her. He also seems to be able to control the different layers of the accompanying soundtrack, since her

11 See for this the debate, e.g., the positions of Alexandre Astruc and François Truffaut: faced with a reality where a film was rather the product of different subtasking employees directed by a commercial film company, than the product of a single creative and independent mind, Astruc, already in 1948 in his text "Manifest de la caméra-stylo," conceived conditions under which a director could and should use the medium of the film and its technical means as components of his language in order to express things mattering to him. But only with the movement of the "Nouvelle Vague" did this theory find directors that actually tried to practice the concept. See for this and the ensuing debate: Astruc (1948/1992), Wollen (1969) and Distelmeyer (2003). Since, however the "author" of a movie is not to be automatically identified with its "narrator," there still remains the ongoing question of whether a film can have a narrator at all which is still a hotbed for debates.

12 On the questions about "narration" and "narrator" in films see, concerning the state of the discussion and its most prominent literature, especially Kuhn (2007) and Griem and Voigts-Virchow (2002: 161–163); for an attempt to redefine "narrativity" in a transgeneric and transmedial sense see Rajewsky (2007). Chatman (1990: 134f.) has suggested a definition of "cinematic narrator" which, by including and encompassing almost all the vital elements of a film production, tends to become, however, too broad. As Bach (1999: 238) rightly points out, moreover, his defintion blurs the difference between "narration" and "narrator."

13 Kuhn (2007: 64ff.) taking up François Jost's notions of "ocularisation" and "auriculation," also discerns between the visual and the acoustic aspects of perception in film and develops the concepts of a "sprachliche Erzählinstanz" ("linguistically narrating entity") and a "visuelle Erzählinstanz" ("visually narrating entity") in a film. Harry's voice-over here would represent of course the "linguistically narrating entity." For Jost's notions see Jost (1987). For the distinction between the visual and the acoustic aspects of perception in film, see also already Schlickers (1997).

voice is only heard when he allows it to be, while the music from the party is all the time in the background. But apparently distracted by Harmony's looks ("Jeez—look at those stems, will you?", he incites the audience to admire her legs) and despite the titles ("How Harmony Got To The Party") introducing the whole sequence, Harry eventually forgets about the explanation: "Oh shit! I skipped something. Damn it. […] I made a big deal, then I forgot." He criticizes himself when he realizes his error (0:09:58): "Fuck, this is bad narrating!" And with a "Anyway, I don't know if you want to see it now," he stops the sequence he is just showing the audience and starts a new episode, as if he would control the flow and order of the images while sitting outside the diegetic world at a Moviola (a device which allows the editor of a movie to view the film while editing). Only five minutes later, he has to stop the film again (0:15:20), this time excusing himself for seemingly showing a pointless scene: "That is a terrible scene. It's like, 'Why was *that* in the movie?' Gee, you think 'Maybe it'll come back later, maybe?' I hate that." Thus, it would seem as if Harry, telling the story in retrospect, is unhappy with his choice of picked and shown episodes because they actually do not contribute to the point of the narration. Only later will the audience realize that Harry was not howling because the scene was pointless, but because in his view it was too obvious. From this arose his commenting comparison to such stereotypical movie moments: "A TV's on, talking about the new power plant. Hmm—wonder where the climax will happen." And again, this time only four minutes later, Lockhart criticizes himself anew: "Okay, I was a bad narrator again" (0:19:53), because he has not clearly explained and linked an earlier scene to the rest of the film. Judging from the other moments where he stops the film at a certain point in order to then restart it at another, it seems that he has an array of previously shot footage at his disposal which he then presents more or less the same way Orson Welles did in his famous semi-documentary *F for Fake* from 1974. There, Welles depicted himself in fact sitting at a Moviola, seemingly assembling and presenting previously shot film material he started, stopped and combined according to his wishes, continuously commenting upon it. In Harry's case, however, it now appears that the images are actually only produced as he talks: "Ma and Pa Kettle.[14] I got an idea. Why not put these two lame-o extras in front of the mammoth fucking lens. Boo! Scat! Fat lady, leave!" (0:20:04). He shoos away two people, standing in front of the scene which has already been presented during the opening flash-back sequence. But since then, especially considering how the "fat lady"

14 "Ma and Pa Kettle" were the two protagonists of an American series of popular, comedy movies in the 1940s and 1950s which dealt with the absurd misadventures of the Kettle clan. See for this McNeil (1996: 254).

blocked the view, Harry is now concerned that the audience might not be able to completely see the scene or properly follow his tale. The fact that he is able to chase away the two people suggests that they can hear him and follow his commands and that he is thus able to transgress and bridge the boundaries between the extradiegetic world and the intradiegetic world. Moreover, the way he talks about them as "two extras" hints at the fact that they all know that they are just actors in a film production. The fact that Harry commands these people and that they respond grants Harry conceptual status of director of the film[15] who, however, is miraculously able to choose from already shot footage while at the same time interfering with its production.

In syntony with this, the film's protagonists not only constantly stress the film as a historic genre ("I am sore," Harry says to Harmony the first time he speaks to her in a bar [0:17:22], adding: "I mean physically, not like a guy who's angry in a film from the 1950's").[16] And in the final scene, Harry and Perry Van Shrike (Val Kilmer), thus breaking the "fourth wall" of the film, are even addressing the audience directly by looking at it: "That's it. That's the true story of what happened last Christmas. […] Thanks for coming," Harry says and Perry later adds "Now go, vanish!" (1:34:10), seemingly switching off the camera towards which they have been both speaking (which now, however, does not seem to be a professional film camera, but, given the suddenly modest quality of the image, appears to be rather a cheap video camera or a camera in a laptop). Hence, they show that they are aware of the fact that they are actors in a movie

15 This shows that the general conclusion drawn by Bach (1999: 234) is problematic: stating that in Carl Reiner's film *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1982) the first-person narrator has no control over the images or the music of the film, she deduces that generally "ein voice-over-Erzähler" is "keinesfalls die filmische Entsprechung zum Erzähler in der Literatur" ("a voice-over-narrator […] is definitively not the filmic equivalent to a narrator in literature"). Although one can still discuss about the result of her conclusion, her arguments are based on weak evidence, as the case of *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* clearly shows.

16 At the same time, this is also a reference to the novel on which Black's script is based: in Brett Halliday's novel *Bodies Are Where You Find Them* from 1941, which is credited in the film's titles as a source of inspiration for its script, the word "sore" is also very often used in this old-fashioned sense. Since Halliday's novels, centred around the detective Mike Shayne, were adapted as films from the early 1940s on (starring Lloyd Nolan), Harry's remark could be also seen as referring to Halliday's novel and their filmic adaptation. On this point, see also the following note. Black's film contains several other in-jokes referring to films and TV-series: e.g., the character of the stewardess "Flicka" in *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* owes her name to the fact that Black could thus put a pun into the dialogues which, when Harmony at one point (00:33:49) talks about "My friend Flicka" on the one hand refers to "My friend Flicka" (both the film [1943] and the TV series [1955–56]), and on the other hand to an episode from the series *L.A. Law*, titled "My friend Flicker" from November 1992, and starring actor Corbin Bernsen who, in *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, plays the actor-villain Harlan Dexter (I owe these hints to Michael Myles, Saarbrücken).

even before Perry, paradoxically, warned Harry and Harmony that "This is not a book. This is not a movie" (0:53:33), thus referring to the two media in which the plot of *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* is deployed (the novel *Bodies Are Where You Find Them* by Brett Halliday, and Black's film).[17] But even before Harry and Perry address the camera itself, Harry had addressed the audience in a voice-over close to the film's denouement (01:13:50): "How about it, filmgoer? Have you solved the case of the dead people in L.A.? Time Square audiences, please, don't shout out at the screen," Harry says at one point of the film, thus hinting at his expectation that the movie will be a blockbuster, programmed in cinemas in New York's Times Square. And again, almost behaving as if he were in the shoes of a director, Harry comments directly upon the flaws and qualities of his product. So when it turns out that he and Perry have miraculously survived the final showdown, he anticipates the audience's reaction (1:28:59): "Yeah, boo, hiss. I know. Look, I hate it too. In movies where the studio get all paranoid about a downer ending, so the guy shows up, he's magically alive on crutches, I hate that. I mean, shit, why not bring them all back." And in order to mock this practice, the film actually shows three characters who were earlier killed in the film, now walking happily into the hospital room, followed by Abraham Lincoln and Elvis Presley. "But the point is, in this

17 Black's script borrows the central motives of the murderous scheme put up in Halliday's novel. In both stories, a man "substitutes" his daughter by replacing her with another girl in order to make her withdraw a lawsuit the real daughter has started against him, thus threatening him with the loss of her mother's estate. In both cases the events are then triggered by the fact that a former acquaintance of the real daughter (in the book, her secret husband; in the film, her boyfriend) comes to visit her and thus threatens to unmask the whole plan by identifying the false daughter. This leads in the book and in the film to the killing of the real daughter, detained in an asylum, as well as of the false daughter, and in both stories the killers then try to pin the murder on an innocent person (in the book, on detective Mike Shayne; in the film, on Harry) by constantly haunting him with the corpse (Halliday's book moreover includes a swapping of the two bodies). Since Halliday (primary pen name for Davis Dresser) wrote a series of fifty mystery novels about private detective Mike Shayne which were then also adapted for films in the 1940s and the 1960s, the "Jonny Gossamer"-novels and -films Harmony is so fond of in *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* have to be seen as a homage Black pays to Dresser's books. Black actually has variously valued the impact such books had on his formation and his writing: "If I hadn't read those stories, I wouldn't be writing movies. […] 'Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang' specifically pays homage to the detective stories I read when I was a kid," he is quoted in an interview. But apart from these particular influences, Black generally defends a rather "literary" approach towards films: "What I missed was the ability to tell stories that felt more like novels—that had more edge to them, and more risk. […] It's amazing to me that to this day, how many screenwriters or aspiring screenwriters you talk to and you say, 'What do you like to read?' and they say, 'Well I don't really read that much.' I say, 'You don't read, but you want to be a writer!?' They say, 'I like movies, I just want to write movies.' They don't read books. I think that's virtually an impossibility." For these quotes, see
http://www.writingstudio.co.za/page989.html and.
http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000948/bio (both last accessed 24.9.2009).

case, this time, it really happened," Harry says in defense of himself while an eager nurse chases the unreal visitors out of the room: "Yeah, it's a dumb movie thing, but what do you want me to do? Lie about it?"

And after that, when the film has apparently ended but still continues, Harry placates the audience (1:31:43): "And don't worry, I saw the last 'Lord of the Rings', I won't have the movie end 17 times. There is, though, one final scene for your viewing pleasure."

That he is actually supposed to be the narrator of the film is stated by Harry right at the beginning of the movie ("My name is Harry Lockhart. I'll be your narrator"; 0:03:47) and confirmed in the end by Perry who joins Harry in the above-mentioned final scene and tells him (1:34:06) "Get your feet off my fucking desk. […] And stop narrating," because he wants the film to finally end.

By and large, it thus seems as if *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* would satisfy the conditions of all four of Genette's types of metalepsis. We have type 1 metalepsis because Harry is not only supposed to narrate the story, but is also thought to control its flow and sometimes manipulate it. We are also confronted with type 2 metalepsis inasmuch as Harry, concerning the plane of the narration, constantly moves to and fro by leaving it for a short while and then entering it again. In the end, when Perry, as one of "Harry's" characters, joins Harry and tells him to finish the narration, we encounter type 3 metalepsis. And finally, right at the beginning of the film we can witness type 4 metalepsis because while the action continues during the party, Harry explains (or tries to explain) to us why Harmony is here.

Of course, Harry is not the actual narrator or director of the movie, but is just presented as such by the real director, Shane Black, who thus creates a narrational cosmos within which Genette's four types of metalepsis clearly occur but which, when stepping out of the film's world, can no longer be applied due to the fact that Harry then actually turns out to be just one of the fictional characters of the film, and not its narrator or director:[18] one must therefore discern between a relative, internal metalep-

18 This is also an example for the impracticability of the distinction introduced by Irene de Jong who suggested to discern between "actors" who "refer to the 'hic et nunc' of the primary story and thereby remain in [their] position as actor" and somebody who can "tell a secondary story himself and thereby become a 'real' narrator." (Jong 1985: 9). For a critical discussion of her approach see Nelles (1992: 80). Other than Rigby Reardon in Reiner's *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (see note 14 above), Harry is not just a combination of a fictional character and an extra-diegetic source of the narration (so Bach 1999 in her analysis of Reardon in Reiner's film), but he is also presented as a kind of personification of the "implied film maker" or "implied director" who, however, is not really to be identified with Harry. For the notion of the "implied film maker" and "implied director," see Wilson (1986: 133ff.) ("implied film maker[s]") and Kuhn (2007: 63) (as "impliziter Regisseur", i.e., "implied" or "implicit director").

sis (according to which Black's film would be metaleptic in the sense of Genette's four types) and an absolute, external metalepsis (under whose terms *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* would not be considered metaleptic).[19]

Given this, the next step will be to determine whether these notions can be also applied to the genre of the music video.

From comic-books to datamoshing

When examining the music clip in view of possible metaleptic elements one indeed encounters several phenomena pertaining to the matter.

These, however, show different grades of contiguity regarding the metalepsis and one is led distinguish between "represented metalepsis" and "enacted metalepsis." When the music video shows characters crossing the boundary between a fictional world and an embedded fictional world, the video relies on the mere representation of a metalepsis. When the music video actually transgresses the boundaries of its main fictional world, however, a metalepsis is enacted.

Concerning the first case, represented metalepsis, there are, for example, clips which present a plot based on metalepsis alone. In Steve Barron's famous award-winning 1985 music video[20] for the song "Take On Me" by the Swedish group a-ha, a young girl (Bunty Bailey) sitting in a coffee shop is literally dragged into the black and white comic strip she is reading by the comic's protagonist (played by the group's leadsinger Morten Harket). The shift from the realistically presented fictional world to the embedded fictional comic world is made evident by the fact that, once inside the strip, she too appears as a roughly-pencilled black-and-white figure (an effect achieved by rotoscoping). When stepping "behind"

19 My nomenclature ("internal metalepsis"/"external metalepsis"), despite its apparent parallels, is independent of the notions used by Dorrit Cohn ("métalepse intérieure"/ "métalepse extérieure"), since she uses these terms rather in order to discern different relationships between the diegetic, the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic levels. Thus, while I am defining the "internal" and the "external metalepsis" according to the intra- or extradiegetic point of view on a story, "métalepse extérieure" for her is "toute métalepse qui se produit entre le niveau extradiégétique et le niveau diégétique" ("every metalepsis which occurs between the extradiegetic level and the diegetic level"), and "métalepse intérieure" is "toute métalepse qui se produit entre deux niveaux de l'histoire elle-même, c'est-à-dire entre une histoire primaire et secondaire ou entre une histoire secondaire et tertiaire" ("every metalepsis happening between the two levels of a story itself, which means between a primary and secondary story or between a secondary or a tertiary story"). See Cohn (2005: 122).

20 The video won six awards (among them for "Best Concept Video", "Most Experimental Video," "Best Direction" and "Best Special Effects") and was nominated for two others at the 1986 MTV Video Music Awards.

the panels, these frames work as a sort of window through which the young man and the girl appear to each other in live action. Three times the impact of physical action on the comic pages and its consequences are shown when the comic is crumpled up and thrown away, causing the pages to overlap in such a way that two motorcyclists, who have just lost a race against the boy, are able to get into his panel and attack the couple.[21] During their flight, the male character rips open a page so that the girl can escape back into her "real" world. Finally, when she reaches home she unfolds the crumpled comic and finds the young man, who tries to break out of the page by throwing himself against its walls, ultimately succeeding as he does so.

Although the video seems metaleptic (depicting a transgression of the borders between the "real" world of the girl and the embedded comic world), it is not fully metaleptic since the boy does not transgress the borders of the music video itself, but those of a medium which is represented only in the course of the plot, i.e., in the comic strip. Metalepsis, therefore, is only represented in the music video but not enacted or conducted.[22]

The same holds true of Michel Gondry's clip for Björk's "Bachelorette," made in 1997, where again metalepsis is represented and shown, but not carried out. Gondry shows us a girl named "Bachelorette" who first finds an empty book that starts to write itself while she is reading it, telling her future story as a first-person account in the simple past tense.[23] Moreover, the book not only narrates, but it actually dictates to the reader what she has to do by her future experience. It is part of the book's plot that she gives her story to a publisher who then sells it to a musical impresario (this is a development not foreseen in the book). The book is adapted as a stage production, and since Bachelorette plays herself, she re-enacts her story, including the moments when she gives the book to the publisher, who in turn sells it to the impresario who then transforms it into a stage show with Bachelorette playing herself.

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21 This idea was also taken up later, e.g., in David Wiesner's 2001 book *The Three Pigs,* where the traditional tale of the "The Three Little Pigs" is changed inasmuch as the pages of the book, telling the story, come into contact with the pages of other children's books, allowing their characters to enter the story of the pigs and to interfere with their story.

22 Genette (2004: 61) describes a later TV-advert (contemporaneous with the publication of his book) which works in a similar way to the a-ha-clip but—given that its own medium, the television is addressed here—can be considered as more precise example for metalepsis: in the advert, a banker, appearing in a TV spot ("une publicité en abyme," as Genette puts it, a pun, meaning both "an abysmal advert" and "an infinite advert"), extends his hand out of the TV set and shakes the hand of the surprised viewer of this spot.

23 In 1998, the German author Michael Kleeberg, in his novel *Ein Garten im Norden,* used this motive the other way round by having his protagonist find an empty book which transforms everything written into it in reality.

This transformation means that on the stage a second stage appears on which Bachelorette re-enacts her story which also includes the moments with the publisher, the impresario and the stage production; a third stage thus appears on the stage of the second stage, which itself already appears on a stage. In the end, therefore, as in a kaleidoscope, the different levels of reality are staggered in a "mise en abyme" of increasingly smaller stages upon even smaller stages.[24]

Because the narrating book appears within the diegetic universe at the same time, it telling the narratee what to do within the story itself, we can identify an "intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe." This means that a character from the narration, i.e., Bachelorette, interferes with the narrator, i.e., the book. However, the actual medium in which the whole story is told is not the book, but a music video, the boundaries of which remain intact. Therefore, we here again have a case where metalepsis is shown and represented without being enacted or conducted.

Nevertheless, there are frequent examples where the boundaries of the music clip are made evident. The 2004 music video for the Good Charlotte song, "I Just Wanna Live," tells the story of an unsuccessful rock group. Dressed up as food products (such as a slice of pizza, a corn on the cob, a hamburger, etc.), we see the musicians distributing leaflets in front of a supermarket in order to earn money when they are discovered by a greedy producer. Inspired by the musicians' outfits, the producer transforms the currently nameless band into the "Food Group." Forcing them to continue wearing their silly costumes, the producer launches their career through well-placed gossip and scandals. Creating part of the hype around the "Food Group" is of course a music video. Presented in the first third of the clip, this video-within-a-video has everything usually associated with a music video, including the titles naming the band, the song title "All U Can Eat," the record company "Epicurous Records," and "Bread Simon," the name of the fictional music video's director. But despite the ironic hints in the music video that we are watching the actual band, Good Charlotte (signed up with the record company "Epic"), in a video directed by Brett Simon, the clip is at best metareferential, ironically referring to its own medium.[25]

24 This motive goes back to works such as Ludwig Tieck's play *Die verkehrte Welt* from 1798, where an on-stage audience is following a play within a play. See, e.g., Petzold (2000). But also apart from such precise models, Gondry generally is very fond of such kaleidoscopic and mise en abyme constellations—see for this Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 106f.).

25 For the video by Björk and Good Charlotte see also Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 90ff., 436f).

The same holds true of John Landis' 1991 music video for Michael Jackson's song "Black or White." Here, too, the medium and the making of the music video is made evident, in this case even more directly than in the clip for Good Charlotte, particularly since the actual shooting of the video itself is part of the clip. After the famous morphing sequence where faces of different ethnic provenances blend into each other, the camera pans back in tandem with the last beats of the music, revealing the film set and the crew working on it. But since none of them really transgresses the boundaries of the diegetic universe, the panning back of the camera has only a metareferential effect. Given that the actual filming of the clip is shown,[26] the effect is stronger, but in a way that still relates to the Good Charlotte clip.

Finally, the same can be said about two examples from the early forerunners of the music video. Regarding the "Scopitones" mentioned above, a music film for Betty Claire's song "Scopitone Party" was shot in 1964, where not only bits and pieces from other Scopitone films are scattered throughout the clip, but where Claire is also shown handling a Scopitone, seemingly "choosing" her favourite titles. For the farcical song "Merci Patron!" by the French comedians "Les Charlots," a promo clip was shot in 1971 which is set in the factory of a Scopitone production plant that allowed the singers to climb into the empty shells of the machines and look of out of the screens, thereby substituting the expected faces of previously recorded glamorous pop stars with their own "live-action" heads. Thus, in a certain way, they inverted the usual function of a promotional music film which, almost since its inception, was and is to work as a substitute for expensive and time-consuming live performances.[27] By replacing the musicians, usually appearing on a screen, by the members of the "Charlots" popping their heads out of the screen, the film for "Merci Patron!" renders an ironic comment on the usually harboured expectations concerning a Scopitone film. Again, however, the achieved effects are metareferential rather than metaleptic, given that in both cases the medium (the film) and its devices (the Scopitones) are made evident, but without infringing any diegetic boundaries.

Even cases where the material of the medium is stressed belong to that category. In Walter Stern's 2006 music video for "The Prayer" by Bloc Party, lead singer Kele Okereke is shown wandering through a room in which a dancing party takes place. Okereke hallucinates intense heat, but instead of burning the people and the items in the room, as Okereke

26 Genette (2004: 35, 65), following Cerisuelo (2000), here uses the notion "métafilmique."
27 See for this Keazor and Wübbena (2007: 57–65).

moves and observes, the heat melts the film, and therefore the medium of the music clip itself.

This concept (referring to the medium of a clip by showing its "material" defects) has by now also been realized with reference to the fact that music videos, when downloaded as digital files, can be damaged and defective, thus, when played, showing colourful and abstract shapes and fractal patterns instead of the expected clear images. Referred to as "Datamoshing," such digital glitches are now used as an aesthetic means in order to create alienating effects in music videos. Examples include Ray Tintori's clip for the song "Evident Utensil" by the Band Chairlift or Nabil Elderkin's music video for Kanye West's "Welcome To The Heartbreak," both produced in 2009.[28] As stated above, however, even though the emphasis on the carrier medium of a clip, i.e., the film, videotape or data file obviously destroys the illusion of following an action directly with our own eyes (instead of taking into account that we are actually watching something filmed and edited) and has obvious metareferential qualities, it nevertheless cannot be considered metaleptic, since no diegetic boundaries are transgressed.

Being fictitious

Things are different, however, in Marty Callner's 1993 clip for the song "Amazing" by the rock band Aerosmith. The video depicts the virtual adventures of an adolescent boy (interpreted by Jason London) who enters an Aerosmith video clip thanks to computer technology. He first downloads the previous clip released by the band, "Cryin' " (also shot by Marty Callner in 1993), and then enters its world by creating his avatar and equipping himself with a data-glove and a cyber-casket. In the story world of the clip, he meets its heroine (played by Alicia Silverstone). However, she turns out to be a capricious and stubborn bore. Just as the adolescent had previously corrected the appearance of his avatar by getting rid of his pimples and adjusting his haircut, with a few clicks he now modifies the young woman's attitude before taking her on a motorbike ride, which ends in passionate love-making on top of the bike. When the fuel tank is empty, the couple are taken on a ride by an airplane which gives both of them the possibility to do some sky surfing. The boy then ends the virtual adventure and prints out several portraits of her, but while putting the portraits together, the camera pans back, revealing that the image of the young man actually is on the screen of another computer monitor in front

28 See Müller (2009).

of which the girl sits just finishing her cyber-adventure with him. It turns out, therefore, that things are not as they seemed to be. The boy himself is actually just a fabricated virtual creation controlled by the girl. Whereas it first seemed that the boy had entered the diegetic world of "Cryin' ," manipulated the girl and controlled the action, now two things become clear: first, that boy's cyber-adventure was actually just part of her virtual game whose setting is situated in his (and in a certain way, the viewer's) diegetic world; second, that his game is thus intra-diegetic while hers turns out to be extradiegetic, and that while she first appeared to be the fictitious protagonist of a music video, watched and directed by him, in the end the tables are turned and it is she who appears to be the "real" person, watching and directing him, the protagonist of a music video.

That this denouement also has its eerie touch is signalled by the fact that the boy apparently has a slight inkling that he is being observed while printing the portraits of her. This is due to the fact that when the camera pans back, he looks over his shoulder towards it with an irritated, quizzical expression, as if he could feel the presence of an observer. But does he also suspect that he is not a real person, only a virtual creation?

Although in this example we are still in a situation where the medium in which the story is told (the music video) is not identical with the medium in which the metalepsis takes place (the cyber world), we are very close to it. Callner obviously wants the viewer to closely associate the music video with the cyber world, which is why the boy first downloads the previous "Cryin' " clip by Aerosmith in order to then enter its particular story world. Moreover, when the boy scans through his playlist at the beginning of the video, we also learn that the "Amazing" clip we are currently watching likewise appears on the list. This is already a hint towards the end of the music video where it is made clear that the girl had obviously chosen the story world of "Amazing" (including its protagonist) as her virtual playground. The narrated reality we were following for more than six minutes, taking it for the real world (as opposed to the cyber world the boy visits), is disclosed as being nothing more than another level of virtual reality.

Jorge Luis Borges has suitably put into words why such "nested realities" provoke a strong feeling of unease in us: "Why does it disturb us that the map be included in the map and the thousand and one nights in the book of the *Thousand and One Nights*? Why does it disturb us that Don Quixote be a reader of the *Quixote* and Hamlet a spectator of *Hamlet*? I believe I have found the reason: these inversions suggest that if the char-

acters of a fictional work can be readers or spectators, then we, its readers or spectators, can be fictitious."[29]

"I had the strangest week ever!"

"Amazing" does not seem to have a direct, identifiable narrator, although part of its effect is achieved through the fact that we first get everything presented through the point of view of the boy, who thus also serves as a sort of narrative medium[30] —at least until the perspective of the clip suddenly changes from the perspective of the boy to that of the girl, provoking the surprising shift. While his perception initially seemed to be the central viewpoint from which the plot is told, and while he seemed to be a freely acting individual, we now learn that he is rather the diegetic character in a narration, manipulated and observed by the girl who ultimately now takes his place also with respect to the "identifying proximity."

Usually when listening to a song we spontaneously (though incorrectly) identify the singer with the subject of the text (especially when the lyrics are in the first person). This leads us to consider the singer as either the protagonist and/or narrator of the story a song often tells.[31]

When presented in the context of a music film, however, things get slightly more complicated, since the visible protagonists are not always (although very often) identical with the musical protagonists. In the case of the "Amazing" video, for instance, we have a "set" of different protagonists for each component of the clip. Whereas multiple scenes of "Amazing" depict singer Steve Tyler performing with his band outside of the narrative, thereby linking the musical portion of the video with the actual band Aerosmith, the fictional boy and the girl are linked only to the narrative sequences of the video. Since the lyrics, sung by Tyler, deal with the return of someone (apparently more mature) back into a hopeful life after he has experienced an abysmal phase of errors, lies and desperation, the text is not really related to adolescent ideas and thoughts and hence there are no moments when the words can be successfully interpreted as

29 Borges (1952/1964: 196). See also Genette's comment: "The most troubling thing about metalepsis indeed lies in this unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extradiegetic is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narratees—you and I—perhaps belong to some narrative." (Genette 1972/1983: 236).

30 Knut Hickethier has here suggested the fitting notion of the "identifikatorische Nähe," the "identifying proximity" between a character and the viewer (Hickethier 2007: 128). One could here also apply the notion of the "focalizer" to the boy—see for this concept Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 83).

31 See also Ben-Merre's contribution to this volume.

thoughts of the boy. The fact that the lyrics need to be understood as an utterance of the lead-singer (or the character he impersonates while performing) is, apart from their content, confirmed by the fact that the performance scenes take place in a labyrinthine system of tunnels which correspond to the final words of the text, where Tyler leaves the audience with the words "Remember—the light at the end of the tunnel/May be you. Goodnight!"

With "Amazing," Callner thus created a video clip for Aerosmith which builds upon his previous music video for "Cryin' " in order to tie together the different videos for the two songs (both contained on same the album, *Get a Grip*,)[32] by reusing the same protagonist (Alicia Silverstone)[33] and by telling the story of a young Aerosmith fan, seemingly entering the story world of the first clip.[34]

Nevertheless, since a music film is basically conceived as a vehicle for to stylizing and presenting musicians to their public (thus trying to make up for and top the qualities of a direct encounter the audience usually has when following a live concert), it focuses more often on the musician(s) interpreting a musical piece, shifting their already fixed role as protagonists of the lyrics to the visual level by telling a story from what appears to be their point of view, based on or linked to the sung text.

A typical example is the music video for Craig David's song "Seven Days," shot in 2000 by the director-team MAD (= Max Giwa and Dania Pasquini). Here too, however, one has to be careful when identifying David directly with the subject of his song. In this case, however, the clip itself invites such identification, especially in its original, extended version.[35] At the beginning of the clip, even before the music plays, we see the protagonist (who seems to be identical with the singer and is thus also named "David" here) enter a barber shop for a haircut. When the barber asks him how he is doing, David replies by saying: "Let me tell you: I had

32 Towards the end of the "Amazing" video, there is even a hint at the cover-photo of the album which shows a pierced udder, thus interpreting the title "Get a Grip" as an invitation. The girl has a plastic cow standing on one of her shelves.

33 Silverstone also features in a third music video, shot by Callner in May 2004 for a song from the album. In "Crazy," she teams up with Tyler's daughter, Liv Tyler, in order to snub their (mostly male) environment with their "crazy" behaviour.

34 Presenting Silverstone as the protagonist of the former "Cyrin'" clip in the context of the narration of the "Amazing" video also hints at a "sideways metalepsis" (a metalepsis between storyworlds) or the "breaking of the fifth wall" which is supposed to separate the different storyworlds in which one and the same actor/actress plays different roles.

35 According to the common practice of shortening music videos for frequent airing, the clip for "Seven Days" was also presented mostly in its shorter version, where the scenes without the song's music were cut out, thus abridging it by about a minute.

the strangest week ever." Following this 30–second introduction, the real plot of the music video starts, making it clear that the scene in the barber shop serves as a narrational framework which is now filled with a flashback into the events of David's life from the previous week. In order to remind the viewer of this frame, scenes of David telling his story in the barber shop are repeatedly interspersed throughout the clip. That these events are closely associated with the lyrics of the song is made evident by the fact that David starts his narration of the past events only as the music sets in and the song begins. Thus, the seven days of the "strangest week ever" are obviously linked to the "Seven Days" of the song title and to the content of its lyrics. Throughout the lyrics, David tells us about how, on his way to see friends, he met "a beautiful honey with a beautiful body" who asked him for the time. At this point, the ensuing dialogue between David and the woman is then dissolved into a series of questions (like "What did she say?") and answers ("She said she'd love to rendezvous") which seem to unfold between David and a listener of his story, and which seem to have also inspired the narrational frame of the barber shop for the music video.

The images do not just replicate the content of the lyrics, but actually specify it. In the text, particularly in the rhyming game-like refrain, we learn only about David's everyday approach to the girl ("I met this girl on Monday/took her for a drink on Tuesday") followed by immediately and continuous lovemaking ("we were making love by Wednesday/and on Thursday & Friday & Saturday we chilled on Sunday"). However, the story narrated by the clip not only takes up the daily structure indicated by the line "I had the strangest week ever," but specifies that the Monday (when he meets her) and the Tuesday (when he takes her out for a drink) were of a very special nature, because in this regard, the plot of the music video resembles the plight of Phil (Bill Murray) in the 1993 movie *Groundhog Day*, directed by Harold Ramis: just as Phil, David is condemned (or blessed) to have the same things happen to him over and over again until things develop in an ideal way. Thus (unlike the events told by the song lyrics), David is initially without his watch when the "special lady" asks him for the time; then, after the first re-run of the events, he remembers to wear one and is thus able to fix a date with her. But when he is about to leave in order to meet her, he discovers that the tank of his car is empty (at this moment, Max and Dania even interrupt the flow of the music in order to clearly state this for the viewer: "I was in the car, looked at the gauge—it was empty!"; David tells his audience in the barber shop); then, when he finally seems to have done everything right (not just concerning

the girl, but also for himself and his surroundings)[36] and eventually finds himself in a bar with his date, he accidentally pushes his glass of wine onto her, thus—again—ruining their encounter.

It is at that very moment that the clip by Max and Dania leaves the trail established by its model, *Groundhog Day*, and instead opts for another motive, introduced earlier in film history:[37] unhappy with the course things take (and probably as unnerved by the idea of replaying the same run of events a fifth time again as the viewer), David presses a first invisible and then suddenly appearing "pause" sign on the upper left corner and thus (Harry Lockhart will do this in a similar way five years later) stops the flow of images in order to then rewind them. But while Harry does this while seemingly sitting at a Moviola outside the diegetic world and thus manipulating the film, David literally steps out of the film's frame and manually pulls it back to a moment previous to the accident with the wine glass; then, while smirking at the audience, he returns into the picture, positions himself, catches his breath and presses the "pause" sign again in order to let the action and the music continue. Knowing about the possible risk, he now behaves more carefully, and the date is a success. The last images of the clip show us David (again smirking at the audience) and the girl cuddling and smooching, thus hinting at the continuous lovemaking the refrain repeatedly has been telling about us before (the very last scene of the video actually shows us David sitting in the barber shop and voicing the refrain a-cappella in front of an incredulous listener).

In these video clips, we have seen several types of Genette's metalepsis enacted. If we accept David as the actual narrator of the story (following the narrational framework with the barber shop where he is clearly established as such), he, as the author/narrator, controls and manipulates the action (type 1) by moving in or, respectively, out of the story and controlling the narrating images (type 2). If, however, we do not accept him as the actual narrator (that is, as a character presented to us only as part of the story, told by the "real" authors, Max and Dania), then the type 1 and

36 In the first run of the events, someone steps on his white sneakers and smudges them, he apparently has no money to give to a beggar, and he witnesses an old lady loose a balloon into the wind; in the later course of the events, David is able to avoid the smudging of his shoes, has money to give to the beggar and catches the lady's balloon.

37 The motive had already been used in early American animation films where the characters sometimes also show a clear awareness of finding themselves in the context of a sequence, created out of a succession of single film frames whose boundaries they can transgress. See for example Michael Maltese's and Charles M. Jones' animated cartoon classic, "Duck Amuck" from 1953, where Duffy Duck finds himself split up in two when the film suddenly stops between two frames so that a kind of paternoster effect is given: Duffy's lower body is in the upper frame while his upper body is stuck in the lower frame, leading eventually to the existence of two identical Duffys when one Duffy transgresses the borders of his film frame and joins his double counterpart.

2 metalepses would have to be considered relative, internal ones. Nevertheless, since David is presented in the clip as a character in the narrated story who goes up a level in order to interfere with the narration by manipulating its images, this would fulfil the terms of Genette's type 3, but this time as absolute, external metalepsis: relative, internal and absolute, external metalepsis would not exclude each other, but (concerning type 3) would actually overlap.

If, finally, we look back to Black's *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* with all this in mind, we discover similarities as well as differences when comparing the movie and the music video. As to the similarities. even if we do not accept Harry as the "real" narrator of the story but merely as one of the characters, he is still presented as a narrated diegetic character who goes up one level in order to comment upon and interfere with the narration. Just as the "Seven Days" music video, Black's film can be considered as covering the relative, internal as well as the absolute, external metalepsis, overlapping in type 3. And in both cases, the narrators are suspending the time difference between the narrated moments and the moment of their narration when they intervene into the narrated action which, however, to be "narratable," should have been somehow finished and concluded. Both *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* and "Seven Days" rely on the resulting ambivalence. In the case of the movie, this ambivalence is interpreted through the film's footage when the narrator Harry not only seemingly edits it as previously shot material, but when he is nevertheless at the same time able to interfere with its production by shooing away the extras, for example. Likewise, the narrator David in the music video for "Seven Days" literally steps out of his story while telling it in order to manipulate the course of the told events into the desired direction; theoretically, this stepping-out of the story must be then understood as part of the narrated tale for otherwise its story would lack an ending which it would only get while being told by David. However, when he enters the barber shop his words of the "strangest week ever" indicate that for him the course of the events is already completed and that he "only" wants to narrate and not thereby finalize them. Nevertheless, it not only seems as if David would tell his audience how he leaves his narration in order to manipulate the course of the events so that they eventually lead to the happy end, but it appears that he actually *requires* the narration in order to be able to achieve this correction in the first place: it is the narration that provides him with the necessary frame for (literally) getting the grip on the events he needs in order to rewind and then correct them. It is precisely this paradox (while telling a story with a happy ending, its narrator and protagonist leaves and manipulates it

in order to achieve this happy ending)[38] sets "Seven Days" apart from *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, where the paradoxical condition of its narration (Harry manipulates the production of already shot footage) is less crucial. Although the narrator/protagonist here also has the images and their flow at his command and is able to influence their production and sequence, this has no real impact on the denouement of the storyline, but rather concerns the question (often raised throughout the film) of the quality of the narration (and it is certainly not by accident that metaleptic effects occur mostly when this issue is addressed). Instead, in the music video for "Seven Days," the interference of the narrator with his narration has consequences not only for *the way* in which things are told, but also for *what* is told because without the narrator's intervention there would most likely have been no happy ending to tell: the "beautiful honey with a beautiful body," soaked in the wine accidentally pushed upon her, would have walked away, leaving David only with the hope for yet another re-run of the events that would grant him the opportunity to do *all* things right this time. But instead of passively waiting for this, as he has done before, David is now shown as somebody actively (and literally) taking his fate into his own hands, thus eventually breaking free out of the time loop. Compared to the way metalepsis is used in Black's film, this resolution appears to be a more audacious and bold manner of applying it.

As we have seen, there are significant, though at the same time also gradual, differences between the way metalepses can be deployed in feature films and music videos. This seems to be due to the implications resulting from the levels of the song's lyrics and their performance in a music video.[39] Since the genre of the music video was fostered and deployed as a substitute for live performance, the fact that the musician addresses his audience is less surprising than in a feature film such as *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*. Here, the viewer in the suspenseful course of events occasionally forgets that Harry is not only the protagonist of the story, but also presented as its narrator, and hence the audience is astonished when Harry reminds it of his double status by addressing it directly. In the music video, however, due to the almost constant presence of the musician in words and voice, we are continuously reminded of his or her double function as narrator and protagonist of the told story. In order to achieve metaleptic effects, the respective strategies must be more spectacular, thus adopting for ex-

38 In this respect, MAD's music video for David is a typical example of the so-called "strange loop," a term concept proposed and developed by Hofstadter (1979) and generally defined as a phenomenon arising when, by moving up or down through a hierarchical system, one finds oneself back where one started.

39 See also Ben-Merre's contribution to this volume.

ample typical elements from cartoon films (as in the case of the music video for "Seven Days").

But such differences at the same serve to shed light on the functional parallels shared by films and video clips: their status as siblings is confirmed, while the often implied "big brother"/"little sister" hierarchy is refuted.

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Metaleptic TV Crossovers[1]

This essay deals with two phenomena that connect fictional worlds: the first is a paradoxical transgression of boundaries of worlds; these fictional worlds are discrete and mutually exclusive. The second is an intertextual transgression between fictional worlds that seems to be included in a larger joint world. The first phenomenon is called *metalepsis*; the second *(fictional) crossover*.

In metalepsis, entities from one fictional world transgress to other fictional worlds that are inaccessible to them. Quite often, these worlds are separated by a hierarchical distinction of the representing world/the represented world, as when, for example, the world of a reader is physically inaccessible from the world the reader reads about and vice versa. Metalepsis allows the reader to physically enter the world she reads about as well as fictional characters to escape to her world. In crossover, entities from one fictional world move to another fictional world. In contrast to metalepsis, these worlds appear to be accessible to each other. A reader could read two unrelated books, one about New York and the other about New Jersey; when a character from the first book appears in the world of the second book, a crossover occurs. In this configuration, the world of the reader is not important.

While both phenomena seem to share a highly similar structure, they emphasize converse aspects of their configuration and serve different purposes. Whereas metalepsis highlights the separateness of independent worlds, crossover highlights their combination. Whereas metalepsis transposes a character to a seemingly inaccessible world, crossover implies that a foreign character has been part of the world even before appearing there. Whereas metalepsis perplexes with the realization of something impossible, crossover entertains with the possibilities of its realization.

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While this rhetoric implies that crossovers and metalepses form a dichotomy, they should be rather thought of as marking the extremes of a spectrum of world-connecting. The examples discussed in this essay are located all across this spectrum. This spectrum is characterized by the following gradation:

— realistic, non-paradoxical crossovers;
— crossovers with minor inconsistencies;
— crossovers with metaleptic effects that are unintentional;
— crossovers with metaleptic elements that are intentional;
— metalepses as unrealistic crossovers;
— intentionally paradoxical transgressions, i.e., proper metalepses.

The specific focus of this essay lies on metalepses[2] and television crossovers.[3] While diegetic crossovers are also used in (postmodern) literature, films, and extensively in comic books and fan fiction, they are very often associated with television shows.[4] In a television crossover, one TV show introduces characters, settings, and even plot-lines from another TV show.[5] This device is usually used to cross-promote new shows or to heighten the importance of individual stars, shows, and characters. Crossovers are intended to tie in or reinforce a shared fictional universe of an author, production company, or television station.

For the discussion of metalepsis, crossovers offer three vantage points:

(a) Crossovers employ metalepses as stylistic devices. They can resort to all those types of metalepsis that are common to audiovisual media,

2 This essay adopts a transmedial concept of metalepsis defined by Wolf (2003: 91) as "a usually intentional paradoxical transgression of, or confusion between, (onto)logically distinct (sub)worlds and/or levels that exist, or are referred to, within representations of possible worlds" (emphasis in the original).

3 The term *crossover* stems from industry practice. Its introduction into narratology (and a respective specification) seems highly useful. A point of departure is Ryan's notion of "migration of characters through intertextual borrowing" (1992: 549; cf. Surkamp 2002: 174); Ryan refers to McHale (1987: 36), who in turn refers to Eco's (1979: 200–266) application of the philosophical notion *transworld identity* to literature. Allrath, Gymnich and Surkamp (2002: 36–37) briefly mention crossovers in connection with television series; Nevins (2005) offers a historical and typological perspective on crossovers especially in the context of literature and comics.

4 In this essay, the notion *television show* predominantly refers to fictional serials and series that include sit-coms, dramas and dramatic comedies in both animated and live-action form.

5 Holbrook's webpage www.poobala.com/crossoverlist.html offers an extensive list of television crossovers. See also an interview with Holbrook at Yahoo! Picks Profiles (19 November 2007). Holbrook's work has been especially helpful in researching conspicuous examples of metaleptic crossovers for this essay. Further lists of crossovers in various (popular) media can also be found at the website tvtropes.org.

especially television shows. In addition, the intertextually distributed narration of crossovers offers also unique configurations. In keeping with this volume's discussion of types of metalepsis, this essay will focus on these special configurations of intertextual metalepsis in crossovers.

(b) Even when a crossover does not deliberately employ a metalepsis, the combination of two distinct shows with differing properties (such as format, discourse, mood, topics, or diegetic configuration) leads to certain incongruities and ruptures that can be examined in the context of metalepsis.

(c) Not only a discussion of metalepses that are embedded in crossovers, but also a discussion that compares and contrasts metalepses and crossovers as similar structures contributes to the scope of this volume. This perspective offers insights into the nature of fictional worlds and characters, the transgression of boundaries of fictional worlds, and the combination of these worlds that can appear either as a paradoxical violation of boundaries (in the case of metalepsis) or as a logical amalgamation (in cases of realistic crossovers).

The structure of this essay is based on these three vantage points. Since (a) and (b)—metalepses unique to crossovers and metaleptic effects of crossovers—are only gradually differing phenomena, they will be discussed in the first part. The second part will explore the general implications of crossovers and metalepses. It will explicate two differing, yet connected views on the reception of fictional worlds. The first view explores a dynamic model of world creation that allows the audience to disregard minor inconsistencies, which is especially important for the reception of television series. The second view is more static, focusing on fictional worlds as stable, coherent concepts with clearly demarcated boundaries. Taking these two views into consideration, the essay will then develop a basic structural model for both metalepses and crossovers. Based on the prerequisites of these two models, a typology of world connection and boundary transgression will be established. Finally, the continuous identity of a character, another prerequisite for both proper metalepses and crossovers, will be addressed in light of different modes of representation.

1. Configurations of Metalepses and Metaleptic Effects in Crossovers

Before exploring several specific configurations of metalepses that are featured in crossovers, we will take a look at the media affordances of television and TV shows in connection with crossovers and metalepses. TV shows and episodes of these shows are both short-lived (due to their

often ephemeral and trivial content as well as to the constant renewal and updating of formats and shows) and persistent (due to constant repetition and reruns and subsequent integration into the collective memory). This conforms to television's dual nature of variety and similarity: while TV pretends to be innovative, it actually recycles and revamps its content; while it promotes constant highlights and climaxes, it often relies on the familiar and habitual. Crossovers are based on this assumed variety and similarity of TV shows and serve to reinforce both notions. They emphasize the variety of shows because a crossover is usually a singular occurrence, allowing shows to be marketed as exceptional TV events. They evoke the similarity of shows, and especially the continuity of a joint "TV universe," by connecting separate worlds across textual boundaries.

At first sight, it seems counterproductive for a crossover to employ a metalepsis, since crossovers usually strive to smoothly amalgamate TV shows while a metalepsis often highlights the violation of boundaries. However, the prevalence of meta-references on television allows crossovers to connect worlds even with devices that are paradoxical and potentially anti-illusionistic. TV crossovers employ all metalepses that are generic to representations, especially to audiovisual texts: transgressions between distinct diegetic levels (extra-, intra-, and hypodiegesis) as well as distinct textual levels (text/paratext, discourse/story). Furthermore, they also employ metalepses specific to television shows: i.e., transgressions related to the flow of the television program (see Williams 1975), to the context of a TV network, to specific formats and structures, to the specific profilmic studio environment, to fictionalized personae of actors or celebrities, to audience addresses, and several more.

Unique to crossovers are distributed intertextual metalepses. Intertextual metalepses do not transgress boundaries in ascending or descending direction between embedded worlds, but horizontally between distinct fictional worlds. These enable metaleptic crossovers to occur even between TV shows that have been broadcast several years apart, as for example in the case of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961–1966) and *Mad About You* (1992–1999).[6] These intertextual metalepses are based on (a) a distributed representation of distinct fictional worlds over several discrete texts and (b) the assumption that these fictional worlds are situated within a joint world and share the same ontological level.

6 In its third season, in episode 3.06, *Mad About You* states the fictionality of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* by referring to the real-life star of the show, Dick Van Dyke, and a recurring sight gag that is part of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*'s opening sequence. Only a few weeks later, episode 3.15 featured one of the characters of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, the fictional star of the show-within-the-show Alan Brady (portrayed by Carl Reiner), as part of their own universe.

a. Metaleptic Spin-offs

A clear-cut case of a joint world is a spin-off, i.e., a new show that is centered on a (minor) character or a plot element from an already existing show. Both shows, original and spin-off, are set in the same universe with overlapping and adjacent characters and settings. Since a metalepsis involves two distinct worlds and since spin-offs are located in one joint universe, metalepses in spin-offs are similar to metalepses in single works where boundaries are transgressed between various fictional or textual levels intrinsic to the single work. However, the tight diegetic integration of spin-offs can also be used to establish metaleptic connections between the spin-off and the original show.

Writer/producer David E. Kelley frequently creates crossovers between his shows. He also likes to experiment with various meta-referential devices. The final episode of his law drama *The Practice* (1997–2004) introduced new characters that would form a spin-off, the comedy-drama *Boston Legal* (2004–2008). Therefore, *The Practice* and *Boston Legal* are set in the same world. Betty White reprised her role from *The Practice* in *Boston Legal*. Catherine, the character she portrays, crosses over from the former show to the latter, so that the character remains identical in both shows. In one episode of *Boston Legal* (episode 5.11), Catherine uses, quite surprisingly, the theme music of *The Practice* as a ringtone—clearly an instance of accessing a paratext that the character has no diegetic access to as both shows are located on the same level and Catherine is one single character in the joint world formed by the two shows. Normally speaking, paratextual information should not be accessible from within this joint world.

Like many of the self-referential allusions in *Boston Legal*, this is a very unobtrusive occurrence of metalepsis—rather a subtle and playful hint at the extended world of the crossover and its fictional boundaries than a violent transgression of discrete ontological domains. The history of the character as well as of the show is momentarily foregrounded. Betty White's character Catherine not only alludes to the show's predecessor but also, in a mise en abyme structure, very strongly to its future, i.e., its imminent cancellation: Catherine, one of the oldest characters in a show full of older men and women, sues television networks for not showing enough programs that older people want to watch. Her diegetic case is also a case for the show itself.

The shared reality of spin-offs that is distributed across discrete texts allows for intertextual metalepses like the aforementioned ringtone. There is certainly a huge difference between a metaleptic reference to another show's title sequence, as in *Boston Legal*/*The Practice*, and a metaleptic reference to a show's own title sequence, as in *Arrested Development* (2003–2006,

in episode 3.1), where a character uses the title tune of *Arrested Development* as a ringtone, or as in an earlier episode of *Boston Legal* (3.22), where a character hums the title tune of *Boston Legal*. The intertextual ringtone from the *The Practice* can also be seen as a reference to this earlier instance of intrinsic paratextual metalepsis. A show's transgressive introduction of its own title tune is strikingly immediate, whereas the crossover version is only metaleptic to viewers familiar with these intertextual relations. Intertextual knowledge is also important to recognize metaleptic crossovers of unrelated series, as the following example will show.

b. Inconsistent Fictionality Status and Strange Loops

One source for metalepsis in crossovers is the inconsistent fictional status of one world with regard to the other. As a show is based on the actual world, it will contain many fictionalized objects based on objects in our reality, among them works of fiction such as literature, films, or television shows. For example, the representation of New York in *Seinfeld* (1989–1998) contains not only the Empire State Building and yellow taxicabs but also a television show called *Mad About You*, which also exists in our actual world. In episode 7.1, George (Jason Alexander) is coerced into watching this show. However, *Mad About You* is not only presented as embedded fiction. In an earlier crossover, *Mad About You* and *Seinfeld* have been located on the same fictional level, as another character from *Seinfeld*, Kramer (Michael Richards), has already appeared in an episode of *Mad About You* (1.8). Viewers familiar with both shows and episodes are quite likely to perceive this configuration as metalepsis, for a portion of the shared world is also shown as a fictional world embedded within this shared world with Kramer located both in the framing and in the framed world.

However, these contradictory facts are not core constituents for the shows. Kramer is no recurring character in *Mad About You*, and *Mad About You* is no recurring series in *Seinfeld*. It is also dubious whether this configuration is even intended as metalepsis: the confusion of fictional levels is neither used as a storytelling device nor set up as a specific metafictional effect (unlike the ringtone in *Boston Legal*). It could further be argued that there is no confusion of fictional worlds at all: *Mad About You* within *Seinfeld* is rather a fictionalized version of the real show, and Kramer in *Mad About You* is only similar, not identical to Kramer in *Seinfeld*.

Still, even if this contradictory connection is unintentional and even if there are alternative interpretations, this configuration will certainly have metaleptic effects on an attentive viewer, since the textual and intertextual information suggests that a metalepsis is highly probable. In fact, there is

not much reason to doubt that Kramer in *Seinfeld* is not identical to Kramer in *Mad About You*: the character looks, walks, and talks the same and is referred to by the same name; he is portrayed by the same actor and lives in a highly similar environment (door number 5B, same hallway). Similarly, the fictional version of *Mad About You* in *Seinfeld* has the same name and the same theme music as the actual show. Intentional or not, metaleptic configurations certainly draw attention to the hybrid nature of retroactive crossovers. Sometimes they highlight sloppy writing, and sometimes they demonstrate how short-lived entertainment can play with its own fictional fabric.

The uncertain fictional status is also responsible for a noteworthy form of metalepsis that can be described as a "strange loop" (Hofstadter 1979: 684–719). This strange loop occurs in crossovers when two shows set in similar worlds contain each other as fiction, as is the case with *The Simpsons* (1989 to present) and *Futurama* (1999–2003 and 2008 to present). Both shows contain merchandising of the other show and are therefore intertwined within the other as representation. As *Futurama* and *The Simpsons* refer to each other only occasionally, these metalepses are visible only to viewers who can recall an earlier cross-reference to the other show. Similar to other intertextual metalepses, these cross-references are not as strikingly and immediately metaleptic as *The Simpsons* merchandise is in the *The Simpsons* itself. There are, however, more obvious intertextual metalepses between *The Simpsons* and *Futurama* in their comic book incarnations *Futurama/Simpsons Infinitely Secret Crossover Crisis*, and *Futurama/Simpsons Infinitely Secret Crossover Crisis II* when a "literary reality-tearing machine" (Boothby and Lloyd 2005a: 29) is tossed into the New New York Public Library that contains "every book ever written" (ibid.). This is probably the most elaborate multiple metalepsis imaginable, as it sets loose "every fictional character from every book ever written" (2005a: 30) and chaos prevails. Bill Morrison, the editor of *Futurama/Simpsons Infinitely Secret Crossover Crisis*, even builds up this metalepsis as a narrative device that can be used to establish a crossover—between *The Simpsons* and *Futurama* (Boothby and Lloyd 2002). After this short excursion to comic books, we will return to a very specific feature of television and its potential for connecting different shows, characters, and worlds metaleptically.

c. Transgressing Promotional Paratexts

Parts of the flow of television programs are promos for upcoming shows. Sometimes these promos are superimposed on the current show. The actual representation of a fictional world thus shares the screen with the

network's logo, with written text, with animation, and even with live-action inserts of characters. Even though these overlays are no crossovers in a narrow sense, they tie together distinct shows and reinforce the identity of a network. This visual combination of two worlds, i.e., the character that appears in the extradiegetic promo and the setting and characters of the actual show, enables metaleptic interaction of the paratext with the fictional representation. It is precisely this metalepsis that can create an (illegitimate) crossover of two shows. Without a metaleptic connection, the two worlds would only be co-present in the same screen space.

The Simpsons has used this setup at least twice: in episode 14.14, a promo for the reality show *Joe Millionaire* (2003), a show that, like *The Simpsons*, has been broadcasted on FOX, appears over the image of Homer Simpson. He is aware of the promo and watches the millionaire and potential brides pass by; he grabs the text insert and eats it. First, he comments in delight, only to spit it out once he realizes that the promo is from FOX. In another episode, "Treehouse of Horror XVIII" (19.5), several promos fill the screen and disturb Marge Simpson while welcoming the audience to the show. Seemingly annoyed, Marge comments, "Can't anyone just watch the show they are watching?" She grabs several characters of these promos and punishes them. Once these characters transgress from the paratext to the actual text, they still remain the same size; i.e., quite small in comparison to Marge—the main character from *House* (2004 to present), for example, fits into the microwave where he is confined and killed.

In both examples, corporeal interaction plays an important role since extradiegetic entities are physically present within the diegesis. These are clear-cut cases of metalepsis, but not of a crossover in a traditional sense, due to the fact that the extradiegetic, animated versions of several shows do not affect their original storyworlds. However, these transgressions establish physical interactions between several shows of the same network. Even if they are established as critical reflections on overlapping promotions, they themselves fulfill this function by mentioning and promoting actual upcoming shows. Only reruns on other networks transcend this intra-network promotional effect, turning them into inter-network allusions.

An even more radical version of this kind of metalepsis is featured in another animated show on FOX, *Family Guy* (1999–2002 and 2005 to present; see also Thoss in this volume on *Family Guy*). Episode 6.2 inserts a promo for *The Simpsons* over a diegetic scene. A miniature version of Marge Simpson stands next to the insert "The Simpsons/Sundays on FOX" and waves at the viewers. She is quite small in comparison to the characters located in the diegetic part of the image. Glen Quagmire, a

character from *Family Guy*, enters the screen, but he is as small as Marge and located on the same paratextual level as she, not on the level of his fellow characters. He jumps onto Marge and tries to rape her (Quagmire is a highly perverted character in *Family Guy*). Marge escapes off-screen. Quagmire chases her as the main show cuts to a close-up of one of the diegetic characters, who have not noticed the paratextual events. As soon as the show cuts back to the original wide shot, Marge and Quagmire (still small) appear from the left. They have just had sex, and, astonishingly, Marge seems to have enjoyed it. They agree upon going to her place to continue. Now the characters from *Family Guy* notice them: the small figures are either standing on the diegetic floor of the living room or the diegetic characters have sensory access to the extradiegesis. The show cuts to the iconographic establishing shot of the Simpsons' house where Quagmire has sex with Marge and kills the whole family.

This rather complex configuration employs the promotional paratext not only as a stage for disturbingly violent parallel actions, but also as a pivot for a multilevel connection of the storyworlds of *Family Guy* and *The Simpsons*. The violation of textual boundaries coincides with the violation of a female character from a rival show. The metaleptic transgression also coincides with the radically transgressive humor of *Family Guy*. This metaleptic crossover was allegedly (at least according to several websites such as TV.com) not shown in the original airing on FOX, but only in subsequent airings on Adult Swim and on the Canadian network Global as well as in the DVD version of the episode. Thus, the promotional reference to a show on FOX is incongruous.

d. Naturalized Metaleptic "Crossovers"

The examples discussed so far are very closely connected: *The Practice* and *Boston Legal* are connected because the latter is spun off from the former and because they both take place in the same city and are concerned with the same profession (lawyers), but also because they are created by the same producer. *Seinfeld* and *Mad About You* are connected because they are similar live-action sitcoms, because they take place in the same city and feature similar characters, and because they have been aired on the same network. *The Simpsons* and *Futurama* are connected because they are both animated sitcoms, rendered in a very similar style, and because they are both created by Matt Groening. Similarly, *The Simpsons* as well as *Family Guy* and paratextual promotions are connected because their representation uses the same style and because they are co-present in the same image. However, not all crossovers feature as many similarities as these

shows. Some crossovers combine shows that are formally and ontologically quite disparate.

Bones (a dramatic FBI series, which has been broadcasted on FOX since 2005) features a crossover episode with the animated series *Family Guy*, which seems to be treated as fictional TV series in the world of *Bones*. This is a case of intratextual metalepsis, since the crossover involves an embedded show. Agent Seeley Booth (David Boreanaz) engages in a conversation with *Family Guy*'s Stewie Griffin. The animated character appears on a TV screen in the donation room of a sperm bank and addresses the live-action character. Since Stewie reappears even after the TV is turned off, Booth starts to talk with him.

This metalepsis is quite striking because *Bones* is usually a realistic show without metareferential transgressions. For this reason the metalepsis is retroactively naturalized. It is revealed at the end of the episode that Booth has a brain tumor, which causes him to have hallucinations; consequently it seems that there was neither an actual metalepsis nor a crossover, but merely the illusion of one. Indeed, the paradox of the metaleptic transgression is not primarily used as a perplexing metafictional device. Instead, it points to an abnormal psychological and physiological state of a character by establishing his imagination as embedded alternative world (Ryan 1991: 111; Surkamp 2002: 168–172). At first, the viewers share the character's perception, and within this perception, the interaction of Stewie Griffin and Seeley Booth is a genuine metalepsis. Naturalization only re-centers the metalepsis to an imaginary world, where it is still a genuine metalepsis. The metalepsis now affects the border between second-order and third-order diegesis (Booth's version of *Family Guy* is embedded as fiction within his imagination).

Usually, a metalepsis underscores how fictional worlds (and works of fiction) deviate from our world.[7] In doing so, an embedded metalepsis tends to show how a character's imagined world deviates from the world he lives in. This shift enhances the realistic status of the first-order diegesis, the diegesis of *Bones*. However, even if the metalepsis is only pushed to an embedded level, the metalepsis itself is established nonetheless. Similarly, the episode in fact establishes a crossover between *Bones* and *Family Guy* by bringing together characters from both shows—a fact that has also been marketed as such. At the same time, Stewie's appearance is not perceived as a legitimate crossover, as it does not take place within the actual world of *Bones*. Viewers are puzzled by this double impression (a crossover, yet no crossover), which is a clever solution to make an impossible

7 Cf. Nelles (1992: 94): "The metalepsis leads the reader to cross narrative levels along with the discourse, to read the two connected levels in terms of each other."

connection possible. The impossibility here is that cartoon characters cannot actually exist within the highly realistic world of *Bones*, which is represented by live-action filmmaking. This essay will return to the question of hybrid representations at the end of the following part, but will first move from specific metaleptic configurations in crossovers to a more general discussion of the two phenomena.

2. Theorizing Crossovers and Metalepses

Underlying this essay are two quite different perspectives on phenomena that connect fictional worlds. These two perspectives will be discussed in the following two sections. The first perspective focuses on the *dynamic (re-)construction* of fictional worlds during the process of reception, a cognitive process that has been referred to as diegetization (for a discussion of diegetization during the reception of a film, see Wulff 2007 and Hartmann 2007). This perspective allows us to understand why recipients can easily adapt to the radical modification of established facts caused by seemingly impossible and paradoxical transgressions. From this perspective we can also explore the specific potential and appeal of crossovers based on the intertextual actualization of unspecified information.

The second perspective focuses on the *static conceptualization* of fictional worlds that informs many theoretical discussions of phenomena such as metalepsis and crossover. This perspective allows us to understand why a metaleptic transgression is perceived as a paradox (and as the violation of a boundary) in the first place. Furthermore, from this perspective we can look at the basic structures of crossovers and metalepses together with their fundamental differences, and potential configurations.

a. Dynamic World Construction: Diegetization

The fictional world of a television show is vast, represented by a myriad of discrete texts that includes not only TV-episodes, previews, and trailers, but sometimes also novels, comic books, theatrical films, audio books, or computer games. While it seems futile for an ordinary viewer to keep track of all the established facts about a fictional world, this is also a hard task for the creators of individual entries of a series—especially if the production is handled by a great number of writers. The creation of new texts about this world almost inevitably entails contradictions and ambiguities, either because writers are oblivious of established facts, because they want to create certain effects (such as a self-referential ringtone in *Boston Legal*),

or because they tacitly modify facts for the sake of the current narrative. This holds true even more for crossovers, where consistent connection of two seemingly similar worlds is not an easy task and where ambiguities are likely to arise. The audience is able to react to noticeable modifications of established facts, especially when they are contradictory or ambiguous, either by discarding older, minor, or more improbable facts, or by questioning the truth value of information— i.e., by keeping some competing ambiguous facts simultaneously in mind for further evaluation. This is part of the dynamic process of creating a fictional world, both in production and in reception.

Individual texts about a fictional world establish, reinforce, or modify facts about this world. However, a given text allows for a limited viewpoint on a fictional world offering only fragmented and incomplete information (Margolin 1996: 118). Only some properties are explicitly represented while others can be inferred with certainty, but most remain speculative. As the narrative progresses, the audience creates hypotheses about the fictional world. If there is no contradictory evidence, the audience will base these hypotheses on knowledge of the actual world and on the specific knowledge about this fictional world that has already been established. Elements, properties, relations, the course of events, laws of nature, social norms, etc. will be inferred from this knowledge. Furthermore, the audience is familiar with the formal and topical features of art, media, and genres. This intertextual knowledge also shapes audience expectations and inferences. While a fictional world is being established, the audience gradually learns in what respect it differs from the actual world and in what respect it differs from other works of the same genre.[8]

Information about a fictional world is not only fragmentary but is also focused on specific elements. While the episodes of *The Golden Girls* (1985–1992) are usually concerned with four older women in a specific household in Florida, its spin-off *Empty Nest* (1988–1995) focuses on the household of Dr. Harry Weston (Richard Mulligan).[9] Both are set in the

8 For a detailed theory of the reception of works of fiction, see Eco (1979). An overview of cognitive approaches in narratology is offered by Zerweck (2002). Cognitive approaches specific to film are discussed in Buckland (2000) and in Hartmann and Wulff (2003); especially influential are Bordwell (1985, 1989), and Branigan (1992).

9 NBC had a Saturday night sit-com lineup in the early 1990s that featured *The Golden Girls*, followed by its spin-off *Empty Nest*, and by *Nurses* (1991–1994), the spin-off of *Empty Nest* (cf. Holbrook 2008; Browning 2009). All three shows were set in Miami; all three shows were created by Susan Harris and produced by Touchstone Television. This close relation of setting, production, and distribution allowed a tight integration of characters and even of events across all three shows. However, there are also incongruities between *The Golden Girls* and *Empty Nest* since *Empty Nest*'s premise was first introduced in an episode of *The Golden Girls* as a backdoor pilot. Facts and actors established in that episode are not consistent with the facts later established in *Empty Nest* itself (Holbrook 2008).

same neighborhood, but the specific locations and characters are distinctly different. Only occasionally do they intersect. Even though most of the events in both shows are highly probable within a joint world, there is only little information about *The Golden Girls* in *Empty Nest* and little information about *Empty Nest* in *The Golden Girls*. There is almost no information about other households in the neighborhood, but the audience can assume that the neighboring houses are inhabited by people that act a lot like actual people and probably even more like the characters in *The Golden Girls* and in *Empty Nest*. Since there is no contradictory evidence, it can also be assumed, for example, that this neighborhood in Miami is located in the USA with more or less similar features to the actual USA of the late 1980s and early 1990s. A distinct show is characterized by a strict focus on specific characters, settings, and typical events. Most contextual information has to be filled in and is usually very generic (this neighborhood consists of an unspecified number of houses, not of fifty red and fifty blue houses; the house next door is inhabited by human beings, not by Alice, Bob, and little Jonny—unless, of course, these facts are explicitly stated or certain clues lead to more specific assumptions). The world of a specific television show (and a fictional text in general) is usually a very small part of a fuzzy, highly unspecified universe. Only a small fraction of its furnishings is either explicitly represented or implied with necessity; the rest is actualized once it gains narrative or descriptive importance (cf. Doležel 1998: 169–184, especially his discussion of Ingarden's and Iser's *gaps* and Eco's *encyclopedia*).

A crossover is a very unique way to actualize unspecified elements. If characters take a trip to Las Vegas, why should they not stay at the Montecito, the fictional hotel from the series *Las Vegas* (2003–2008), which adds the benefit of reusing an already existing set and props? If a show set in New York needs a quirky character from New York, why not use Kramer? If a show calls for a detective, why not employ "the king of crossovers" (Holbrook 2008), the fictional character John Munch (portrayed by Richard Belzer), who has appeared on more TV shows and networks than any other character? The incorporation of intertextually known entities (from both the actual world and fictional worlds) easily adds depth to a fictional world, for all their assumed intrinsic properties, history, and interrelations can now become part of this world. An established character, such as Munch, is certainly more complex than an unknown character; however, as not all viewers share the background information, properties that are important for the respective episode still have to be specified or be made implicitly accessible.

The integration of well-known entities has some drawbacks, as these entities serve a very specific function in their source worlds, where they

are tightly embedded in a network of fictional entities and fulfill the roles of actants (in Greimas' sense). Alterations of these networks are sometimes problematic when they affect the original show, especially when a character is taken out of this network for a spin-off series: the audience may lose interest once the originally successful premise is changed. In a crossover, the transposition of a character into a new functional network may be less severe, since it affects only a single episode, while a spin-off or an altered series has to carry on with the new setup. A change of functional networks still accounts for some incongruous crossovers, especially when two main characters (or two famous actors) compete for undivided attention or when two shows are carelessly crossed over due to short-sighted expectations. However, a dynamic model of meaning-making suggests that minor and even major inconsistencies can be integrated into a conception of a coherent world.[10] Even if a character seems to be out of place and the crossover far-fetched, the viewer is usually able to follow the plot and to connect the two shows to some extent.

Awareness of metaleptic configurations, as in *Seinfeld/Mad About You* or the ringtone in *Boston Legal,* is a different matter. Though marginal and therefore quite easily overlooked, they seem quite odd and even anti-illusionistic once the viewer has noticed them. While we could discard the contradictory connection of *Seinfeld* and *Mad About You* as unintentional carelessness by the writing staff or as an oddity, the metaleptic ringtone in *Boston Legal* is meant as an intentional paradox. Even more obvious is the metaleptic transgression from the diegesis of *Family Guy* to the promotional paratext of *Family Guy* and further to the diegesis of *The Simpsons*. This transgression cannot be regarded as unobtrusive accidental contradiction, for it is perfectly visible and seems to be highly intentional.

There is a continuum between non-paradoxical crossovers, unintentionally paradoxical metaleptic effects, and intentionally paradoxical metalepses in regard to the visibility and intentionality of inconsistent or contradictory elements. While a crossover strives to de-emphasize differences and to emphasize the unity of fictional universes, a metalepsis marks boundaries and the discreteness of universes to emphasize the paradox of the transgression. Metalepses and crossovers are structurally very similar processes with an emphasis on opposing elements. However, while a metalepsis does not work when its constituent elements are not noticeable, a

10 Especially soap operas have to conceal a large number of illogicalities and inconsistencies. Amongst them are the sudden revelation of highly important facts (along the lines of "I am your long-lost brother you have never heard of."), the disappearance of integral characters ("We did have a dog last week, didn't we?"), the sudden growth of children within consecutive episodes ("Boy, you children grow up quickly!"), and many others (cf. tvtropes.org).

crossover usually also functions when it fails to downplay differences and ruptures.

b. Static Concepts of Worlds

A model of diegetization highlights dynamic processes of meaning-making. It is a description not only of the reception of fictional worlds but also of the way we make sense of the actual world. Discussions of metalepsis and crossover usually take a different perspective. They tend to highlight the static nature of worlds: in the case of crossovers, an implicit joint world in which characters can move freely; in the case of metalepsis, enclosed worlds demarcated by "sacred" boundaries (Genette 1972: 245) that can be transgressed.

While the first model mainly stems from cognitivism, the second is based on an approach influenced by set theory. This is apparent in common graphical conceptualizations of metalepses and crossovers (or related phenomena like mise en abyme): circles or squares demarcate worlds; arrows represent movement and direction; and intersections symbolize the actual space of the crossover or the conflated space of the transgression. In fact, it is rather difficult to adequately represent a fuzzy, infinite universe in flux (as suggested by the first model) with static two-dimensional graphics. While the first model (diegetization) is closer to the *perception and cognition* of the actual world (i.e., a construction of coherence out of fragmented information offered by various sensory channels and semiotic systems), the second model is closer to a (Western) *conceptual idea* of the world (i.e., a coherent world extended in three spatial dimensions and a fourth temporal dimension).

It appears that a set theoretical model can be integrated into the broader model of diegetization as a synchronic part. While information is dynamically processed, this information is segmented and ordered into conceptual frames, and elements are integrated into conceptual sets and subsets (cf. Eco's cultural units; Eco 1976: 66–68) or excluded from them. These concepts can be changed over time and may even be discarded and replaced by new concepts, but they remain stable and coherent for a given time. Even though meaning evolves from a constant flux of signs that are interpreted by other signs (Peirce's concept of infinite or unlimited semiosis, see CP 1.339; cf. also Eco 1976: 68), meaning appears to be relatively stable, ordered, and unambiguous in most contexts. With the process of diegetization we try to create a diegesis that is as cohesive, coherent, and causal as possible (cf. Hartmann 2007: 56–57).

Crossovers appear to show coherence because we can integrate all information into the global concept of one joint universe. The worlds of *Boston Legal* and of *The Practice* have many elements that can be integrated into one stable universe, either because they do not conflict (the city of Boston is quite similar in both series, for example) or because they actively establish a connection (unique characters appearing in both series). There are only few conflicting elements (the metaleptic ringtone being one of them), which can be disregarded for the sake of coherence. Crossovers are based on the similarity and contiguity of non-exclusive elements and their probable relations.

In contrast, the paradox characterizing a metalepsis is based on concepts that feature separate and mutually exclusive elements (the representation and the represented, for example). These conflicting relations are transposed from the actual world to a fictional world: while in the actual world certain boundaries cannot be transgressed or not transgressed in certain ways (we cannot physically enter a virtual world, but we can mentally immerse ourselves into that world), the same does not apply to a mere representation of this concept (a fictional character is able to physically enter the book he is reading). Maintaining the exclusive nature of the concept creates a metaleptic effect, but dynamic meaning-making helps to re-orientate and to find explanations for seemingly impossible events.

Based on this two-fold perspective on the construction of fictional worlds and events, we are now able to identify the basic structures and conditions that constitute both crossovers and metalepses.

c. Basic Structures of Metalepsis and Crossover

For metalepsis, the following structural model can be established: a metalepsis involves two small worlds W1 and W2, i.e., the specified sections we have knowledge of. Each is part of a separate universe U1 and U2. A metalepsis creates an intersection of W1 and W2 and, accordingly, a paradoxical intersection of U1 and U2—paradoxical, because a metalepsis presupposes that U1 and U2 are complementary sets (in regard to their actual existence and usually due to a narrative hierarchy) with conspicuously defined boundaries and mutually exclusive properties. As we will see in the next two sections, these exclusive properties may pertain to diegetic levels (embedded/embedding world), textual functions (text/paratext), and ontological status (e.g., live-action characters/cartoon characters). The following three conditions constitute the process metalepsis M of an element E that results in a state of metaleptic contamination:

1. Mutually exclusive universes: W1 (as part of U1) and W2 (as part of U2) are complementary before M; W1 and W2 intersect after M; the intersection contains E; despite this fact, U1 and U2 are still perceived as being exclusive after M;
2. Source domain: E is an element of W1 and no element of W2 before M; E is an element of W1 and an element of W2 after M (i.e., E originates from W1 and connects with/moves to W2);
3. Continuous identity and uniqueness of elements: E in W1 and E in W2 are one and the same element.

Each of these states and their modifications can be inferred from the other states. They mutually support each other.

If E seems metaleptically misplaced in W2, we can infer that E originally belongs to another world, that a world W1 exists, and that W1 is significantly different from W2 (1 and 2 inferred from E, M, and 3). When Stewie Griffin starts to talk with Agent Booth in *Bones*, we can infer from Booth's reaction, from Stewie ontological status (being an animated character), and from Stewie's location (represented on a television screen) that something is amiss in this situation. Furthermore, we can infer that Stewie belongs to an animated cartoon and that this cartoon is a television show in *Bones*.

M can be inferred from the combination of 1, 2, and 3 if M is not shown as a process; if the same E is in a world it has not been in before and should have no logical access to, a metalepsis must have taken place. When Stewie Griffin is later located within the actual world of *Bones*; it is very likely that he is identical to the Stewie Griffin we have seen on the television screen. Therefore, he must have metaleptically left his world and moved to the world of *Bones*.

The identity of E is reinforced by overtly showing M as a continuous process that features actual transgression (3 is the result of 1, 2, and M), which may contain a causal explanation (a fantastic or pseudo-scientific artifact, a magical performance, or a special constellation of the fabric of reality) as well as the representation of a pathway between W1 and W2. In the comic book *Futurama/Simpsons Infinitely Secret Crossover Crisis II*, for example, the boundary between the world of *Futurama* and the world of *The Simpsons* is opened by a special contraption (a pair of scissors attached to a MP3 player with a shiny control knob). "Yes, this is cutting through the barrier nicely!" (Boothby and Lloyd 2005a: 7) Professor Farnsworth remarks, as he is shown using the scissors on the comic-within-the-comic, which also emanates light rays. The next panel shows what looks like a torn page and the word "KARRIP!" in between. The following page shows a multitude of characters from *The Simpsons*, now seemingly transposed to the world of *Futurama*. While we do not see the actual transgres-

sion of these characters themselves, both the context and the visual and verbal information are sufficient to infer that these characters are identical with those found in the world of *The Simpsons* and that they have just been transposed to a world they should have no access to.

If we contrast the three conditions that constitute a metalepsis with the conditions that constitute a crossover, we will find the following differences. In a realistic crossover, condition 1 (mutually exclusive universes) is not met; instead, there is only one universe, and W1 and W2 are parts of this universe. Condition 2 (moving from a source domain) is met only in regard to the limited view of the universe that is offered by the small world W1 of the original show. That W2 is also part of the same universe is not revealed until the crossover is established. This limited view of a joint universe is essential, as it strongly associates E with the original show, even if E plausibly existed close to the small world of the target show before the crossover. Condition 3, continuous identity of the existent, usually a character, seems especially important for crossovers to be perceived as actually connecting two distinct worlds, since the crossover usually establishes this connection exclusively through a character.

We can now state the following three conditions that constitute the process crossover C of an element E:

1. Joint universe: W1 and W2 are different parts of U; W1 and W2 do not intersect before C; they intersect after C; the intersection contains E; C confirms that W1 and W2 both belong to U;
2. Source domain: E is an element of U; E is known as an element of W1 and not known as an element of W2 before C; E is known as an element of W1 and an element of W2 after C (i.e., E originates from W1 and connects or reconnects with/moves to or returns to W2);
3. Continuous identity and uniqueness of elements: E in W1 and E in W2 are one and the same element.

In accordance with each of these three conditions, for both metalepses and crossovers, the final sections will take a look at three dimensions of these two phenomena: (a) When speaking about mutually exclusive or joint worlds, the nature of these worlds must be clarified (including how and why they are exclusive or joint). (b) When an element E from a source domain (W1) comes into contact with a target domain (W2), there are several ways to establish this connection (or transgression, in the case of metalepsis). This essay will focus on the potential nature of these connections and their specific implications. Furthermore, a combination of (a) and (b) enables us to describe potential types of metalepsis. (c) The continuous identity of transgressing elements, especially characters, is important for both metalepses and crossovers. This essay will take a closer look

at the identity of characters, specifically in contrast with non-identical character versions and in the context of highly differing representations.

d. Potential Configurations of Transgressions

With regard to exclusive worlds, basically three conceptual domains can be distinguished: (a) a world that contains the representation (either our actual world or a fictional one); (b) the representation itself (an artifact, utterance, or performance); and (c) the world as well as paratextual information represented by this representation (which may, as infinite recursion, contain representations itself). The representational artifact refers to the diegetic storyworld but it can also refer to extratextual elements (e.g., news inserts in television), to its production, distribution, and reception (a title refers to the show itself; credits refer to its production; a logo refers to the network currently broadcasting the show; promotional inserts refer to the sequential context of other shows), and to extradiegetic elements (e.g., extradiegetic music). This multitude of different conceptual domains and, accordingly, of different worlds leads to a variety of possible directions for metaleptic transgressions.

In contrast, realistic crossovers are restricted to the connection of two represented worlds that can be conceptualized as being in one joint universe. Connections of conceptually differing domains are usually not perceived as legitimate crossovers (for example, the metaleptic introduction of characters from the promotional paratext into the world of *The Simpsons*).

Both for crossovers and metalepses it is not only important which domains/worlds are connected but how this connection is established. An element located in a source world can establish a connection to a target world in various ways. The following list of different modes is not exhaustive, but it does account for the majority of crossovers and metalepses in various media. Connections between worlds are established

— by having/gaining knowledge of the target world;
— by communicating with the target world;
— by creating the target world as a work of art;
— by moving to the target world; or
— because source and target world share a (physical) space.

A realistic crossover always features a shared physical space and can employ all world connections that are based on a shared space: having/gaining knowledge of parts of this space and its existents (the characters from *The Golden Girls* know that the characters from *Empty Nest* exist

and where they live), communicating with the target world (the characters from *The Golden Girls* can call the characters from *Empty Nest* on the phone; they can also talk to them face to face), and, of course, moving from one place to another within this shared space (the characters from *The Golden Girls* can enter a house from *Empty Nest*). Since the world of a representation is not physically accessible from the world where it is created, the connection that is based on creating a work of art cannot be part of a realistic crossover. The characters from *The Golden Girls* cannot create episodes of *Empty Nest*, since *Empty Nest* is not a fictional television show in the world of *The Golden Girls*. In contrast, *Family Guy* is perceived as being a fictional series in *Bones*. Therefore, the world of *Bones* has to contain the creators of *Family Guy* as well as the production of this series; the characters from Family Guy, however, can only appear metaleptically in the world of *Bones* (or as a hallucination).

For metalepses, we are able to establish many different types of transgressions based on the variety of directions and the variety of modes of transgressions mentioned above. Here, we will concentrate only on the most common and most conspicuous types of metalepsis:[11]

1. Rhetorical intermissions (a narrative agency temporally suspends the course of events or distracts from it): this is a weak form of creating a target world as a work of art as well as of having knowledge about the target world;
2. Epistemological awareness of fictional status (usually a verbal reflection by characters): existents within the represented world know that they are only represented;
3. Epistemological (usually spatial) awareness of fictional boundaries/ extradiegetic elements (usually by an indexical assertion such as pointing or looking at elements that should not be part of a storyworld): existents within the represented world have specific knowledge of various elements of the whole representational context; a shared physical space is also implied;
4. Interdiegetic communicative transgressions (addressing extradiegetic/ intradiegetic entities through various semiotic channels, usually verbal and non-verbal): obviously a case of communicating with a target world;
5. Heterodiegetic creative interventions (extradiegetic entity overtly alters /creates the discourse/representation during reception of the

11 These types of metalepsis incorporate McHale's (1987) distinction between Modernism and Postmodernism as governed respectively by an epistemological and ontological dominant, as well as Ryan's (2006) and especially Nelles' (1992) application of this distinction to metalepsis; cf. also Mahne (2007); for a similar distinction, see Thon (2009).

representation; e.g., the hand of the animator redrawing the world[12]): (re-)creating the represented world as a work of art from outside, i.e., from the world that contains the representation;

6. Homodiegetic creative interventions (reaching out of the diegesis to alter/create the discourse/representation, and accordingly altering one's own represented world): (re-)creating the represented world as a work of art from within the represented world;
7. Interdiegetic ontological transgressions (intra- or extrametalepsis, entities fully and physically enter other functional/diegetic level): moving to the target world;
8. Interdiegetic ontological conflations (two ontologically distinct worlds are completely blended, as in Julio Cortázar often-mentioned "Continuity of Parks" (1968); in this short story the world of a reader and the world represented by the novel he reads are gradually overlaid until characters from the novel seem to enter the estate of the reader with the intention of killing him)—a special case of paradoxically sharing a physical space that cannot be shared (the world of a reader and the world he reads about are mutually exclusive and cannot share a physical space).

The examples from the first part of this essay can be categorized as follows: the metaleptic ringtone in *Boston Legal* is an intertextual example of type 3 (and maybe a weak case of type 7, if the music is to be transferred from the extradiegesis to the storyworld). Stewie Griffin in the television set talking to Agent Booth in *Bones* is an example of type 4. As soon as he appears physically within the world of *Bones*, it is type 7 until the whole phenomenon is naturalized as a hallucination. The uncertain connection of *Mad About You* and *Seinfeld* could be regarded as an example of type 7. Access of promotional paratexts in *The Simpsons* and in *Family Guy* is a version of type 7 that involves a distinct extradiegetic level. *Futurama/Simpsons Infinitely Secret Crossover Crisis* is a strong case of type 7, even approaching type 8.

Both crossovers and metalepses employ knowledge, communication, physical movement and a shared space as connections of two worlds. These modes of connection seem to be similar to our real world in the case of crossovers where these connections can be used to potentially access all parts of the joint universe. They appear to be paradoxical in the case of metalepses where they have to transgress impermeable boundaries. It has already been stated that creating a work of art cannot be employed

12 See Feyersinger (2007); this world-creating intervention is striking because usually a narration/monstration seems to recount events set in a seemingly pre-existing world, not to create this world and its entities during the process.

as connection in a realistic crossover. Accordingly, there are no counterparts for types 1, 5, and 6 of metalepses in crossovers. Type 8 (conflation of worlds) is a very special metaleptic configuration since it takes a prerequisite for crossovers—the joint world—and superimposes it on mutually exclusive worlds. As both metaleptic (re-)creations and metaleptic conflations are very specific, we will now take a closer look at these types of metalepsis.

In types 6 and 8, very similar or corresponding parts of two levels are superimposed and in consequence closely interlinked or even merged into one identity. In type 8, elements from the embedded world affect the framing world. Type 6 is weaker: elements from the embedded world only reach out to the framing world to affect the representation of the embedded world. Nevertheless, characters like Felix the Cat or Harold with his purple crayon should have no ontological access to a level that constitutes their whole existence. An animated cartoon with *Felix the Cat* and the picture-book *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Johnson 1955) are artifacts in our world (see Turner 2003 for a similar discussion). They are prefabricated and replicated. We can physically alter the master version or individual copies; we can also alter parameters of the reception process: by cutting out frames from the filmstrip, watching the cartoon through a colored lens, speeding the film up, adding drawings to the book, read it upside-down, ordering the pages, etc.

Fictional characters cannot physically alter an artifact that represents them. However, they can create and alter representations within their own worlds (e.g., draw on a surface), and they can claim to be responsible for any changes occurring in the artifacts in our world. Events in our world (perceiving the changing content of frames of the filmstrip or a progression of pictures and language in a book) are superimposed on events in the storyworld (a character is drawing a picture). Their causal connection is reversed. Events in the storyworld do not occur because their discourse changes, but events in our world seem to take place because they are influenced by events in the story (i.e., the moving images of the cartoon do not change because they change on the filmstrip, but because a character represented by these images changes them).

In this kind of metalepsis two dyadic configurations are conflated: on the one hand, the representation in our world R1 and its represented diegesis D1; on the other hand, the representation within this diegesis R1 (the drawing within the drawn world) and embedded diegesis D2 that is represented by R2. The metaleptic operation involves a transposition of R2/D2 over R1/D1. The embedded representation is identified and merged with the first-order representation; accordingly D2 and D1 are merged. This is especially easy when R1 and R2 employ the same semiotic

system and the same style (e.g., in a drawn animation, where the embedded representation is also a drawing). However, it also possible to mix styles or even semiotic systems, as in the following minimal narrative where linguistic and visual signs are conflated: "Once there was a boy that found a magic pencil and drew the picture of a dog. The dog started to bark. He followed the boy wherever he went." In this narrative, the linguistic expression /picture of a dog/ signifies the content "picture of a dog," which, as a pictorial expression, in turn signifies the content "dog." Likewise, the linguistic expression /dog/ signifies "dog." In this example, the two instances of "dog" are equated: the word /dog/ and the picture of a dog (by repetition of information and the use of the definite article), even though the first "dog" exists on a different level.

The television camera produces signs of signs. The image (as well as the soundtrack) signifies a human being (an actor) that signifies a fictional character. The viewer is aware of both levels of signification, but usually the second signified is dominant; viewers are concerned mainly with the world of the characters, but they can still notice the first signified, the performance of an actor. Usually, the elements within the filmic image are at the same time signs for both profilmic and diegetic events, i.e., for the first and second levels of signification. Sometimes, there are elements within the frame that are only profilmic (and thereby extradiegetic), like an accidental microphone. When typical profilmic elements are shown intentionally, as in *It's Garry Shandling's Show* (1986–1990), where Garry Shandling is established as both a character and an actor commenting on the fictionality of the show, then they gain a diegetic status of their own, effectively pushing diegetic elements to an embedded hypodiegetic level. In *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, the image of an actual (profilmic, extradiegetic) studio signifies a fictionalized (diegetic) studio that signifies a (hypodiegetic) living room. However, this narrative shift does not change the internal hierarchy of these levels. The fictionalized studio is still extradiegetic with regard to the central storyworld. *It's Garry Shandling's Show* constantly shifts between its narrative levels that are all conflated within the same filmic image. Interestingly, when a character from *The Andy Griffith Show* (1960–1968) appears on the *It's Garry Shandling's Show* as a crossover, he is only presented as a character, not as an actor. Even though the show presents itself as a fictional show, it does not acknowledge the fictional status of *The Andy Griffith Show* or of the character. Not even the crossover status of the episode is alluded to. In this case, the ever-metaleptic show does not realize the metaleptic potential of the intertextual crossover.

e. Modes of Representation and the Identity of a Character

We have now taken a detailed look at the first two conditions of crossovers and metalepses: the relations between worlds and the modes by which these worlds can intersect. Finally, we must now consider the third condition: the continuous identity of an existent that connects one world with the other. The focus will be on fictional characters, as they form the majority of existents that connect fictional worlds in crossovers and metalepses.

With regard to literature, Margolin (1996: 118–120) has shown how different versions of a character (or what he calls a "world-inhabiting individual") can be perceived either as identical, as surrogates/counterparts, or as unrelated. His observations are focused on the semantics of characters, but here their representation is also important. The example *Bones*/*Family Guy* features a combination of differing representations and raises three questions in light of this discussion: (a) Can different representational systems represent a character with continuous identity? (b) Is it possible to establish crossovers between different representational systems? (c) Does a changing representation of a continuous world entail metalepsis? These questions tie in with the last section of the first part of this essay about the animated character Stewie Griffin from *Family Guy* in the realistic world of *Bones*. The following discussion will allow us to re-evaluate the spectrum between crossovers and metalepses proposed at the beginning of this essay.

A story, and accordingly, a character can be represented by a variety of discourses and semiotic systems.[13] Moving images combine various sign systems into a bundle of representations (e.g., written and spoken language, non-verbal signs, and filmic signs); visually, they can incorporate naturalistic live-action shots, photorealistic animation, stylized live-action shots, as well as exaggerated animation.

However, even if all these representations refer to the same storyworld, there is a marked difference between the integration of multiple styles within a coherent work of fiction, such as the animated sequence in *Kill Bill: Vol. 1*, and the multiplicity of works about a fictional character, such as the Batman franchise. While the former refers to one specific storyworld, the latter refers to a variety of distinct storyworlds that share certain core properties and intersect only occasionally. Similarly, only the basic setup of the animated series *The Flintstones* (1960–1966) is relevant for the live-action film *The Flintstones* (1994), which creates its own version

13 A proponent of the story/discourse dichotomy is Chatman (1978: 20–26); see Ryan (1991: 261–267) for a discussion. Alternative terms and concepts are discussed in Martínez and Scheffel (2003: 20–26).

of the anachronistic prehistoric world. Specific events in either version have almost no influence on the other version.[14]

Whether a work of fiction is seen as legitimate contribution to an established storyworld or as a deviant version depends on several factors, amongst them chronology (original and subsequent versions), paratextual framings (promotion, title, title sequence), placement (the same time slot on television as the week before), a high similarity of content and representation, and explicit textual features that establish a connection. It is probable that viewers constantly re-assess whether they are dealing with an already established world or with a new version of this world and, accordingly, with a continuous character or a new version. *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* strongly indicates that its animated segment refers to the same world: clear cues are given by the integration into one continuous film text, by the established macro-segmentation, by voice-over narration, by an initial split-screen, by the probable identity of character and topic, as well as by a general metafilmic pastiche of styles.

While, for example, the 1960s live-action series and the 1990s animated series of *Batman* (1966–1968; 1992–1995) share several characters and settings, they are too dissimilar to be regarded as referring to one joint world. In contrast, Christopher Nolan's recent live-action versions of the superhero, *Batman Begins* (2005) and *The Dark Knight* (2008), are strongly perceived as sharing one storyworld. Thanks to this strong sense of continuity, the character Rachel Dawes can be portrayed by two obviously different actresses, Katie Holmes and Maggie Gyllenhaal, and still be seen as identical. Similarly, the character Becky in the TV series *Roseanne* (1988–1997) is portrayed by two actresses alternately, a fact that is often commented on in the show itself.

In the case of crossovers, similar factors are relevant in order for viewers to determine whether a character is identical with a character in an original text or a character in a new version. In a combination of live-action and animation, a character can either appear in its original representation—Stewie Griffin in *Bones*—or in the representation it crosses over to: live-action Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully from *The X-Files* (1993–2002) are animated (but voiced by the actors that originally portrayed them) in *The Simpsons*, episode 8.10 ("The Springfield Files"). Animated versions of well-known live-action characters are quite frequently integrated into cartoon series. Nevertheless, due to the stark stylistic and representational contrast of both versions, a shared reality seems counte-

14 It is chronologically not impossible that the original series from the 1960s could be influenced by a film from the 1990s, as reruns often involve altered versions of the original. Also, the viewer will probably establish a mental connection between the two versions, perceiving the one in the context of the other.

rintuitive. Only a tighter integration, such as in *Kill Bill: Vol. 1*, seems to enable this shared reality.

The indexicality of a live-action shot (i.e., the assumed physical connection to actual events in front of the camera) seems to prevail over the representational, virtual, and construed aspects of audiovisual media (which are, for example, actors representing fictional characters and their actions, cardboard sets signifying settings, the spatiotemporal construction of a diegesis based neither on profilmic chronology nor on spatial relations during the shooting, etc.—for the relation of profilmic and diegetic circumstances, see Souriau 1951/1997). Images of reality seem to have a special aura, even if they stand for something else, or are fragmentary and rearranged, and even if digital animation has undermined this special aura of reality and materiality, making indexical images and purely virtual images indistinguishable.

Unlike digital animation, which is often used for "invisible" pseudo-indexical special effects, cartoon animation provides a visibly stark contrast to live-action shots. This is so even though some cartoon characters' movements are based on live-action shots, i.e., rotoscopy (see Schrey 2010). Cartoon imagery is full of condensed, expressive forms, bright, planar colors, and exaggerated movements. Even if certain sit-coms show a similar degree of reduction and hyperbole in their treatment of topics and their narrative flow, cartoons are far more extreme and unrestricted on a visual level (cf. Gray 2006: 65–68). Hence, overt (i.e., stylistically salient) animation and live-action are usually perceived as belonging to very different domains, their differences outweighing certain similarities.

Therefore, crossovers that involve the animated version of a live-action character are usually not considered genuine contributions to the original fictional world. The actions of the animated version are seldom integrated into the characters' canonical history. The crossover of a character presupposes that the character is highly similar to the original representation. This not only involves typical looks, behavior, reactions, etc. but often even the same actor. Even if the animated version emulates typical traits—a strength of cartoons—, its deviant stylistic representation still thwarts full identification. These characters seem to be deviant versions of a generic template character that can be transposed to several fictional worlds without affecting the original instance. They are, according to Eco (1979: 228–230, 259–260) merely homonymous (cf. McHale 1987: 36). Crossovers that feature non-identical versions are usually discounted as genuine crossovers. Therefore, Agents Mulder and Scully and a paratextual Dr. House in *The Simpsons*, Stewie Griffin in *Bones* as well as Marge Simpson and her home in *Family Guy* are non-actual crossovers, or "non-crossovers," as Holbrook calls them (2008).

The transposition of a character from one representational domain to another often yields conflicting perceptions. Viewers certainly try to find familiar properties (which is why we recognize a pre-existing character as such in the first place) and furthermore cues for coherence and identity, but they also have to handle impressions that disturb any coherence, especially sharply contrasting aesthetics and implied production processes. These transpositions create metalepsis-like effects: a character enters a domain that is far from its source domain. Only, the paradox does not arise from the impossibility of this transgression but from the double perception of being coherent and at the same time radically dissimilar. If the paradox cannot be resolved, the viewer will perceive the character as a new, deviant version. Again, it is a matter of identity that determines whether we can speak of a metalepsis proper or of an effect similar to a metalepsis.[15]

3. Conclusion

We can draw several conclusions from a contrastive discussion of metalepsis and crossover.

Both metaleptic and non-metaleptic (i.e., realistic) crossovers seem to be essential for an intertextual amalgamation of television, which is characterized by a heterogeneous flow of texts and fragments of texts. Both metaleptic and non-metaleptic crossovers can be used for a wide range of functions, such as publicity stunt, narrative enrichment, playful self-reference, puzzling metafictional commentary, or shocking annihilation of boundaries.

An approach that considers both the dynamic aspects of meaning-making and the rather static conceptual models construed by this process helps to clarify fundamental structures of world-connecting phenomena. We have established three isomorphic conditions that constitute both realistic crossovers and metalepses: (a) the relation between two worlds (being either part of a joint universe or part of two mutually exclusive universes); (b) some element/existent connecting the worlds and (c) this element/existent being perceived as continuously identical. We have also stated that crossovers and metalepses mark extremes of a spectrum. The

15 Transgressions from one representation to another may also cause metalepses, if these worlds represent radically different subworlds: when Roger Rabbit takes a tiny sip of liquor from a live-action glass in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988, directed by Robert Zemeckis and Richard Williams), his throat bulges disproportionally. The alcoholic liquid is not even visible, but its metaleptic transgression is implied by the radical change of volume and the extreme somatic reaction of the animated character (cf. Feyersinger 2007: 123–124).

following intermediate stages of the spectrum were then identified: 1) realistic crossover; 2) crossover with minor inconsistencies; 3) crossover with metaleptic effects that are unintentional; 4) crossover with metaleptic elements that are intentional; 5) metalepsis as unrealistic crossover; and 6) metalepsis proper. The location on this spectrum is determined not only by the three constituent conditions, but also by the degree of overtness and intentionality of the transgression/connection. The static perspective on fictional worlds accounts for the basic structures and conditions as well as for the specific prerequisites for the two opposite poles of this spectrum. It is the dynamic perspective however, that helps to decide where to locate an actual phenomenon under scrutiny in this spectrum. This dynamic perspective also implies that assessment of an actual phenomenon is very much dependent on the specific viewer, and accordingly certain inconsistencies or metaleptic effects are discernable only to very attentive viewers or to viewers with certain intertextual knowledge.

Finally, this also implies that there are configurations that some viewers will perceive as metalepsis and others not, and that there are configurations that some viewers will perceive as crossover, others as non-crossover, and still others as something else. The insights of this essay should provide the tools to analyze these configurations and explain differing perceptions.

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"Some weird kind of video feedback time warp zapping thing": Television, Remote Controls, and Metalepsis[1]

1. Introduction

In an essay on the cultural history of remote control devices, Jan Holmberg quotes the blurb on a multi-angle DVD entitled *Virtual Sex with Jenna Jameson*. It reads: "Now as never before, experience all the lust and desire of having sex with one of the most beautiful women in the world, Jenna Jameson. Interact with her using your DVD Remote! You choose the sexual positions! You choose the camera angles! You choose her moods between innocent and nasty!" (qtd. in Holmberg 2004: 224–25). As Holmberg aptly remarks, the DVD's "interactive mode is emphasized to the point where it seemingly breaks diegetic barriers" (2004: 224). In other words, the fantasy of omnipotence advertised here is also an eminently metaleptic fantasy, one that tears down the boundary between the viewer's world and the world represented on-screen. It is, of course, somewhat odd that the desire for complete immersion and sexual union is to be achieved through the artificial interface of the remote control. Yet, while the DVD blurb cannot but present this scenario in metaphorical terms, it could be easily realized in fiction, and we would probably have little trouble imagining it taking place in a David Cronenberg film.

As a matter of fact, pop-cultural narratives have abundantly explored the possibility of fusing distinct ontological realms by using one's TV (or DVD, VCR, etc.) remote, to the point where the 'metaleptic remote' has become a storytelling trope. In television series, but also in films, there are numerous instances where characters operate this device to enter the world of the television program they are watching or move back out again. Some even manage to switch channels while they are inside. In these sce-

1 I wish to thank Katharina Bantleon, Henry Keazor, Karin Kukkonen, Sonja Klimek, Keyvan Sarkosh, Nicholas Philip Scott, Alexander Starre, and Werner Wolf for their help with this essay.

narios, the function of remote controls is metonymically extended: whereas in reality a remote allows one to control only the appliances used to access fictional worlds, in fiction the remote grants one access to these worlds themselves. In other cases, characters use their remote control not to travel to a different world but to act upon their own world. In other words, these narratives pretend that fictional beings (and fictional remotes) control the very medium they are in. Once again, the remote's usual workings are displaced: the fictional remote does not control, for example, a TV set, but rather the world in which that TV set exists as well as, so we are led to believe, the very real TV set we in our world are sitting in front of.

The hackneyed nature of this plot device has not gone unnoticed. Under the heading "Remote Remake," blogger David Friedman pokes fun at the Adam Sandler vehicle *Click* (2006) by citing ten other films or TV show episodes based on the premise of the 'magic remote control'. In the comments section, users supply another twenty or so examples (Friedman 2006). Although not all of these magic remotes fit my description of the metaleptic remote, many of them do, and it seems a worthwhile endeavor to try and explain precisely why this trope is so popular. Hence this essay is not so much concerned with a definition or typology of metalepsis, but rather with its effects and functions in a specific cultural setting.

This notwithstanding, let me briefly outline the concept of metalepsis I shall employ.[2] For narratives, I will take it as read that this device essentially consists of violating a story world's perceived autonomy, the self-contained nature we ascribe to a fictional world while we are immersed in it. It does this by transgressing the crucial line that separates the inside from the outside of a story world in a paradoxical manner, that is, contrary to received opinion. This can be done in three prototypical ways: entangling a story world with another imaginary yet ontologically distinct world present in the narrative, feigning a transgression between a story world and the real world, and disregarding the story-discourse dichotomy. The first variety of the metaleptic remote described above neatly exemplifies the first prototype: it entangles the story world of a fictional television viewer with that of the program they are watching or, alternatively, story worlds represented by different TV channels (worlds arranged in a parallel rather than embedded fashion). The second variety falls somewhere between the second and third prototype: as well as pretending that characters in a story world control appliances in our world, it gives them the ability to shape the narrative discourse that creates their world.

2 I have elaborated this concept, which is based on Ryan (1991) and Wolf (2005), elsewhere (Thoss forthcoming).

For my purposes, I have chosen three examples from television, namely an episode from *Eerie, Indiana* (1991–92), *The Simpsons* (1989 to present), and *Family Guy* (1999 to present), respectively, and three examples from cinema, *Amazon Women on the Moon* (1987), *Stay Tuned* (1992), and *Funny Games* (2007). In these narratives, metalepsis and the metaleptic remote almost always serve a witty and ludic purpose, yet also emerge as a site of negotiation for issues of spectatorship and television viewing, if not popular culture in general, most notably immersion and escapism, the difference between reality and fiction, and the question of who controls whom in the interplay of medium and recipient. This is especially relevant for *Funny Games*, the odd one out in my selection. Whereas the other films and TV shows discussed are unabashedly populist, tend to offer conciliatory messages to viewers, and employ the metaleptic remote to advertise their own medium, Michael Haneke's art film for the masses completely subverts the trope and uses it to stage an attack on television culture. In this respect, the present essay is also an attempt to locate characteristics of a pop-cultural use of metalepsis, at least insofar as one can discern a difference between the frequently overlapping categories of lowbrow and highbrow.

2. Trapped in television: *Eerie, Indiana* and *The Simpsons*

A sort of *X-Files* for children, *Eerie, Indiana* ran for a brief time in the early nineties and deals with the bizarre adventures of thirteen-year-old Marshall and ten-year-old Simon who happen to be living in the "center of weirdness for the entire planet." Here, as in the next three cases I shall discuss, the metaleptic remote operates by entangling a narrative's primary story world with a second, ontologically distinct world embedded within the first one. In the episode in question, "Scariest Home Videos," the two boys, to their great disappointment, unexpectedly have to watch over Simon's little brother Harley on a Halloween evening. To make sure Harley will not bother them, the kids pursue a very grown-up strategy: they put him in front of the television and tell him to "watch a nice mummy movie"—a "safe and mindless" activity as they believe. However, Harley turns out not to be the passive spectator his babysitters had wished for. He starts playing around with the television and the video camera connected to it by positioning the camera so that it captures his own image. Harley then quickly switches back and forth between the camera's image and the horror film being shown on TV with his remote control and,

when he bites it, inadvertently causes some kind of short circuit[3] that makes his body start to flicker and vanish in a puff of smoke. When Marshall and Simon check on his whereabouts, they see Harley walking around looking back at them from inside the television and realize that he must have switched places with the monster on-screen. While their charge wreaks havoc upon the film he has been caught in by tearing away the heroine's clothes and pushing over set walls, they now have to deal with a mummy that has twice come to life, so to speak. Yet, at the end of the episode, this metaleptic confusion is reversed. The two friends find out that, as Marshall puts it, "when Harley bit the remote, he must have caused some kind of video feedback time warp zapping thing." With the help of this remote control, they manage to put the mischievous child back in front of the television and the mummy back inside. Order is thus restored—although not completely, since the mummy is sent back to a different channel, one showing a tropical beach, where it enjoys a well-deserved break. As it turns out, the mummy is not a real mummy but rather famed actor Sir Boris van Orloff who was "reincarnated in one of [his] most memorable roles" after eating bad shellfish.

At first glance, *Eerie, Indiana* displays a certain irreverent attitude towards its own medium and joyously celebrates the mayhem metalepsis brings about. This is most obvious in the character of Harley, who might well appear as an embodiment of the defiant consumer of popular culture, as described by Fiske (1989), who does not accept their prescribed place and actively subverts the content offered to them. Yet, even if this is the case, it is entirely self-serving on behalf of the show. "Scariest Home Videos" is television advertising itself and telling its audience what a great time one can have with this medium, what immersive pleasures and thrills it can give one. Even Marshall and Simon, who want to spend their Halloween outside of a domestic setting and try to undo the metalepsis as quick as they can, are ultimately provided with first-rate entertainment through the TV set. As Marshall tells us in his opening voice-over, it was the "scariest Halloween of all time and [they] weren't even gonna make it out of the house," a sentiment he repeats at the end by stating that there was "enough adventure for ten men right there in [his] living room." The metaleptic remote allows Harley as well as Marshall and Simon to experience television in a visceral, thrilling, and yet ultimately harmless way, and this experience is mediated by the show to its audience. In more than one sense, metalepsis is thus used by *Eerie, Indiana* to draw in the viewer.

3 Incidentally, short circuit is a metaphor often used to describe metalepsis and was even proposed as its terminological replacement (Wolf 1993: 357).

It is surely not an insignificant detail that "Scariest Home Videos" takes place on the carnivalesque holiday of Halloween, a time marked by inversions and hence an ideal breeding ground for metalepsis. In addition, it is also a popular event and thus a likely site for a distinctly pop-cultural use of this device. Bearing this in mind, it can hardly be considered a coincidence that the creators of *The Simpsons* chose to place a metaleptic remote in one of their Halloween episodes, "Treehouse of Horror IX." In the segment entitled "The Terror of Tiny Toon," we are once again faced with children left home alone on this day where boundaries are most permeable. Bart and Lisa want to watch an episode of *The Itchy & Scratchy Show* on TV, but to prevent them from being exposed to a "gruesome Halloween cartoon," Marge removes the batteries from the remote control. Ever the resourceful rascal, Bart replaces them with a piece of plutonium—a "highly unstable" material, as Lisa warns him—and turns the television back on. When Bart uses his nuclear-powered remote to change the color of the image, Lisa, who is standing next to the TV set, changes color correspondingly. Thus begins the metaleptic contamination between the Simpsons' world and that of their television. As the siblings start fighting over the remote control, they accidentally press the Enter button, which transports them straight into *The Itchy & Scratchy Show*, where they are soon hunted by the homicidal cat and mouse. Rescue arrives in the shape of Homer, who, unexpected, enters the Simpson living room and grasps the remote control. When he changes channels, Bart and Lisa as well as their pursuers briefly continue their chase on another program (*Live with Regis and Kathie Lee*). At the next click of a button, they are back on *The Itchy & Scratchy Show*, reversing this short metalepsis between parallel worlds (a variety I will come back to). Bart and Lisa see Homer on the other side of the screen and urge him to press Exit on the remote control, which brings the children back into the real world. Unfortunately, Bart's body has been eaten by piranhas inside the cartoon, causing him to materialize as a skeleton in front of the TV set. However, Lisa redresses this by using the remote control's rewind button to restore his body. This appears to conclude the metaleptic fluster, were it not for the Simpsons discovering that Itchy and Scratchy, too, have made it out of the television. To the family's great relief, the cat and mouse turn out to be harmless in the real world because they are just a cat and a mouse.

It has been claimed of *The Simpsons* that "no television program has ever been more about television" (Alberti 2004: xviii)—an assertion fully borne out by "The Terror of Tiny Toon." In a way, it holds the same self-celebratory and consolidating message for its audience as "Scariest Home Videos," yet it also exploits the trope of the metaleptic remote in an arguably more creative and versatile manner. Although it initially seems that

Bart and Lisa should have heeded Marge's sentiment concerning "gruesome Halloween cartoons," their enjoyment of *The Itchy & Scratchy Show* is without negative consequences in the end. The remote control takes them on an adventure that, in true carnivalesque fashion, threatens to upset the hierarchy between reality and fiction, between cartoon violence and real violence, yet ultimately reaffirms it. Even Bart's apparent demise can be rewound and undone at the touch of a button. By extension, viewers of *The Simpsons* are invited to think of their involvement with this program or others (or even television in general) in much the same terms, as a riveting yet risk-free activity. Bart and Lisa represent the average fan of popular culture, and the show supports them in their engagement with the pleasures this culture offers, even if others may find them objectionable.

3. Channel surfing: *Amazon Women on the Moon* and *Stay Tuned*

If lateral metalepsis in *The Simpsons*, switching from the world of *The Itchy & Scratchy Show* to that of *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee* and back, is a mere interlude, it comes to the fore in my next two examples. Here, the remote control is not only used to move people between the real world and the world of a TV show, but also, or primarily, between the worlds of different TV shows which form parallel story worlds of a sort. One of the segments in *Amazon Women on the Moon*, an anthology film designed to emulate channel surfing, exemplifies this in condensed form. It is entitled "Murray in Videoland" and opens with the eponymous hero comfortably installed in his armchair and praising his new television: "Best investment I ever made!" he exclaims and kisses his remote control. His wife Selma joins him and complains that he has not left the house for two weeks, since he received the new TV set. Then, the remote stops working. Wondering "what the hell has happened to [it]," Murray points it at himself and promptly disappears only to reappear seconds later on the weather report, shouting out to his wife for help: "Selma, get me out of here! I must have pressed the wrong button." Selma starts operating the remote, but instead of returning her husband back to the living room, she only manages to transport him from one program to another (a baseball game, a rock video, *King Kong*, a soft porn, *Bambi*, and a broadcast of a presidential visit to Moscow). All the while, Murray continues to implore his wife to help him, yet the latter is apparently unable to find the right button without the manual, which Murray threw out. For the rest of the film, he makes sporadic appearances in other segments of the film (which are all meant to be TV shows) and is last seen as the credits are rolling, desperately beseeching the audience to come to his assistance.

In contrast to *Eerie, Indiana* and *The Simpsons*, "Murray in Videoland" presents a rather negative interpretation of what it means to be trapped in television, yet in a very light-hearted tone, because Murray simply gets what he deserves for watching too much television. When the remote stops functioning the way it should and puts Murray into the weather show, it is almost as if the medium itself is getting back at him, as if technology is turning against its master to punish him for his abuse of it and concomitant neglect of his surroundings. Together with Selma, we take pleasure in seeing this tenacious couch potato placed in the midst of the events he used to enjoy from a safe distance. Clad in nothing but his underwear, Murray is increasingly at odds with, and dislikes, the kind of programs his wife sends him to. It is only when he finds himself in the soft porn that he tells her to stop zapping ("Here you can leave me for the night"), yet Selma exacts her revenge by moving him to the Disney Channel. It is now she who possesses the remote control and thus the power to decide how the evening will be spent. In sum, "Murray in Videoland" is not critical of television consumption as such: it merely offers a rather plain warning against overdoing it, a sort of mini-satire on escapism that remains in the comfort zone of pop-cultural self-criticism. While not denying that popular culture can be a means of escapism, it nevertheless puts all responsibility on the individual's shoulders. Audience members are supposed to moderate themselves so they can continue to engage with the truly important matters in the real world.

To a certain extent, *Stay Tuned* is nothing more than the fully fleshed-out feature-length version of the barely four-minute-long "Murray in Videoland." The film opens with the suburban home of Roy and Helen Knable. Like Murray, Roy is a couch potato and television addict, much to the chagrin of his wife. As if his viewing habits were not bad enough, Roy is offered cable television by the sales representative Spike, who praises the high-tech remote control that comes with it by promising "escape from all your failures and woes at the touch of your thumb." Roy and Helen are indeed in for the "TV adventure of a lifetime," as they are soon sucked into the cable network through their satellite dish. Unbeknownst to the Knables, Spike works for the devil, and, unless they can survive 24 hours in TV land, their souls belong to him. Once they are inside television, the couple learns they can move between channels. At first, they do so through surfaces of white noise that serve as gateways between different programs. In one of them, they come across another marooned viewer who explains: "Brought my remote with me. Gets too hot—Bam! I'm on another channel." As in "Murray in Videoland," the metaleptic remote control not only allows characters to move between their world and the world of a television program, but also between the parallel worlds that

constitute the cable network. In the film's frenzied finale, Roy and Spike chase each other through a seemingly endless number of televised worlds by pushing buttons on their remotes. They visit a Sergio Leone Western, *Star Trek*, an airbag commercial, an ice hockey broadcast, a parody of *Driving Miss Daisy*, the sitcom *Three's Company*, and a swashbuckler film—among others. Eventually, the Knables manage to escape television: Roy presses the Off button.

At first sight, *Stay Tuned* displays a similarly unfavorable perspective on excessive televiewing as "Murray in Videoland." Roy, however, has the remote control with him while he is trapped in television, which means that he is also given a chance to do something about his situation. As it turns out, the metaleptic journey through the cable network is a cathartic experience for him. Having been exposed to the perils of television in such an immediate and visceral fashion, it is as if he has redeemed himself and exorcised his addiction to the medium. By taking his escapist desires to their metaleptic fulfillment, the film has shown him that reality may not be such a bad place after all. At the end of the film, Roy resigns his place on the couch and becomes a fencing teacher and, in the final shot, advises one of his pupils not to watch so much television. No longer engrossed in the gratifying yet mind-numbing pleasures of popular entertainment, it appears he has become a responsible member of a community, someone who is socially engaged and passes on his knowledge. However, this ending may prove to be somewhat unsatisfactory or half-hearted, because *Stay Tuned* has presented television as such a fascinating medium throughout the previous hour and a half. Especially in the last part, when Roy and Spike zap themselves from one channel to the next, the film conveys a sense of exhilaration in the way it remediates (in Bolter and Grusin's sense)[4] television and simulates channel surfing. Here, the trope of the metaleptic remote is used to celebrate the frenetic pace by which spectators can immerse themselves in the most varied of worlds. At the end of the day, *Stay Tuned* is not only unable but perhaps also unwilling to resolve this tension between an all-out consumption of media products and an allegedly responsible attitude towards them.

4 Bolter and Grusin (1999) use the term "remediation" to describe the ways media absorb and refashion one another, something they consider to be a hallmark of our age. The manifold ties between television and film explored in this essay are an obvious case in point, especially with regard to "Murray in Videoland" and *Stay Tuned*, where cinema is rivalling television in trying to prove it can match and perhaps even surpass the experience offered by cable or satellite TV.

4. Fighting for (the remote) control: *Family Guy* and *Funny Games*

In the narratives discussed above, we were always dealing with characters who used the remote control to move themselves or others in and out of the televisual worlds surrounding them. However, this is not so in the next two cases. Here, the remote is not used to jump to a different world but rather to control one's own world as if it were a program on television—which it could of course very well be. In other words, metaleptic contamination is brought about from within by characters who are, or at least should be, completely oblivious to the fact that they are in a TV series or film. These narratives make believe that fictional beings can, with their remote control, wield power over their own medium and even operate the TV set (or VCR or DVD player) on which they are watched. Hence, as characters take over control, recipients experience the loss of it. The metaleptic transgression is not one between one story world and another (embedded or parallel), but between the world a narrative represents and its means of representation, between story and discourse, in other words, as well as a feigned one between the story world and our world.

My first example is from an episode of *Family Guy*, "Bango Was His Name, Oh!" In it, the Griffin family goes to an electronics store where they are introduced to the digital video recorder TiVo. In order to demonstrate the functions of this new technology with which you can "re-watch anything you missed," a salesman uses the remote control to rewind the episode itself by a few seconds, during which TiVo's on-screen display can be seen and its sound effects heard. Next, he asks if he should "ring it [TiVo] up" for them, to which Lois Griffin complains "Hold on, hold on! I think we should discuss it first!" The salesperson then produces his remote once again, but this time fast-forwards the episode up to a point where Peter Griffin is standing at the checkout counter buying the product. As the scene fast-forwards, we are able to make out that the Griffins are engaged in animated discussions, while the salesman just smirks, obviously pleased with himself that he has found a way of effectually bypassing the sales talk. Clearly, he has duped Peter into buying TiVo, but he has also somehow duped us, the audience. It is only we who should be able to rewind or fast-forward and by this means exert control over the program; yet here it seems as if this control has been wrested from us by a fictional being, as if the show itself has suddenly determined how we are to view it. For a moment, we may well have the feeling that the consumer electronics we use to watch *Family Guy* no longer obey us (especially if a TiVo box is actually sitting in our living room). From this one could infer that this episode contains some sort of veiled criticism of its own medium, that it

suggests that we as television viewers, along with Peter, are cultural dupes, manipulable at the touch of a button. Obviously, this reading is at odds with the general tone of *Family Guy*, a show that is notorious for its gratuitous gags, and the fact that this scene in particular is a rather blunt case of product placement. At least on the surface, the trope of the metaleptic remote is used simply to produce a humorous, off-kilter effect and advertise a product.

If *Family Guy* and the other TV series and films dealt with so far have all been firmly grounded in popular culture and adamantly affirmative of it, this can hardly be expected from the last case I wish to discuss, *Funny Games*, a film that claims to be about popular culture and yet represents anything but popular culture. This uneasy relationship is even more pronounced in the English-language version of the film. Having felt that his original German-language version did not reach the audience it was meant for, Michael Haneke set about to do a shot-by-shot 'Hollywood remake' of his famous diatribe against media violence, so that it could finally be experienced by its intended addressees, the "consumers of mass entertainment" (Haneke qtd. in Wheatly 2008: 21). What we are dealing with is an unmistakably elitist and highbrow film that wants to educate the recipients of popular entertainment about the bad influence it has on them. One critic has compared Haneke's didactic aesthetic to that of Schiller in this context (Hart 2006), and it seems equally pertinent to link it to the Frankfurt School's dismissive stance on 'mass culture' and the 'culture industry'.

Funny Games presents itself as a thriller about a well-to-do family taken hostage in their lake house by two young men, Paul and Peter, who bet that the three family members will not be alive by 9 o'clock the next morning. Throughout the course of the night, Ann, George, and their son Georgie are subjected to torture and humiliation by Paul and Peter, who, however, are also portrayed as victims, albeit victims of the media. The two refer to each other as Tom and Jerry and, later on, as Beavis and Butthead, proof, if you will, that they have been desensitized and conditioned by television. Consequently, while the pair kill Georgie, we are presented with a longish shot of a TV set splattered in blood, which the film thus insinuates is the real perpetrator. Still, the point of *Funny Games* is most clearly expressed towards the end, when the remote control comes into play.

Here, Paul forces Ann to say a prayer backwards. Ann, however, does not comply and seizes the moment to shoot Paul's accomplice with a shotgun lying nearby. Shocked, the otherwise cold-blooded killer frantically searches the room and shouts "Where is the remote control? Where is the fucking remote control?" Upon finding it (the remote control has

been neither mentioned nor seen previously), he rewinds the film as if it were a DVD[5] up to the point where he asks Ann to say the prayer. This time, Paul manages to wrangle the shotgun from Ann before she can fire it and thereby demonstrates that he is truly in control. After asserting "That was the test run," he shoots George. If one looks at this scene out of context, one could almost be led to believe that Paul's rewinding of Peter's death is not that different from the salesperson fast-forwarding *Family Guy* or, indeed, Lisa rewinding Bart's piranha attack. Yet, the humor and wryness of those scenes is almost wholly absent in *Funny Games*. Haneke uses the trope of the metaleptic remote to reveal the killers' own attitude towards their deeds, to show us how they ostensibly treat reality like a film or like television and turn torture and murder into spectacle and entertainment. It has to be noted that Paul's murder is, in fact, the only time we see violence on-screen. As gruesome as the film may appear, all other violence occurs off-screen. That this one instance of visible screen violence is rewound and undone, then, furthers the film's point that media violence is not real and yet leads to violence in reality.

Popular culture is not accused here of being a mere vehicle for escapism, but of being a veritable 'test run' for hazardous behavior, of providing baneful role models and patterns that are followed and imitated by a jaded audience. With *Funny Games*, we are miles away from *The Simpsons*' blithe assertion that cartoon violence does not equal real violence, despite the fact that both use the same device to drive their message home. In a way, Haneke subverts the trope of the metaleptic remote control by bereaving it of its more openly lucid components and its capacity to explore and celebrate TV's possibilities. Instead, he turns it into a means of serious criticism and employs it to condemn certain parts (if not all) of popular culture. In this case, it is much more likely that a character's taking control over the medium also signifies the entertainment industry's control over the audience.

5. Conclusion

While it would certainly be amiss to take *Funny Games* as indicative of a highbrow usage of metalepsis in general, its elitism and monolithic rejection of popular culture make it a perfect foil against which the trope of the metaleptic remote in pop-cultural narratives can be understood.[6] These

5 This is one of the few elements Haneke has updated for the remake. In the 1997 original, the scene is made to look like a videotape running backwards (Wheatley 2008: 22).

6 In a recent essay, Alexander Starre (forthcoming) discusses a scene from *The Sopranos* (1999–2007) that also seems to involve a metaleptic remote rewinding the episode itself.

narratives take the seemingly inconspicuous and banal activity of using one's TV remote and transform it into something bigger, a means to literally immerse oneself in television or to control not only one's TV set but the whole (story) world. Clearly, their goal is to celebrate the medium of television and the act of watching it. Even when immersion careens into escapism and these narratives display a more critical attitude towards TV consumption, they do so in a way that is still fun to watch. Their lighthearted tone does not prevent them from tackling issues deemed more serious—and central to debates surrounding popular culture—just as the appearance of these issues does not prevent them from losing their entertainment value. What they do not do, however, is openly challenge recipients. They confirm their audiences' opinions and beliefs rather than contest them (which I do not consider a deficiency). As much as *Eerie, Indiana*, *Stay Tuned*, and company are at odds with Haneke's use of the trope in this respect, it is interesting to note that, from a formal perspective, no significant difference can be discerned. If I have mentioned a hybridity between popular and high culture in the introduction, then it is, in this case, mainly one of style. As seen, *Family Guy* can rewind its narrative just as well as *Funny Games*, while, for instance, *Stay Tuned*'s multiple worlds and repeated boundary-crossings could surely rival those of any postmodernist novel. What we would probably not find in that novel, though, would be a metaleptic remote control. Barring the exception of *Funny Games*, this trope appears as a genuine pop-cultural form of this device that was formerly deemed to be rather avant-garde.

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Seamlessly integrated into the series' quality-television aesthetic, this appearance of the trope could represent another example of highbrow usage, one endowed with a degree of artistic ambition comparable to Haneke's, though unrelated to his discontent with popular culture.

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Metalepsis in Popular Comedy Film

The transgression of different—and ontologically distinct—levels of narration, the crossing—often fantastic—of the boundary between different fictional worlds within the common frame of a film and the immersion of film aesthetic device is a widespread and well-known phenomenon not only in so-called art films but also in a large number of comedy films. Taken as an expression of a heightened self-awareness of the artificiality and conventionality of the medium film, these transgressions and immersions have already been extensively discussed in the context of self-referential or self-reflexive films with a strong emphasis on film-in-film.[1] With this article I seek to expand this traditional approach and explore the comic effects of metalepsis in popular comedy film.

The term 'metalepsis' has been well established in literary narratology since it was first introduced by Gérard Genette in his *Narrative Discourse* (1972/1980). However, it has not found its way into the field of film studies until recently.[2] It seems, therefore, desirable to describe and conceptualise different forms of transgressions and immersions in certain comedy films and to evaluate the effects peculiar to them.[3] This may prove that metalepsis is a genuine transmedial phenomenon,[4] which is not confined to the literary text but is also common to many other media and forms of art such as the fiction film.[5]

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1 It was first Gloria Withalm who discussed such self-reflexive transgressions and immersions especially in comedy films (cf. Withalm 1997; 1999).

2 For a detailed discussion, cf. Feyersinger (2007: 114). Genette (2004) presents several examples form film which he takes for metalepses. Without going into further detail here, some of Genette's examples, however, are not very convincing. For further recent studies on metalepsis in film cf. Limoges (2008) and Klimek (2009).

3 As John Pier (2005: 253) states correctly, it is ultimately impossible to separate the formal aspects of metalepsis from its effects.

4 Based on Irina Rajewksy's (2002: 13) definition, Werner Wolf (2005: 84 n.3) understands *transmediality* as a sub-form of *intermediality*. Transmedial phenomena are phenomena that appear in more than one medium; yet in contrast to the concept of *intermediality* a possible origin and intermedial transposition seem quite uninteresting.

5 According to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2004: 68), a "narrative film" is "a film that tells a story," i.e., that is made up of a set of cues which constitute the film's story

In the following I shall try to present several examples of different forms of metalepsis in comedy films. The focus on the comic genre can be explained by the fact that popular comedy films are one of the film genres where metalepses can most often be found. The examples to be given will prove that what Genette calls the "effect of strangeness" in metalepsis (1972/1980: 335) may be produced in manifold ways, depending on the very nature of the transgression(s). Therefore, I shall argue that it is necessary to differentiate no fewer than two kinds of metalepsis in comedy films: *narrative* and *fictional* metalepses. Narrative metalepses occur when the boundary between the fictional world and a representation of the (supposedly) real world is transgressed. Fictional metalepses occur when the boundary between two embedded fictional worlds is transgressed without the narrator /narrative apparatus coming to the fore. Both types of metalepsis produce their own comic effects which not only result from mere transgression (and its supposedly anti-illusionist effects) but go hand in hand with other circumstances. These may be either comical or absurd, causing or amplifying the comic effect of the transgression(s). Or, as in the case of *fictional* metalepses, they may be fantastical, even disturbing, thus calling for comic relief.

1. Metalepsis as a Narrative Phenomenon

Genette's original statement about metalepsis refers to the confusion of the extradiegetic world of the narrator and narratee with the fictional, intradiegetic world as well as to the transgression of the boundary between the latter one and (a representation of) a world, which he calls 'metadiegetic' (cf. Genette 1972/1980: 324–325; 235). If we qualify both these transgressions with one and the same notion, i.e., *narrative metalepsis*, this would confine the phenomenon to narrative media—or even only to texts where a narrator can be clearly discerned—and deny its transmedial nature. We should not forget that the term diegesis (*diégèse*) in the sense of a fictional world and level of narration does not originate with Genette. In fact, it can be traced back to Étienne Souriau (1951: 237) who employed the term diegesis to designate the fictional reality ("réalité de fiction") of a film. In this sense, diegesis can be understood as the world in which the story takes place, i.e., as the spatio-temporal environment, the fictional world in which the characters are located and act. According to Souriau the fictional reality of the film is just one of seven levels of existence

(2004: 49). These films embody a narrative form which "is most common in fictional [sic] film […]" (2004: 68).

which constitute the filmic universe ("*les sept plans d'existence de l'univers filmique*" 1951: 234). The others are: afilmic reality ("*Réalité afilmique*"), that is the real and common world which exists independently from film (234); profilmic reality ("*Réalité profilmique*"), which describes any person or object put intentionally in front of the camera lens (235); filmographic realities ("*Réalités filmographiques*"), which mark the picture and anything else existing on the film strip (236); filmophanic (or 'screenic') realities ("*Réalités filmophaniques (et écraniques)*"), designating all arrangements, forms or movements which can be seen during the projection of a film or, in short, everything that occurs during the audiovisual projection of a film (240); the spectatorial facts ("*Les faits spectatoriels*"), that is everything that takes place in the mind of the spectator, including expectations before the film and any after-effects (238); and finally, the creatorial level ("*Le plan créatoriel*"), which psychologically or sociologically concerns the persons who create a film or the periphery it originates from (240).

Souriau's terminological system can be harmonised with Wolf's definition of (onto)logically distinct (sub)worlds (2005: 91), if any of the seven realities are understood as possible worlds within the larger filmic universe. In this sense, any other world (or level) than the diegesis could be described as extradiegetic. Moreover, any confusion of ontologically distinct elements or worlds within a common filmic space (universe) can be described as metalepsis (cf. Feyersinger 2007: 122).

2. Narrative Filmic Metalepses (Types and Effects)

Souriau's typology of different filmic worlds allows us to differentiate the distinction between the fictional world and the (supposedly) real world for film. It offers distinctions between different dimensions of narrative film which can yield metaleptic effects. I will begin by outlining traditional narrative metalepses in film, i.e., intrusions of the narrator into the fictional world, along Souriau's distinctions. This leads me directly to the question of who or what the narrator of a film or, more precisely, the cinematic narrator is. It goes without saying that the cinematic narrator is neither a character nor a voice-over, verbally narrating or commenting on the events represented in the film. This would clearly confine the notion of a filmic or cinematic narrator to a very limited number of films. Moreover, these 'verbal narrators' are themselves diegetic characters framed by the overall cinematic narration and are therefore its product. This being the case, who or what produces the filmic diegesis, i.e., the fictional world of a film?

Whereas David Bordwell (1985: 61–62) stresses the narrational character of fictional film but at the same time rejects the idea of a narrator,[6] Seymour Chatman (1990: 134), in reply, argues that it is possible to discern an "overall agent," which he calls the *cinematic narrator*. Chatman's cinematic narrator is neither the camera nor the voice-over, which "may be one *component*" (ibid.). Chatman rather defines the cinematic narrator as "the composite of a large and complex variety of communicating devices" (ibid.). On the auditory channel, these include noise, voice and music which may be either on- or off-screen. And on the visual channel, such diverse elements as props, location, appearance and performance of the actor, mise-en-scène, lighting, colour, distance, angle and movement of the camera, type and rhythm of the editing and a variety of other such factors need to be taken into account (1990: 135). Drawing again on Souriau's terminology this means that the cinematic narrator is not entirely or exclusively located on a diegetic level (although some components, such as voice, may be), but above all on the profilmic and filmographic levels.

a. Intrusions of Narrative and Film Aesthetic Devices

The cinematic narrator as the synthesis of the different cinematic or film aesthetic devices normally goes unnoticed because the "different components […] usually work in consort" (ibid.). In the following, I will give several examples in which this work in consort breaks up and parts of the cinematic narrator visibly or audibly intrude into the world of the diegetic characters or vice versa. These intrusions and transgressions will be called narrative filmic metalepses.

Intrusions of the Camera:

Undoubtedly, the camera is the most important cinematic device on the profilmic level. Although present at almost every moment of a film, the camera normally goes unnoticed. It is one of the crucial conventions of (mainstream) cinema that nothing should draw attention to the camera.

6 For Bordwell, the fictional film is a narration without narrator. It is evident that a character cannot be the overall narrator of a film, since any personal or personified narrator (in the form of an off-screen voice, for instance) is part of the narrative process but does not produce it. At the same time, Bordwell rejects the idea of the necessity of a non-personified narrator because he understands (filmic) narration "as the organization of a set of cues for the construction of a story. This presupposes a perceiver, but not any sender, of a message" (1985: 62). The construction of the story and of the story world(s), (the diegesis) is therefore the result of a mental process of the spectator based on cues, and not on a narrator. Thus it is hardly surprising that Bordwell condemns the concept of a narrator as indulgence "in an anthropomorphic fiction" (ibid.).

This is why a direct glimpse of the diegetic characters into the camera is usually avoided. Yet in many comedies this convention is not only disregarded but intentionally broken. A striking example can be found in Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977): while waiting in a queue in front of a cinema, Alvy Singer (Woody Allen) gets annoyed with a man discussing the flaws in the latest Fellini films, then suddenly steps forward, looks directly into the camera and addresses us with the words: "What can you do when you get stuck on a movie line with a guy like this behind you?"

Such direct glimpses into the camera open a rupture between the diegetic world of the characters and the spectatorial world of the audience.[7] Thus any direct glimpse into the camera is metaleptic: its effect is to interrupt the filmic illusion, laying bare the fact that the filmic fiction and its diegesis are mediated. (The effect is somewhat similar to the anti-illusionistic device of breaching the fourth wall in theatre.) In most cases, the camera remains more or less inert; however, in Mel Brooks's *High Anxiety* (1977), we can find two scenes where the camera even "becomes active and intervenes in the action" (Withalm 1997: 259), thus intruding into the diegesis. In the first part of the film, we see the newly arrived Richard H. Thorndyke (Mel Brooks) dining with some of the leading staff of the "Psychoneurotic Institute" from outside a window. The camera approaches the characters in a travelling shot until it crashes into the glass of the window and pulls back again. In the final scene, Thorndyke and Victoria Brisbane (Madeline Kahn) are lying on a bed while the camera pulls back in a travelling shot, breaks through the wall and keeps pulling back. This scene clearly indicates that the (supposed) production of the film merges with its diegesis. Moreover, it confirms Jean-Marc Limoges's (2008: 35) statement that although the metaleptic interference by the camera breaches the diegetic boundary, it neither breaks nor destroys the diegesis or the fiction. As he correctly points out, in both scenes in *High Anxiety* the characters do not really feel disturbed by the presence of the camera, but rather by the fact it interrupts their actions (ibid.). Surely, both scenes appear more or less funny. But, to refer to Limoges again, it is never just the metaleptic transgressions and thus the violations of the diegetic boundaries that let us laugh in the films of Mel Brooks. Rather, they always go hand in hand with other comic aspects, including certain references and repetitions (Limoges 2008: 33–34) or even absurd reaction of the diegetic characters.

7 Nicole Mahne (2007: 102) argues that the passive spectator feels found out due to a character's direct glimpse into the camera, whereupon the diegetic boundary is passed. Moreover, she stresses that in such a case the diegetic characters are well aware of their fictional status in terms of an epistemological metalepsis.

Intrusions of Sound, Music and Score:

This brings us to another example from *High Anxiety* which marks the intrusion of a different film aesthetic device into the diegesis: the score. In a striking scene, we see Thorndyke and his chauffeur Brophy (Ron Carey) sitting in a car when suddenly there is the sound of thrilling music. What first seems merely to supply the atmospheric background turns out to be audible to Thorndyke and Brophy, too, who are both obviously quite distressed by the uneasy music. This already being metaleptic, the twist is pushed further when, to the relief of the two characters, the source of the music becomes visible: a bus pulls over, in it sitting the members of the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra playing their instruments.[8] Another example can be drawn from *Blazing Saddles* (Mel Brooks, 1974): while Sheriff Bart (Cleavon Little) is riding through the desert, he suddenly notices an orchestra playing the score.

In contrast to diegetic music within the story which the characters refer to or interact with, a film's score is not part of the diegesis. Referring to Souriau's terminology, the score in its materialisation is located on the filmophanic level, and in its effect on the audience on the spectatorial level. In the two examples from Mel Brooks, the boundary to the diegetic world is breached, the score thus becomes diegetic and the characters can react to it. Yet once again, it is not the transgression itself that is comical or funny, but rather the reaction of the characters and, as Limoges (2008: 36) claims, its combination with other absurd circumstances.

Breaching the Boundaries of Editing:

As already mentioned, according to Chatman editing is one the devices that form the cinematic narrator. Being a certain arrangement of the film material, editing is an operation that is executed on the filmographic level (cf. Souriau 1951: 236). So any interaction between diegetic characters and editing operations or devices is to be regarded as metaleptic. One such editing device is the so-called split-screen: within one common frame, two scenes are arranged which take place at the same time, even though they are spatially separated. While convention allows communication via a telephone, for instance, any direct interaction between the characters in the two fields is to be denied. However, at the end of Marty Feldman's *The Last Remake of Beau Geste* (1977), a film full of metalepses, we can see Beau Geste (Michael York) and his brother Digby (Feldman himself), who

8 This metaleptic scene is quoted in the 8th season's *Simpsons* episode "The Springfield Files" (1997): after a long night at Moe's, Homer is on his way home when he suddenly hears the scary musical theme from Hitchcock's *Psycho,* only to find out that it comes from a bus in which the musicians of the Springfield Orchestra are playing their instruments.

are in very different places, by means of a split screen, when suddenly the two shake hands. Surely, this should be impossible, not only because the gap between them is vast in a diegetic sense, but also because it marks an extradiegetic, filmographic boundary resulting from an editing technique. Thus any transgression of the gap between two (or more) scenes in a split-screen is to be regarded as metaleptic.

Another common editing device is the iris, which usually serves as a conventionalised closing of a scene or of an entire film. Of course, the iris is not part of the diegetic world of the characters. Again, in Feldman's comic version of *Beau Geste*, it is Digby who interacts with such an iris by trying to prevent it from closing. And to take a third example from Feldman's comedy: when Crumble (Spike Milligan), the Gestes' servant, is forced to go a-round in circles by a rotating newspaper, he not only interacts with the diegetic newspaper but with the extradiegetic, filmographic device as well, a fact that is emphasised when he claims to have found another film cliché.

Intrusions of Sub-, Inter- and Introductory Titles:

Probably the most common filmic inserts are sub-, inter- or introductory titles.[9] Although not completely detached from the filmic diegesis (introductory titles may provide necessary information about the fictional world; intertitles in silent cinema may substitute spoken language of diegetic characters[10]), they are, on the level of their materiality, first and foremost a filmographic device, inserted in or between or merged with the photographic picture by means of editing. Surely, as spectators we register those titles, yet at the same time we assume that the diegetic characters neither notice them nor know of their existence. It is thus not very aston-

9 All sorts of inserted lettering—to which titles belong, too—are often regarded as paratexts (cf. Böhnke 2007: 29). According to Genette (1987/1997: 1), who coined the term, paratexts are all those productions which cannot definitely "be regarded as belonging to the text" but which are materially attached to it, "surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it." Regarding a literary work, any such instance as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations, and intertitles are to be taken as paratexts. They transform the mere text into a book which can be merchandised and consumed. "For us, accordingly, the paratext is what enables the text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public" (Böhnke 2007: 1). The notion of paratext, which ensures the unity of the work, can therefore also be assigned to film (cf. Böhnke 2007: 11). Yet as Böhnke convincingly suggests, not only is it misleading to regard any sort of inserted lettering such as intertitles as paratextual elements, but one also is well advised to expand the notion to include any part of the film material (2007: 28–29). Böhnke defines (filmic) paratexts as higher levels within a narrative hierarchy, i.e., as elements not belonging to the (filmic) diegesis (2007: 20).

10 Böhnke (2007: 52) rightly points out that intertitles may not simply be regarded as extradiegetic elements but can provide diegetic as well as extradiegetic information.

ishing that we can find metalepses playing on such titles or textual inserts in a number of self-reflexive comedy films. For example, in *The Last Remake of Beau Geste*, the Sheikh (James Earl Jones) meets Ahmed, the Sheik's son (Rudolph Valentino), from George Fitzmaurice's 1926 silent film, *The Son of the Sheik*: after communication between the two sheiks initially seems impossible because the one speaks verbally, the other graphically, the character from Feldman's film ultimately not only recognises that he can read the inserted titles but also manages to learn 'to speak' in titles.[11] In *The Man with Two Brains* (Carl Reiner, 1983), Dr. Michael Hfuhruhurr (Steve Martin) and an Austrian police officer have difficulty communicating because each speaks in his own language. Therefore, additional subtitles are superimposed. When the officer recognises that his dialogue partner speaks English, he demands that the titles be stopped in order to have more space. But subtitles may also become a cause of misunderstanding, as in *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (Jay Roach, 2002). In both examples, the metaleptic character is quite clear: the subtitles merge with the fictional world and become a means of diegetic communication. The comic effect thus results from the fact that they are not troubled by this—rather unlikely—intrusion.

Apart from texts like subtitles, other graphic elements can be inserted by means of editing. Maps are a familiar insert, especially in adventure movies, either to locate the setting of a scene or of a whole movie or to indicate a movement and bridge a time gap.[12] Again, in *The Last Remake of Beau Geste*, the march of Beau's and Digby's legion through the Sahara is graphically indicated by red arrows on an extradiegetic map. After a cut, we see Digby as the last man in the row looking back only to witness how the red arrows from the map quickly move towards him, forcing him to turn around and follow his troops.

b. Confusions of Filmic Worlds

Whereas the status of inserted titles and graphic elements seems to be at least somewhat ambiguous, studio and film company logos are definitely not part of the diegesis (cf. Böhnke 2007: 80), nor are they narrative devices. They represent genuine paratextual elements, clearly pertaining to the real world. However, these paratextual elements can nonetheless be

11 This and the following examples for metaleptic intrusions of and interactions with graphic inserts have already been described on several occasions by Gloria Withalm (except for the one from *Austin Powers in Goldmember*). Cf. Withalm 1997: 262; 1999: 155.

12 For a detailed discussion of the different functions and effects of inserted maps, see Böhnke (2007: 149–162).

introduced into the fictional world of a film and thus become part of the diegesis.

Studio and Film Company Logos—Intrusions and Interactions:

The Eddy Murphy comedy *Coming to America* (John Landis, 1988) opens with the Paramount logo, and while the opening credits unroll, the camera flies past the distinctively pyramidal mountain overlooking the jungle of the fictional Kingdom of Zamunda.[13] Metaleptically, the extradiegetic world of studio production and distribution and the fictional world merge. Once again, it is Marty Feldman's *Beau Geste* persiflage, where a character is confronted with the Paramount logo in the middle of the film. While Digby is walking in the desert, he suddenly comes across a big sign cautioning him he is about to enter the "Mirage Area." Suddenly the Paramount logo unrolls from above, forcing Digby to kneel down and he then finds himself in front of the opening title of William A. Wellman's 1939 *Beau Geste*.

Regarding the Paramount logo, it should also be noted that Feldman's *Last Remake* itself is distributed by Universal Pictures. Feldman's parody, being a 1977 film, should thus commence with the Universal Studios logo used at the time: the rotating earth globe appears in a zoom through two asteroid belts and then the word "Universal" fades in. But instead, *The Last Remake of Beau Geste* opens with the Universal logo from the late 1930s and early 1940s, showing the art deco glass globe around which the words "A Universal Picture" rotate. This being merely an anachronism in the first instance, it quickly turns out to be genuinely metaleptic, when a door opens in the lower left part of the picture and Marty Feldman enters the logo arrangement, breaks the rotating words and takes the globe in his hands. Here, the boundary between the supposed extradiegetic real world of Marty Feldman and the *filmophanic* paratext is breached.

13 Apart from comedies, we can find such an incorporation of the studio logo at the beginning of a film on several occasions. At the beginning of *Raiders of the Lost Arc* (Steven Spielberg, 1981) the Paramount logo dissolves into a mountain of similar shape supposed to be in South America. This gimmick is picked up in all subsequent *Indiana Jones* films. *Waterworld* (Kevin Reynolds, 1995) opens with a variation of the Universal Studios logo showing the polar caps covered with ice which then melts causing the continents to disappear and thus introducing the post-apocalyptic setting of a flooded world in which the story takes place.

Confusions with the World of Distribution and Consumption:

The studio logo refers to the extradiegetic field of film production, distribution and consumption.[14] In Mel Brooks's *Spaceballs* (1987), we can find a different kind of metaleptic intrusion of the real world of a film's production and distribution. When Dark Helmet (Rick Moranis) wants to find out where Lone Starr (Bill Pullman) and Princess Vespa (Daphne Zuniga) are hiding, Colonel Sandurz (George Wyner) advises them to have a look into the video cassette of the film *Spaceballs*. "How can there be a cassette of the movie? We're still making it!", Lord Helmet wonders. But Sandurz tells him about the newly invented "instant cassettes": "They're out in stores before the movie is finished." And actually, as the corporal (Mitchell Bock) has a look at a storage rack where the video releases of all the previous Mel Brooks films are neatly strung, he finally comes to the *Spaceballs* cassette.[15] The cassette is put into a VCR, and after a fast-forward we can see Dark Helmet, Sandurz and the corporal watching themselves in the monitor watching themselves and so forth—a perfect *mise en abyme*. As Limoges (2008: 38) convincingly points out, the humour of that scene results from the absurd fact that in the end, the characters are not at all bothered by finding objects in their diegetic world which originate from the extradiegetic—and supposedly real—world of the film's distribution.

The extradiegetic world of film production comprises a large variety of different aspects which all may serve for metaleptic transgressions, intrusions or allusions. Some of these are rather subtle, such as the aspect of stardom and celebrity cult. Maybe Genette (2004: 69) is right when he argues that we spectators never quite forget the stars behind their roles and thus behind the fictional characters. Consequently, certain spectatorial expectations are carried over into the fictional world, and our construction of the diegesis is thus influenced by our extradiegetic knowledge and wishes.

Such a direct reference can be found in the German comedy *(T)Raumschiff Surprise—Periode 1* (Michael 'Bully' Herbig, 2004). When caught in a medieval castle and asked whether he is of noble ancestry, actor Til Schweiger, who plays space taxi driver and warhorse Rock Fertig Aus, deliberately falls out of character, stating: "My name is Til Schweiger.

14 Withalm differentiates production, distribution, reception/consumption and the product itself as the possible fields of self-reference and self-reflexivity of any particular film (cf. Withalm 1993: 369–73; 1999: 150–53). Within these fields, the techniques of self-reflexivity Withalm describes are predominantly metaleptic.

15 In fact, on closer inspection, other merchandising products of the film *Spaceballs* can be seen throughout the Spaceballs space ship, such as a *Spaceballs* towel.

I'm an actor. That's how I earn my money." This brings us to another example. Genette (2004: 73) claims that the appearance of an actor /actress or of a well-known person, such as him- or herself (he mentions Marshall McLuhan in Woody Allen's *Annie Hall*) represents a genuine filmic metalepsis, as it introduces an extradiegetic presence into the fictional world. Be that as it may, we should handle such claims with caution and keep in mind that even in the case of a so-called 'cameo', it is not the real human being appearing in the film but a re-fictionalised character bearing the same name as the extradiegetic model. When Arnold Schwarzenegger plays himself in *Last Action Hero* (John McTiernan, 1993) during the premier of the film-in-film where he is supposed to incorporate the metadiegetic character of Jack Slater, it is in fact not the real Schwarzenegger but another intradiegetic fictional character we can see.[16]

Breaching the Boundaries of Production:

Many other allusions to the world of a film's production are much more obviously metaleptic. In *The Muppet Movie* (James Frawley, 1979), Kermit and is friends are on their way to Hollywood, but en route the group gets separated. When Kermit and some of his friends go astray in the desert, they are finally rescued by the other part of the group, leaving Kermit to wonder: "How did you find us?"—"We read it in the script," one of his friends replies. We find here a verbal—and visual, as the supposed script is also presented—allusion to the extradiegetic level of the film's production. In *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993), another of Mel Brooks's self-referential parodies, several copies of the script become visible: when Robin (Cary Elwes) is about to lose against Prince John (Richard Lewis) in archery, he complains that this outcome is not in accordance with the script, whereupon he and several others produce their copies to check it out.[17] In the same film, we also catch a glimpse of the crew when, during a fight with the Sheriff of Rottingham [sic!] (Roger Rees), Robin stabs with his sword through an open window, "piercing a roasted chicken one of the stagehands is having for lunch" (Withalm 1997: 259). This is not the first time that Brooks confronts us with this type of metalepsis. Near the end of *Spaceballs*, Lone Starr and Dark Helmet fight a light saber duel,

16 See also *Ocean's Twelve* (Steven Soderbergh, 2004), where Danny Ocean's (George Clooney) wife Tess, played by Julia Roberts, fraudulently poses as the pregnant 'real' Julia Roberts in order to enable Danny's criminal gang to get close to the Coronation Egg they want to steal while it is on exhibit at a museum. However, she is exposed by Bruce Willis (playing himself) who recognises that Tess is not the 'real' Julia Roberts.

17 These two examples have previously been described by Withalm (1997: 256–257) under the aspect of self-reference but not with regard to metalepsis. However, Sonja Klimek (2009) discusses them as metalepses.

when suddenly a production crew, including a camera (supposedly the one used for the very film *Spaceballs*), becomes visible and the boom operator gets killed by Dark Helmet.

Sometimes it is even the whole sound stage or an entire studio that is drawn into the fictional world of the film. Conversely, the diegesis may expand to the point that it bursts through the boundary, spilling over into the extradiegetic studio world, as at the end of Mel Brooks's *Blazing Saddles* (1974). The fight of Sheriff Bart and his friend Jim (Gene Wilder) against the evil Hedley Lamarr (Harvey Corman) and his henchmen literally breaks the fourth wall when it spills out of its own sound stage into the neighbouring musical set in the Warner Bros. studios, then shifts into the studio's cafeteria where a pie fight breaks out, and finally ends up in the streets of the backlot. The film concludes with Sheriff Bart shooting Lamarr right outside Grauman's Chinese Theatre—just in time to join Jim inside the theatre to view the end of their own film. Obviously, the transgressions here are quite various: the boundary of the confined fictional world is metaleptically passed while at same time a temporal and spatial shift occurs; the ending no longer takes place in the late 19th-century wild west world of the diegetic setting, but in (then) present-day Hollywood.

But even when they do not or cannot escape their diegetic confinement, film characters may well be aware of their fictional status as the beginning of *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* proves: some villagers complain that every time a Robin Hood film is made, their village is burnt down and then they shout: "Leave us alone, Mel Brooks!" Of course, this is just a poor copy of a well-known metaleptic figure from literature: the independent existence of fictional characters and their rebellion against their creator as known most prominently from Ludwig Tieck, Luigi Pirandello, Flann O'Brien and Gilbert Sorentino.[18] The example given from *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* refers to the god-like and even sadistic freedom of the creator—in cinema most often equated with the director—who at any time can interfere with the fictional world and change it according to his will.[19]

Metaleptic transgressions may also occur between different parts of an episodic film, in which the episodes are diegetically distinct. Withalm (1997: 263) stresses: "When a film consists of several episodes, they are

18 The figure of an autonomous fictional characters has been described extensively by Achim Hölter. Cf. Hölter (2007: 37–45) in particular.

19 That this freedom may bare the traits of despotism (at least from the characters' point of view) is well illustrated at the beginning of Feldman's *Last Remake of Beau Geste*. During the opening titles a hand reaches into the frame, pointing into the sands of the Sahara, where the fictional story takes place, and thus leaving a hole in the ground into which two members of the Foreign Legion promptly fall. As the hand carries a ring showing the initials "M. F.," we may assume that this is supposed to be the hand of director Marty Feldman.

usually independent of each other. The characters have no knowledge of each other—usually." Once again, it is Mel Brooks who presents us such a metalepsis in an episodic film. The antiquity episode of *History of the World: Part I* (1981) closes with Comicus (Brooks) and Joesphus (Gregory Hines) fleeing Rome in a chariot drawn by a horse called Miracle. At the end of the French Revolution episode, Jacques (Brooks again), the "garçon de pisse" who doubled as the French King, is to be decapitated when Mademoiselle Rimbaud cries out: "Only a miracle can save us now!" No sooner said than done: Miracle, the horse from the antiquity episode, arrives drawing the chariot carrying Josephus. Jacques and M[lle] Rimbaud jump onto the chariot, and in the last shot of the film the fugitives pass along a mountain carved with the words "The End"—which of course marks another variant of a metaleptic inclusion of a paratextual element in the diegesis.

c. Effects of Comedy—Breaking and Re-Framing Filmic Illusion

Considering that our examples are taken from comedy films, one thing might be surprising: it is not the metalepses themselves that are funny. Breaking the filmic illusion does not in itself create a comic effect. The comic effect we observe in these metalepses results from the often absurd reaction of the fictional characters to the metaleptic transgressions and intrusions. In many cases, it is a moment of surprise that seems funny to us, confirming that comedy presupposes a certain competence on the side of the spectator (cf. Dahms 2010). As spectators, we must be able to recognize the specific comic effect. For example the incongruity of a situation (ibid.) oftentimes corresponds exactly to the reaction of the fictional characters, which is itself out of all proportion, even exaggerated. The transgressions and intrusions do not really disturb them; rather they seem to be aware of their fictional status, thus sharing the knowledge of the real spectator and becoming his confidants and accomplices. It is precisely this winking and, sometimes even ludicrous complicity that stresses the deviations from the norms and conventions of filmic fiction and from which these metalepses take their comic effect. If we take comedy itself as a form of deviation—and thus per se as a transgression (ibid.)—its affinity to metalepsis (or vice versa) becomes quite obvious. Comedy is always a play with borders and limitations. It thus becomes a mediator between supposedly incompatible worlds. Comedy, just like metalepsis, leads to a destabilization of well-regulated circumstances (ibid.).

One specific form of such a destabilization is the breaking of illusion. Indeed, all the examples of filmic narrative metalepses and confusions of

possible worlds within the filmic universe seem to prove Werner Wolf's (1990: 295) assumption that metalepsis is one of the most effective techniques for breaking illusion. The concealing of a film's artificiality and factitiousness by means of conventionality is vital for the creation of a seemingly sound, complete, transparent and thus (supposedly) realistic diegesis. All the examples given so far break this convention by metaleptically laying bare certain aspects of the artificiality, textuality and assembly of the respective films, illustrating, moreover, their dependence on a superior extradiegetic world from which they originate by means of production and narration. This exposure nearly always comes about in terms of the story and may thus be characterised as metafictional. According to Wolf (1990: 289), the "explicit metafictional laying bare of [artificiality] is one of the important processes responsible for breaking illusion." Hence he stresses the "strong *anti-illusionist effect*" (Wolf 2005: 103) of metalepsis in general.[20] Moreover, in a certain way, all these self-referential parodistic film comedies betray the audience, denying the spectators their *willing suspension of disbelief*, according to Coleridge's famous notion (cf. Foakes 1990: 222), by (seemingly) interrupting the filmic illusion.

Yet on closer inspection, it becomes clear that metalepses do not function as anti-illusionistically as it might seem. In my opinion, they are less meant to serve as "a *marker of fictionality*" (Wolf 2005: 102), than to act as a so-called 'narrativising' device. Thanks to metalepsis, extradiegetic elements can be embedded into the diegetic world of filmic fiction through a constant process of reframing. This may happen either in an act of intrusion of extradiegetic elements into the diegesis or by an extension of the diegetic frame to encompass parts of the extradiegetic world. In both cases, however, the transgression of the boundary between extra- and intradiegesis leads to an amplification of the fictional world, whereupon the assumed extradiegesis turns out to be the actual intradiegesis (cf. Feyersinger 2007: 118–119) in which, once again, one or more further metadiegetic worlds may be embedded. Certain parts of the presupposed non-narrative and non-fictional afilmic and profilmic world are thus metaleptically fictionalised, thereby becoming part of the fictional world of the filmic narrative. This explains and confirms Limoges's (2008: 35) conten-

20 In the same manner, Frank Wagner (2002: 239) argues that all metalepses lay bare the constructedness of the narrative and its process of textualisation. With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that (narrative) metalepses can most often be found in postmodern film parodies with a strong self-reflexive impetus, as in the films of Mel Brooks or in Marty Feldman's *Last Remake of Beau Geste*. These films are characterised by a pronounced reference to themselves as film, i.e., the film as a product becomes part of its own diegesis (cf. Withalm 1999: 153). This process is of course genuinely metaleptic and thus confirms the self-reflexive potential of metalepsis.

tion that although metalepses may breach the diegetic boundaries, the diegetic world as well as the fiction itself remain intact.

Narrative metalepses have become a predictable convention within the film genre of self-reflexive and self-referential[21] parodies.[22] They no longer interrupt our willing suspension of disbelief, but have become part of it: willingly, we suspend our disbelief of the possibility of transgressions of the boundaries between (supposedly) ontologically distinct words. Although we know that such transgressions are in fact impossible, we want to believe in them, at least for the moment, be it only for our amusement.

3. Who Watches the Watchers?—Or: Fictional Filmic Metalepsis

In the light of our examples in the previous section, it seems justifiable to extend the notion of metalepsis from the narrator's intrusion to any form of transgression of the boundaries between ontologically and epistemologically distinct worlds and sub-worlds within the larger filmic universe as set out by Souriau. Thus in a wider sense all these transgressions might be termed ontological metalepses, referring to any passage, trespass or breach that seems logically impossible or forbidden (cf. Ryan 2005: 207). As the diegesis is one of the possible worlds, the notion of ontological metalepsis also comprises all confusions of ontologically distinct fictional (sub-) worlds. These may not only exist within the common filmophanic frame of an episodic film, for instance, but also within one and the same diegetic frame. If the boundaries between these embedded fictional worlds are transgressed, I speak of *fictional* instead of *narrative metalepsis*, thereby joining up with Genette's (2004: 16) notion of "*métalepse fictionelle*."

For fictional metalepsis we need to distinguish different (possible) levels of diegetic hierarchy. Within the common frame of a single film, the different possible fictional worlds may be arranged either vertically or horizontally. (In the latter case these worlds are situated on the same diegetic level, and can be presented either at the same time or in succession.) As Genette (1983/1988: 88) notes himself, such a "transgression of the threshold of embedding" is to be designated as *metalepsis* and may be accomplished in either an ascending or a descending manner.

21 I refer here to Withalm (1999: 153) who pleads for a differentiation between self-referential films that refer to film as a system (from film-in-film up to cinema as the location of viewing) and self-reflexive films which at certain moments actually allude to themselves as film.

22 As Reginald A. Foakes (1990: 227) observes regarding dramatic illusion, "in making its way to the theatre, an audience goes with a set of expectations derived from their prior knowledge of the nature of a theatre." This being true for cinema as well, metaleptic transgressions and intrusions have become just as much part of our knowledge of conventions as illusionistic devices.

a. Fictional Transgressions and Immersions

Probably the most famous fictional metalepsis in a film can be found in Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985). Allen's romantic comedy, set in the time of the Great Depression, tells us the story of Cecilia (Mia Farrow), who regularly goes to the cinema to forget the troubles of her dull, grey life. While she is watching the "The Purple Rose of Cairo," the film-in-film about adventurer Tom Baxter (Bill Pullman), for the fifth time, Baxter first addresses her, thus verbally trespassing the boundary between meta- and intradiegesis, and then literally steps out of the screen, thereby turning from black and white into colour. Baxter, visibly enjoying his newly gained freedom, refuses to return to the film. Under the protest of the remaining characters in the film-in-film, he and Cecilia leave the theatre, but Baxter soon has too find out that the 'real' world is quite different from the one he knows: the money he wants to pay with in the restaurant is refused as "fake money," and he misses a fade when he kisses Cecilia, who reproaches him with talking like in film. On the other hand, a fight proves that Tom cannot get hurt because he is imaginary, even in the supposed real world. Meanwhile, Gil Shepard, the actor who has played Tom (Pullman, too), has arrived, trying to convince him to return to the film. So he does, but he takes Cecilia with him—quite to the surprise of the other characters on the screen who state: "She's real." The screen thus proves to be permeable in both ways. Whilst Cecilia lingers in the film, Gil enters the cinema, too, addressing Cecilia on the screen. He pretends to have fallen in love with her and demands that she decide for either him or his character. Both Tom and Cecilia step out of the screen again and Cecilia decides she wants to stay with Gil, because he is real. Finally, Tom returns to his own world and the film is stopped. But Gil has betrayed Cecilia for the sake of his career and leaves her behind.

I have given a rather detailed summary, as Allen's now classic film illustrates various aspects we also encounter in many other films in which fictional metalepses occur. First of all, *The Purple Rose of Cairo* exhibits not only the comic but in particular the fantastic nature of metaleptic transgressions—even more so, as these transgressions seem to take place completely unmediated and unmotivated. Secondly, Woody Allen's film takes up the notion of the independent existence of the fictional character and its rebellion against its creator. And thirdly, the metaleptic transgressions illustrate the ontological differences between the possible worlds in front of and behind the screen which each have their own rules.[23] It seems

23 The most striking example for the ontological distinctness of the world on the screen seems to be the fact that it is black and white, whereas the supposedly 'real' world is of course in colour. Similarly, in *Pleasantville* (Gary Ross, 1998) David (Tobey Maguire) and his

worthwhile to discuss these three aspects in more detail by comparing them with fictional metalepses in further comedy films.

Apart from the fact that Cecilia has seen the film four times before, there is little evidence as to why Tom Baxter suddenly addresses her and leaves the screen. Surely, Baxter as well as the other characters of the film-in-film are curious to know "what it's like out there." However, it is impossible to discern a concrete trigger for the actual transgression. Thus it occurs completely unmotivated. This enforces the fantastic effect which results from the fact that, according to our common sense, such a trespass is logically and ontologically impossible.[24] Besides, in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* the metalepsis is entirely unmediated. In this it differs from many similar metaleptic transgressions in other films which often present a pseudo-realistic explanation of whatever kind for the cause of the metalepsis. In the "Murray in Videoland" segment of *Amazon Women on the Moon* it is a malfunctioning remote control that induces the metaleptic intrusion. We can find a similar idea in the German comedy *Die Einsteiger* (Sigi Rothemund, 1985). Here Mike (Mike Krüger) invents a cleverly devised remote control allowing him and his friend Tommy (Thomas Gottschalk) to 'beam' into any film currently running on his video cassette recorder and out again. In *Pleasantville* (Gary Ross, 1998) David (Tobey Maguire) is given a futuristic remote control by a mysterious TV repairman (Don Knotts) which teleports him and his sister Jennifer (Reese Witherspoon) into his favourite TV show.[25] In *Last Action Hero*, on the other hand, it is a magical gold-plated ticket which catapults Danny Madigan (Austin O'Brien) into the newest film of his favourite action character, Jack Slater (Arnold Schwarzenegger). Another frequently found possibility for explaining the fantastic intrusion is to ascribe to it the mode of the dream. Actually, this leads us back to the era of silent cinema, proving that the idea of metaleptic transgressions in comedy film is not a mere invention of postmodern cinema. In Buster Keaton's *Sherlock, Jr.* (1924), a film projectionist who wants to become a detective one day falls asleep while he is at work, and in his dream he approaches the screen and then jumps into the film that is just being shown. Similarly, in *Delirious* (Tom

sister Jennifer (Reese Witherspoon) are drawn into his favourite TV show, "Pleasantville," a 1950s black-and-white sitcom. The show is characterised by rather austere morals. But by introducing the notion of sex, the two teenagers from the 1990s profoundly change the show's world. As its inhabitants begin to explore their sexuality, more and more objects and people begin to gain colour, until finally the entire world becomes coloured.

24 Cf. Ryan (2005: 209) who stresses that the ontological metalepsis pulls us into the universe of the fantastic as it fulfils the fusion of possible worlds, thus breaching the laws and rules of logic.

25 Further examples and a detailed discussion of the remote control as a means of metalepsis can be found in Jeff Thoss's contribution to this volume.

Mankiewicz, 1991), soap opera writer Jack Gable (John Candy) finds himself in his own TV show after an accident, but as the story reaches its climax he suddenly awakens in the studio set, only to realise that all that he has experienced was but a dream during his blackout. All these examples make clear that usually some sort of explanation is required to make plausible the otherwise illogical and paradoxical transgressions of fictional metalepsis.

Fictional metalepsis mainly serves to emphasise the dependence of the fictional characters and their world(s) on a creator located on an ontologically superior level. In *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, Tom Baxter praises his newly gained freedom when he steps out of the screen, while Gil Shepard laments that his own creation plagues him. But this freedom turns out to be a mere illusion, for Baxter can't leave his fictional nature behind him, probably best illustrated by his statement "It's written into my character." And while one of the remaining characters on the screen dwells on the possibility that they are real whereas it is the audience that is a dream, they all fear annihilation in case the projector should be turned off. This fear of obliteration also affects the life of Harold Crick (Will Ferrell) in Marc Forster's comedy-drama *Stranger than Fiction* (2006) when Crick is forced to realise he is a fictional character in the latest book-in-progress of author Karen Eiffel (Emma Thompson). On actually (and thus of course metaleptically) encountering her, he must even learn that she is struggling from writer's block as to how to dispatch him. The dependence of the fictional characters on an author's writing is also made obvious in *Delirious*: once Jack Gable finds out that whatever he writes on his typewriter becomes true in the dream-like story he has just experienced, he repeatedly makes use of this possibility to change the story in his favour. The freedom of the fictional character ends as soon as Jack interferes. Jack appears as the demi-urge that can randomly change anything he wants to.

All this leads to the conclusion that the ontological status of the supposedly real and of the fictional world seems to be completely miscellaneous. Take for example the scene in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* where Cecilia joins Tom Baxter to enter the world on the screen. Somewhat amused she remarks that the champagne glasses are only filled with ginger ale. In short, everything seems to be a fake. However, the fictional world is not necessarily deficient, mainly because it is larger than the sum of all the components it is made up of, as *Delirious* exemplifies: before Jack Gable, dream-like, enters the world of his own soap opera, we see him on the set of the show, where the hospital consists of nothing more than a few papier-mâché walls and stage props. Yet when he wakes up in the show after his accident, he is startled to find out that the hospital indeed has long and crowded floors.

But first and foremost, the ontological discrepancy results from the fact that each world is ruled by its own laws. If we think back to the circumstance that Tom Baxter can't be hurt even in the real world because he is fictional, this leads us to a similar but at the same time completely different, example from *Last Action Hero*. As long as Jack Slater remains within the confined boundaries of his fictional world, he survives any breakneck situation without the slightest injury. But once he leaves the screen and enters Danny's 'real' world, he not only has to suffer pain for the very first time, but is also fatally wounded. Hence Danny insists that he is not to be taken to hospital but back to the cinema. Once he has returned to his own world, the meant-to-be fatal wound turns out to be but a slight scratch. On the other hand, the fictional world can also potentially be lethal for the intruders from the 'real' world. In *Die Einsteiger*, Tommy and Mike have to fear for their lives on several occasions. When on leaving a movie Tommy accidently beams a female vampire out with him instead of Mike, the creature does not become unthreatening in the 'real' world. Equally, in *Last Action Hero* the magical gold-plated ticket is windswept into a cinema where Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* is shown, whereupon Death (Ian McKellen) descends from the screen bringing disease and death to anyone he touches. Yet when he encounters Danny and the wounded Jack Slater he tells the boy that he has not come for Slater as he is not on any of his lists whereas Danny, who will die a grandfather, is. Before he leaves, the boy asks him to help him return Slater to his world, but Death refuses declaring: "I do not fiction. It is not my field."

b. Permeability, Reversibility and Reciprocity

The major differences and the ontological distinctness of the supposedly real world and fictional world seem to accentuate the boundary separating the diegeses.[26] However, this barrier is by no means impenetrable.[27] On the contrary, the examples of fictional metalepsis indicate that the diegetic border is permeable, or at least semi-permeable. And as illogical and thus impossible as it may seem, it has often been suggested that this trespass is on no account mono-directional but rather reversible and reciprocal.

26 Cf. Feyersinger (2007: 128), who points out that in many cases metalepsis betrays the boundary between distinct diegeses and thus supports the classic concept of diegesis, whereas transgressions and breaches occur in heterogeneous and instable worlds suggesting an amplification of that concept.

27 Cf. Baron (2005: 297), who argues that metalepsis does not necessarily cause an amalgamation of diegetic levels but in contrast may also confirm their imperviousness ("*l'étanchéité*").

The instances of fictional metalepsis from the comedy films discussed above can be interpreted as a symbolisation of the audience's expectations. Confirming Coleridge's notion of the *willing suspension of disbelief*, the immersion of an intradiegetic character into the metadiegetic fictional world illustrates the real spectator's desire to be literally drawn into the action he or she witnesses on the screen.[28] Similarly, the descent of a metadiegetic character from the screen might be understood as a visualisation of the spectator's identification with his or her heroes. Take Cecilia's escapism in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* for instance: when going to the cinema, we wish to forget reality and instead replace it with the fictitious world on the screen. In other words, fiction and reality become interchangeable: for the moment, at least, we wish that fiction would become reality, or that our reality might appear just as wondrous as the dreamlike film world.

Taking all this into account, the filmic illusion is not only maintained but even re-enforced. Fictional metalepsis expresses and emphasises our desire for fiction. Be that as it may, is crossing over of the boundary between fiction and reality in film not ultimately bound to fail? Will it not always be but wishful thinking? Both cinema and television, unlike theatre, deny the possibility of physical interaction. The screen and the display are ultimately impenetrable in either direction. Any attempt to defy this fact must turn out to be frustrating. We find an example for this in early silent cinema, with Edwin S. Porter's short comedy *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1902): simple-minded Uncle Josh takes for real what he sees on the screen. When he believes he recognises his own daughter during a love-scene, he wants to hit the boy, but of course he only grabs the screen, tears it down and finds to his surprise the projectionist in the rear.

Regardless of this objection, the audience's immersion into and desire for fiction imply at least the hypothetical possibility that we, the spectators are just as fictitious as the characters we see in cinema or watch on TV. Of course, this leads us to the conclusion of Jorge Luis Borges's essay "Partial Enchantments of the 'Quixote'" which Genette (1972/1980: 236) was the first to refer to in the metaleptic context:

> Why does it disquiet us to know that Don Quixote is a reader of the *Quixote*, and Hamlet is a spectator of *Hamlet*? I believe I have found the answer: those investigations suggest that if the characters in a story can be readers or spectators, then we, their readers or spectators, can be fictitious. (Borges 1952/1964: 46)

28 Even stronger than in the case of narrative metalepsis I would like to emphasise that fictional metalepsis does not necessarily break the filmic illusion. Far from it, it "displays rather illusionistic than anti-illusionist effects" (Fludernik 2003: 384). I am in complete agreement with Monika Fludernik, who with reference to metalepsis in literature, argues that "[t]he purpose of the device is to enhance the reader's immersion into the fiction [...]" (ibid.).

So, who watches the watchers?, we might ask in the spirit of Juvenal's phrase. Maybe it is not us watching the characters on the screen or the monitor, but them watching us, as in the last segment of *The Kentucky Fried Movie* (John Landis, 1977), where a young couple (Tara Strohmeier, Richard Gates) is having sex on the sofa while the TV is still running. The newscaster (Neil Thompson) has increasing difficulty concentrating on his text because he is distracted by what is going on in front of the TV. He even calls some of his colleagues, who voyeuristically and lasciviously watch the couple. *Amazon Women on the Moon*, which ten years later picks up the faux broadcast format of *The Kentucky Fried Movie*, once again presents us a with voyeuristic metalepsis in the segment entitled "Video Date" (dir. John Landis). While looking for a film in a video shop, Ray (Marc McClure) is accosted by a salesman (played by famous sexploitation director Russ Meyer) who provides him with a video tape bearing his name. At home, the video turns out to be a pornographic film in which a girl called Sharri (Corinne Wahl) directly addresses Ray, begging for sex with him, when suddenly Sharri's boyfriend Frankie (Andrew Dice Clay) appears in the video, first shooting Sharri and blaming Ray for it, then pointing the gun at himself. Finally, when the police arrive, it is the shocked Ray still sitting in front of his TV set who is arrested.

Both examples confront us with a fantasmatic *mise en abyme* structure in which reality and fiction become indistinguishable—at least from the intra- or metadiegetic perspective. But by definition, this convolution may be infinite in either way—at least hypothetically. From the angle of intradiegesis, the supposedly real extradiegetic world may be just one more step or level of a fictional *mise en cadre*.[29] Our real world may therefore turn out to be just as fictitious as the world of the intra- and metadiegetic characters. Like Borges's magician in "The Circular Ruins," we would then have to accept that each one of us is "a mere appearance, dreamt by another," an idea, a fantasma which humiliates and scares us (Borges 1940/1979: 77).[30] Eventually, this explains Genette's (1972/1980: 335) observation that metalepsis produces either a fantastical or a comical effect. Metalepsis therefore may serve as a kind of comic relief for a possible yet unbearable truth.

29 Wolf (2001: 63) proposes to rename the classical *mise en abyme* structure *mise en cadre*. The *mise en cadre* can be understood as a transfer or transposition onto the level of the frame.

30 Cf. Žižek (2008: 229) who stresses the very fantasmatic nature of this idea: "In short, the most elementary fantasmatic scene is not that of a fascinating scene to be looked at, but the notion that 'there is someone out there looking at us'; it is not a dream, but the notion that 'we are the objects in someone else's dream'."

4. Conclusion

It is my hope that these remarks on metalepsis in comedy film have shown that it is reasonable to differentiate between the intrusion of (supposedly) extradiegetic elements, especially those of the 'cinematic narrator', into the fictional universe (*narrative metalepsis*), and transgressions between embedded fictional worlds (*fictional metalepsis*). This delimitation seems all the more justified by the fact that the proper comic effects of both kinds of filmic metalepsis are completely different. In the case of *narrative metalepsis* the comic effect results from the overall absurd and parodistic humor of a scene or of an entire film. It reflects the production conventions of the film and is based primarily on the actions and reactions of the fictional characters, on the cognisance and complicity of the audience and on further comic allusions. *Narrative metalepsis* has a profound affinity to comedy. Neither *fictional metalepsis* nor its accompanying circumstances, on the other hand, are comic per se. Thus it is not restricted to comedy films (the affinity to drama is quite obvious, as in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* or in *Stranger than Fiction*). Here, the metaleptic effect is of a fantastic, even disturbing nature. Therefore, in the case of *fictional metalepsis* the comic effect, finding its expression in the laughter of the audience, is frequently a form of relief on the side of the spectator. Comedy, here, is a kind of alleviation, compensation or *détente* (cf. Freud 1905/1982: 138) in the light of a hypothetical, but nonetheless disturbing fantasma.

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Metalepsis in the Cartoons of Tex Avery: Expanding the Boundaries of Transgression[1]

Who would have thought such a small digression, proposed over thirty years ago, would become the subject of so much debate? Gérard Genette introduced many notions in *Figures III* that immediately became influential, and he also provided a pathbreaking definition of metalepsis. Genette's definition started a chain-reaction that first developed the concept and later distinguished between its various types (particularly Genette 2004 and Pier and Schaeffer, eds. 2005). To date, the concept has mainly been applied in the field of literature; however, it also seems reasonable to do so for popular culture narratives, since they are governed by the same kinds of narrative configurations as literary works. Such new applications can allow us to continue exploring the concept. In order to identify its constitutive elements, I will consider this initial definition (fine-tuned by Genette and reconsidered by Pier and Schaeffer) alongside various digressions from Frank Wagner's article "Glissements et déphasages. Notes sur la métalepse narrative" (2002). This study seeks to widen the definition with an eye towards the cinema, and more specifically, cartoons. I will then propose a more complete and flexible typology which will try to avoid the often contradictory and confused names given to various types of transgressions (i.e., rhetorical metalepsis, ontological metalepsis, auctorial metalepsis, personalised narrator metalepsis, anti-metalepsis, heterometalepsis, etc.). As a third step, I will demonstrate the fresh possibilities provided by this revised typology through the work of American cartoonist Tex Avery (1908–1980). I will show how his cartoons are wrought with instances of metalepsis and thus expand the boundaries of Genette's definition.

1 Translated from the French by Johanne O'Malley.

Towards a comprehensive definition of metalepsis

Genette's initial definition of metalepsis (1972: 243–245) has three components, all of which have been reconsidered in one way or another and to varying degrees by those who have continued to study this phenomenon. These three components are: "*worlds*" ("diegetic universes" or "narratives"); "*boundaries*" and their "*transgression*" (or "intrusions");[2] and the "*direction*" of the transgression (not to be confused with its "*modes*" or "*modalities*" which will be discussed later).

Some thirty years after *Figures III*, the same concepts resurfaced in *Métalepses: Entorses au pacte de la représentation* (2004). They often assumed the same names, but not always. The notion of "*worlds*," for example, resurfaced as two "worlds"[3] (Pier 2005: 253), two "universes" or two "domains" (Ryan 2005: 207), two "enunciative contexts" (Meyer-Minnemann 2005: 135) or two "levels" (be they "narrative" or "diegetic"), each being "clearly divided" (Pier and Schaeffer 2005: 11). This divide marks off the "world of the storyteller" from the "world of the story" (Pier and Schaeffer 2005: 11–12), the "[world] from which the story is told" from the "[world] about which the story is told" (Cornils 2005: 97, 105), the "narrative world" from the "narrated world" (Pier and Schaeffer 2005: 14), the "narrative level" from the "narrated [level]" (Pier and Schaeffer 2005: 11), the "narrative plane" from the "narrated [plane]" (Kindt 2005: 175, 178), the "[universe] of the stage or […] the audience" from the "fictional universe" (Pier and Schaeffer 2005: 12), the "two levels of the auctorial narrative, the *discourse* level and the *story* level" (Fludernik 2005: 74) and finally the "imaginary" world from the "real" world (Ryan 2005: 207).

Wagner also evokes this "boundary," what Genette calls the "narrative boundary" (2002: 250), the "boundary of representation" (ibid.: 250), or "textual fence" (ibid.: 247, 250). Participants in the conference "La métalepse, aujourd'hui" also alluded to this "line in the sand" (Pier 2005: 247) as forever "sacred" or "sacrosanct" (Cornils 2005: 105), "moveable" (ibid.: 97) yet "impenetrable" (Baron 2005: 296) or "impassable" (Meyer-Minnemann 2005: 135), flanked by two "distinct" (Cornils 2005: 97, Ryan

2 To which might be added "*effects*" (not to be confused with "*functions*"), neither of which will be broached by this article. However, a discussion with Harald Fricke the day following our symposium in Neuchâtel proved enlightening in that he reminded us that "function" is that which the transgression attempts to do *within the text*, whereas "effect" is that which it attempts to have *on the audience*. Function can be isolated as an *intratextual* process, but effect is always contingent and can be considered an *extratextual* feat. We could say that the "function" of a metalepsis is to make one think, but that its "effect" is to make one laugh.

3 Terms presented in quotation marks reflect the original nomenclature as translated for the purposes of this article.

2005: 207 and Pier 2005: 253) or "clearly separated" (Pier and Schaeffer 2005: 11) worlds. The notion of "transgressing" these boundaries also resurfaces, such that boundaries are not merely "transgressed" but "abolished" (Kindt 2005: 169), "voided" (Kindt 2005: 175), "disregarded" (Kindt 2005: 169), "pierced" (Ryan 2005: 207), "violated" (Pier and Schaeffer 2005: 12), etc. In the same vein, the symposium's proceedings referred to metalepsis as a "logically forbidden passage" (Ryan 2005: 207), an "intrusion" (Meyer-Minnemann 2005: 135), an "infraction" (Meister 2005: 237–238), a "breach" (Meister 2005: 241), a "violation" (Pier 2005: 247, 250) and also qualified it as "ungodly," "paradoxical" and "controversial" (Meister 2005: 237, 241).

Now, several questions arise from these lexical overlaps. If the "world *about which* the story is told" allows itself to be so easily delimited, what are we referring to in saying the "world *from which* the story is told"? To broach this question, the basic distinction between the fictional world and the real world as outlined in the model from the introduction must be expanded. Is the world of the author and reader the same as the world of the narrator and narratee? What about the kind of transgression that seeks to call into question the (real) author and the (real) reader, or the narrator and narratee—both fictive entities constructed by the text? And does it make sense to talk about "narrator" and "narratee" when we move outside literary works and consider audio-visual ones? Would it not be easier to adopt "producer" and "receiver" —terms that are widely applicable? Could we not also approach them more simply, as Wagner suggested, as transgressions between two worlds "about which the story is told,"[4] regardless of whether they are part of a fictional world or part of our "real" world, be they hypodiegetic or just plain diegetic?

Consequently, it appears more effective (i.e., functional) to talk about "*worlds*" (rather than "levels") and about "*diegetic*," "*extradiegetic*" and "*hypodiegetic*" worlds (rather than "narrative" and "narrated" worlds), just as it appears preferable to use "producer" (cf. narrator) and "receiver" (cf. narratee). We can then take stock of these *worlds* and their many *boundaries* in order to establish the *direction* of the transgressions (vertical, horizontal, ascending, or descending) to then consider their *mode* (rhetorical or ontological).

4 Wagner, after speaking about "breaches, intentional or not, to the frontiers between two narrative levels" (2002: 243), adds that "it is also possible that such breaches occur *within a single level*" (ibid.: 247, emphasis added).

Provisional typology

Before moving forward, let's revisit a few concepts. Firstly, there is the enunciative world (the world of the production/reception of the work) in which the author (which we will refer to as producer), and the reader (or spectator (which we will refer to as receiver) are both *real*. Secondly, there is the narrated world in which the narrator and narratee, (which we will refer to as producer and receiver) are *fictional*, both of them a product of the author. And lastly, there is the fictional world—the diegesis in which characters live—inside of which there can exist more than one embedded or parallel fictional world.[5] If we consider the fictional world as the "diegetic universe" and the potential fictional worlds within it as "hypo-diegetic universes," then that which "surrounds the work" (its context), out of which is born the real producer through the act of creation, is the "extradiegetic universe." Though this is often regarded as the real world, it is in fact a *representation* of the real world, be it realistic or not, and accordingly must be taken as yet another separate world, as did Genette with what he called the "extrafictional universe" (2004: 72). The "extrafictional" world appears to be the only "world *from which* the story is (truely) told" while the "extradiegetic" world is a "world *from which* the story *appears* to be told," or rather a "*representation* of the world from which the story is told."[6] Finally, there are also many works whose diegetic universes are closed (thus giving symmetry to figure 1 below). By adopting the terms *diegetic*, *extradiegetic* and *extrafictional*, we can move away from the less useful notion of fictional vs. real world and thereby distinguish between the real world as such and the real world as it is represented.

Therefore, we now find ourselves with not merely two worlds, but three, and sometimes four in the case of *embedded* universes, if not five when *parallel* universes come into play. To this we can add not a single boundary to be transgressed, but two, and sometimes three in the case of *embedded* universes, if not four when accounting for *parallel* universes. The minimal definition of a single metalepsis remains "a transgression of the boundaries between two worlds." My argument, however, reveals that there are more than simply two worlds involved in a piece of fiction, and

5 Please refer to the table below to follow through with this argument.

6 This specification has taken on some importance following a discussion with Roberta Hofer and Karin Kukkonen. That being said, I still struggle with the fact that Genette, who proposed these concepts, seems to have confused the issue in his latest work. In *Métalepse* (2004), we find Genette talking about "the extradiegetic level *which is our own*" (Genette 2004: 29, emphasis added), and then again about "the novelist […] between *his own living universe,* by definition extradiegetic, and the intradiegetic universe of his fiction" (2004: 31, emphasis added). Genette appears to be expanding the extrafictional in this work.

that consequently there is more than just a single set of boundaries to be crossed.

It seems to be widely accepted that diegetic characters–producers or audiences—presented within a closed world—can interact with hypodiegetic characters who can in turn reciprocate this interaction. It is also widely held that the extradiegetic narrator (or narratee) can also interact with the diegetic characters who can in turn reciprocate this interaction. Therefore, it seems equally acceptable that this same extradiegetic narrator (or narratee) should also interact with the characters of the diegetic universe. It therefore follows that we can also easily believe that the producers of the work themselves could interact not only with the diegetic characters but also with either the hypodiegetic characters, the narrator or the extradiegetic narratee. Taking it a step further still, the (real) audience could conceivably engage in the interaction not only with the diegetic characters but also with either the intradiegetic characters, the extradiegetic narrator or the narratee. And finally, after having taken inventory of all (im)possible transgressions, there remains the potential interaction between the characters of two hypodiegetic worlds from within a fictional world (the diegetic universe) or between two characters from two diegetic worlds from within an enunciative world (the extrafictional universe).

I will now consider the different forms which these transgressions can take. In the present context of seeking to uncover all potential worlds, I must necessarily broaden the simple notion of the transgression's "direction." First I consider transgression in its most frequent form—"vertical metalepsis" as coined by Meyer-Minnemann and Schlickers—which "moves from high to low or *vice versa* from low to high" (2005: 136, 140, 147). This form of metalepsis can be further divided based on the *direction* of transgression,[7] much as Pier proposed (2005: 253–254), to provide for "descending metalepses" and "ascending metalepses." This terminology appears easier to use than the "high to low" and "low to high"[8] or "bidirectional" terminology proposed by Schlickers (2005). I must also include "internal metalepses" (Cohn 2005: 122) or "intrametaleptic" transgressions (Pier 2005: 252) for "metalepses that occur between two levels of the same story, in other words between a primary story and a secondary story, or between a secondary and tertiary story" (Cohn 2005: 122). Ac-

7 Wagner, highlighting Genette's "or inversely" clause (2002: 246), draws attention to these directions (2002: 244) and to the "reversibility of metaleptic movements" (ibid.).

8 Recall that Genette uses the same terminology but inversely: "[…] classical theory only refers to ascending metalepsis by the use of the term *metalepsis*; that is, the author integrating himself within his own fiction […]" (2004: 27, emphasis in original). This is merely a matter of perspective (please refer to figure 1 for the perspective proposed by this article).

cordingly, we must also include "external metalepses" (Cohn ibid.) or "extrametaleptic" transgressions (Pier 2005: 252) for those "metalepses that occur between the extradiegetic and diegetic levels, in other words, between the narrator's and the story's universes" (Cohn 2005: 123). Alongside these instances of vertical metalepsis, we then refer to "horizontal metalepsis," following a suggestion by Wagner,[9] but not in the sense given by Meyer-Minnemann (2005: 136, 140, 145, 148) and by Schlickers (2005). This form can be divided into "*intra*diegetic metalepsis" (when it occurs between two works sharing the same fictional world) and "*inter*diegetic metalepsis" (when it occurs between two works sharing the same enunciative worlds).

Finally, I draw attention to the *modes* of transgression, or the ways in which boundary transgressions occur: "verbal metalepsis" or "*in verbis*," and "physical metalepsis" or "*in corpore*" (Meyer-Minnemann 2005: 146–147), acknowledging that these only work by convention.[10] To these we could also add (through the lens of certain Tex Avery cartoons) "visual metalepsis" and "auditory metalepsis."

9 In addition to transgressions "of boundaries between narrative levels," Wagner mentions transgressions occurring "within the same level" (2002: 247). This results in characters that can "pass between various adjacent fictive universes," and Wagner notes that "it is only at this metadiegetic level that the instance can be considered metaleptic in the sense Gérard Genette gave to it," so long as these "various diegeses constituting his story are *heterogeneous*" (2002: 247, emphasis added). He exemplifies this point by recalling how the narrator returns time and again to the bicycle in "The Voyeur" in Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Maison de rendez-vous*" (ibid.).

10 Fludernik noted that "[physical] transgression produced by the narrator […] is based on the audience imagining the narrator *entering the fictional universe*" and that such a transgression "rests on implicit *anthropomorphic* metaphors and continues with the explicit physical projection of the narrator into the story" (2005: 82, emphasis added).

The following figure illustrates all possible cases of metalepsis:

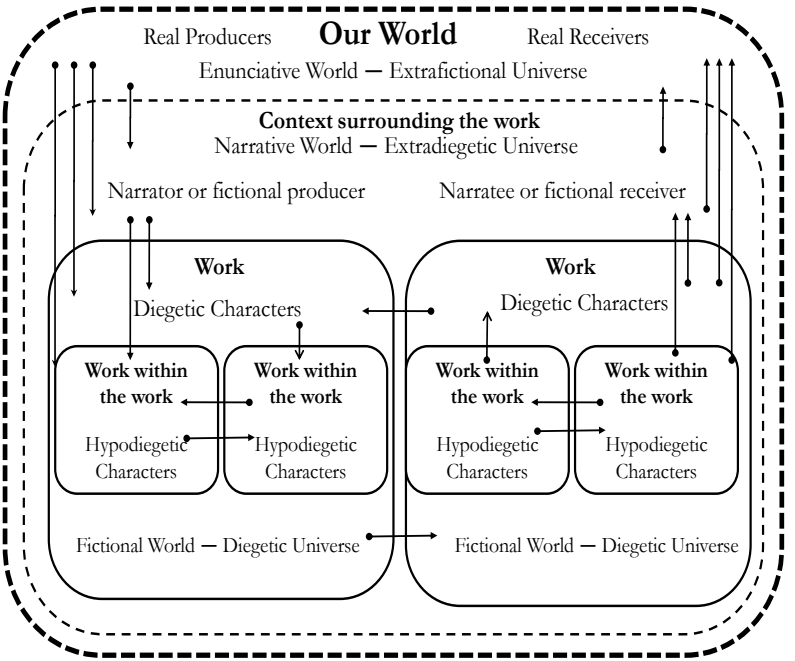

Fig. 1: Forms of Metalepsis

The "real" world (of production/reception) vs. its representation

Are transgressions between our world and the world of the work *truly* possible, let alone those between our world and the work within the work, or better still, those between the world "surrounding the work" —that more or less accurate representation of the "real" world? The standard argument states that "real world" elements introduced into the work are inevitably re-contextualized (and were therefore never truly a part of our "reality") and that any "real world" element introduced into the work immediately becomes part of the fiction (and is therefore in no sense "real").[11] Even if I consider this type of transgression possible—a transgression between the "world about which the story is told" and the "world from which the story is (truly) told" —, it can be argued that the

11 I owe these important comments, and their pursuant logic, to my friend Sébastien Babeux.

presence of a metalepsis weakens the boundaries between the "world from which the story is (truly) told" and the "world from which the story *appears* to be told." Therefore, it may be appropriate to talk about a "*coefficient of reality*," bearing in mind the variability of how convincing a transgression into the extradiegetic universe crosses into the extrafictional universe may be. It thus seems that metalepsis rests on an intriguing paradox: it is precisely because we *suspend our disbelief* (more or less "willingly" according to Coleridge) that transgressions between the diegetic and extrafictional universes work, and it is for this very reason that we *cease to believe* in the autonomy of the fiction.

But some, such as Genette himself and Schaeffer, seem to have envisioned potential transgressions between the "world about which the story is told" (the diegetic universe) and the "world from which the story is (truly) told" (the extrafictional universe). The former refers to Groucho Marx's famous line of the actor who "tells the audience they are lucky to be able to get up and leave as they see fit, while he—the poor actor [or should we say "character"?]—cannot [...] and must stay until the end" (Genette 2004: 64–65). The latter, in his study of the closing speech in *The Great Dictator* (C. Chaplin, 1940), notes that the speech originates not from the barber (the character) but from Chaplin (the actor). Schaeffer refers here to a "change at the enunciative level" (as the enunciation shifts from the character to the author-actor), which "implies a shift from the fictional universe to the real world (Chaplin the filmmaker's world)" (2005: 324–325). He states that "the scene indeed contains metalepsis in the canonical sense of the term. [...] It is born from a transgression not of the boundaries between *that which is narrated* and *the narrator* but of the boundaries that divides the incarnated *character level* (the barber) from the *author-actor level,* that which incarnates" (2005: 327). He further states that this metalepsis "transgresses the boundaries between the *fictional world* level and the *world of the fiction's creation*" (2005: 330–331).

In the first case, we could easily maintain that Groucho's statement *is not* addressed to any *real* audience, since there was no audience in the studio at the time it was spoken. However, we cannot deny that this statement nevertheless breaks the "fourth wall" and ultimately weakens the autonomy of the fiction. Further, depending on the coefficient of reality we attribute to it, the statement is aimed at the extrafictional universe. If Groucho had been explicit about the audience he was addressing, in a way that would not confuse the true audience: we could assign a weak coefficient of reality to this metalepsis, clearly directed at the extradiegetic universe.

In the second instance, can be argued that Chaplin, the actor behind the barber character, is not the *true* actor but in fact the actor we know

through other "texts" (interviews, documentaries, etc.). But we could also add that this "metalepsis"—if indeed it is one—would perhaps reveal a stronger coefficient of reality if, during his speech, the barber were to remove his hat, his clothes, and his moustache (bearing in mind that the actor shedding his role in this way would still be the actor known to us from those other texts as described above).

But these two examples reveal yet another element. Evidently in both cases we see the boundaries between the diegetic and the extradiegetic universes breached (resembling more or less our extrafictional universe). But the extradiegetic universe reveals both the world of *production* (i.e., Chaplin behind the character) and the world of *reception* (Groucho to the audience). Sophie Rabau maintains that in narratives there are three distinct worlds: the world, or place of the *fiction* (inside which the character lives); the moment or historic place of *production* (the one in which the "primary" author writes; and the moment, or historic place of the *reception*, distinct from the production space (the one within which the "secondary" author, according to Rabau, tells a story which introduces the "primary" author and the characters of that story. Therefore, Rabau foresees the possibility of bridging the "boundaries separating, or that should separate, the *fictional world of the character*, the *moment and historic locations where [the authors] write*, and those locations, also historic, but separate from the production space, *where the story is read*" (2005: 60, emphasis added). I will try now to show the usefulness of drawing closer attention to the distinction between the worlds of production and of reception, with the latter demonstrating a higher coefficient of reality than the former, at least in the works considered.

Metalepsis according to Tex Avery

Let us now look at the work of the American cartoonist Tex Avery (1908–1980) to find the various instances identified in the expanded typology proposed above. We shall begin by reviewing cases of intradiegetic transgressions (or internal metalepsis), which tend to be less disturbing, since they rest on diegetic assumptions (thanks to which anything goes), while at the same time they only slightly disturb the "aesthetic illusion."

The cartoon *T.V. of Tomorrow* (1953) provides a broad range of examples. One particular scene features various television sets from which hypodiegetic elements *physically* emerge (*ascending* metalepsis) or into which diegetic characters can immerse themselves, again *physically* (*descending* metalepsis): a diegetic character fills his glass with water from a tap connected to a T.V. screen displaying a waterfall; a smoker lights up directly

off the T.V set showing news footage of a forest fire; cards around a bridge table are dealt to other players through the T.V. screen; an irritating announcer is literally shredded by any exasperated viewer by using a small shredding device installed below the screen; a business man angling for swordfish while watching a fishing show is pulled through the screen into the water! But this particular cartoon reveals the use of another metaleptic mode: *visual* metalepsis. Take for example the scene where a woman watching television while taking her bath turns the television screen the other way so as not to be "seen" by the characters on screen. The boundary transgressed here is neither verbal, nor physical, but *visual*.[12]

But Tex Avery also offers us more troubling metaleptic instances. Take for instance a fictional or extradiegetic narrator (or, as we shall see, a producer) who exists in the "world from which the story appears to be told" but who, with a variable coefficient of reality, also presumes to be someone from the "world from which the story is (truly) told," someone who can interact (verbally and physically) with the diegetic characters (or with characters interacting with these producers).

In *Red Hot Riding Hood* (1943), less than a minute into the scene, the wolf, the heroine and the grandmother, clearly aggravated by the syrupy and verbose narrative, stop and demand that the narrator use a more cynical tone to spice up this dragged-out version retold too many times by "all those Hollywood studios." In this case, the characters assert their independence from the story-telling instance, being both independent of it and yet still dependent on it, as their very existence is rooted in the story.

In *Batty Baseball* (1944), a baseball player interrupts his race for home plate to mention to the narrator that the credits hadn't been rolled at the start of the cartoon, for which the narrator presents his apologies and duly rewinds the cartoon to the beginning. Here again, the characters enjoy a certain liberty, but as they engage in this autonomy, it only reasserts their dependence. In the field of cartoons, and particularly in cinema, the possibility of putting other metaleptic instances either in question or under the spotlight seems quite feasible.

12 This *visual* transgression (in this case, intradiegetic) opens the door on auditory transgressions, if not *musical* (in this case, extradiegetic). If no such example is available from Tex Avery's works, it is possible to find at least one within Mel Brooks' works (another metalepsis master, if you will). In *High Anxiety* (1977), when Professor Lilloman (Howard Morris) informs Richard H. Thorndyke (Mel Brooks) that "if left unchecked, high anxiety could cost you your life," an extradiegetic soundtrack is violently introduced, emphasizing the severity of the doctor's statement. However, the surprise is to notice that the characters themselves are taken aback by this music which, based on their glances, appears to come from above the shot (…or the room). This music, borne from the extradiegetic universe, should not, normally, be heard by the diegetic characters.

Another extradiegetic instance appears in *The Shooting of Dan McGoo* (1945) in which a "camera" (and quotation marks are required here) pans alongside a beer stein slid across the bar in a saloon. The shot pans by a painting of a scantily-clad woman, strategically covered by the barman. The camera stop panning and doubles-back to leer at the painting, to which the barman responds: "You might as well move on doc, I don't move from here all through the picture." Though the transgression of the diegetic barman is clearly ascending on the extradiegetic "camera," he is still well aware of his fictiveness (i.e., he knows he is merely a cartoon character).

These extradiegetic transgressions (or external metalepses) are vertically ascending, for the characters are the ones undertaking the transgression, and, in this case they are *verbal*, such that they involve the diegetic characters and certain extradiegetic instances (i.e., the narrator and cameraman) which are ultimately fictional instances by virtue of their production, not their reception.

So, arguably, we are but a step away from rendering this verbal exchange into a *physical* one. Indeed, the extradiegetic narrator—or fictional producer—of Tex Avery's cartoons does not shy away from "physically" intervening (again, always by convention) in the diegesis.

An example of this mode of transgression is found in *Dangerous Dan McFoo* (1939), a cartoon in which the narrator is running commentary for a bar fight (and is up to this point extradiegetic). Unimpressed with the performances of the brawlers, he finally loses patience and throws them two revolvers through the screen, declaring: "This isn't going anywhere! Let's get this thing over with!" Though the hands of the narrator appearing in the frame are "cartoonish" (thereby carrying a weak coefficient of reality), the characters curiously enough maintain their sovereignty (they do not seem to make a great deal of this extradiegetic instance; ass stated elsewhere, this border crossing "transgresses the diegetic boundaries without breaching the diegesis"[13]).

Produced a decade later, *The Car of Tomorrow* (1951) again reveals the hand of the narrator (also assuming the role of illustrator) as he disapprovingly scratches out the model car featuring "seal beam" headlights (literally seals hiding in the headlights). Since the hand that scratches out the image has a stronger coefficient of reality (a more realistic aesthetic) than the hands seen previously, the cartoon characters, whose two-dimensional nature is highlighted by this interaction, lose their autonomy.[14]

13 See Limoges (2008: 35).

14 Metalepsis can carry a greater or lesser coefficients of reality, thereby giving an impression of something aiming beyond the extradiegetic universe (the world from which the story

These extradiegetic transgressions (or external metalepses) are descending because it is the extradiegetic producers that are breaching the boundaries, in this case *physical* ones They call into question both the extradiegetic instance—narrator/illustrator which remains fictional and related to production (cf. reception)—and the diegetic characters.

The next series of examples also breach the boundaries between the "world about which the story is told" and the "world from which the story appears to be told." However, the transgressions will not be revealed by the producers (or the real world of production), but by the *audience* (and the real world of reception). It becomes clear how these transgressions connect the characters of the diegetic universe not through the past world of production but through present world of reception, and thereby carries a stronger coefficient of reality. It is through these examples that I propose to show how Tex Avery expands the boundaries of transgression.

Indeed, at times Tex Avery's diegetic characters do not appear to pander to the extradiegetic universe but rather to the (more real) extrafictional universe; nor do they appear seek to interact with the various (fictional) instances existing within it and through which (by convention) such instances are created in the first place. In my view, all interactions with the camera or call outs to the audience (or receivers) are extradiegetic ascending transgressions, be they visual or verbal. These metalepses are those which carry a stronger or weaker coefficient of reality which in turn gives the impression, more or less convincingly, that they are indulging the extrafictional spectator. An apt example is found in *One Ham's Family* (1943), a cartoon in which a little pig, while a wolf tends to an injury he incurred while chasing the pig, says into the camera "well I cannot heckle the wolf anymore until he comes back, I might as well heckle you people out there." He then avails himself of a blackboard across which he scratches a piece of chalk, causing many viewers very real goose bumps. We find a similar trick in *Happy-go-Nutty* (1944), a cartoon in which Screwball Squirrel leads his canine assailant into a dark cave. Once in the cave, the scene

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appears to be told) into the extrafictional universe (the world from which the story is really told). Consider *Duck Amuck* (C. Jones, 1953) and *La Linea* (O. Cavandoli, 1972). In the first case, the hand holding the pen which taunts the short-tempered Daffy Duck belongs to Bugs Bunny, even though he is the extradiegetic (i.e., fictional) producer, self-produced by an even more real extrafictional instance (although we are not reminded of this by the producing instance). In the second case, the hand holding the pen belongs to the much more real hand of the illustrator, the extrafictional instance which penetrates the diegesis, carrying a far more sober extradiegetic status (what sways us to believe that this hand is in fact the hand of the illustrator, any more so than in other texts?) In any case, the hand in *La Linea* tends to relate more to the extrafictional than the hand in *Duck Amuck,* whereas the hand in *The Car of Tomorrow* relates to a world somewhere in between.

fades to black and the audience can only hear the *squeal-crash-bang* of the gag, after which the squirrel lights a match to tell viewers: "Sure was a funny gag. Too bad you couldn't see it!" It is hard to conceive that these comments are aimed at some extradiegetic instance, at some narratee created by the work and existing within its own context. It is much easier to believe that it is our world, the extrafictional universe, to which these characters speak, without losing their cynical autonomy. But these *verbal* transgressions are arguably less disturbing than the occasional *physical* transgressions performed by some of Tex Avery's characters.

His characters could in fact make that extra step and try to escape, physically, from their world in order to make believe that they are entering our world or are integrating elements from our world into their own. Consider first the well-known sequence in *Magical Maestro* (1952) in which a thin hair hovers at the bottom of the screen only to be abruptly plucked by the opera singer. In virtually all cases, the audience would have dismissed this thread as truly being caught between the film and the projector lens.[15] Similarly in *Who Killed Who?* (1943), an absurd and inventive satire of the *film noir*, in which a policeman arrives on the murder scene and shouts the standard "Everybody stay where you are!" and then turns to the screen to bark at the shadow of a spectator on the screen attempting to sneak out the exit: "That goes for you too, boy!" Or again, the sequence in *Dumb-Hounded* (1943) in which a prison escapee is chased by Droopy dressed in his Canadian Mountie gear. After taking a sharp turn during the chase, the escapee is expelled from the film by some kind of centripetal force and finds himself on a garishly white background. Upon re-entering the scene, the character does indeed seem to have left the (diegetic) world for another world existing beyond the mere extradiegetic universe. Obviously, the film is a fictional cartoon, but the instance does not show the narrator or the extradiegetic producer. It does not pander to the moment of production but to the moment of reception,[16] much like the two previous examples.

15 This trick is taken up in the credits of *Trail of the Pink Panther* (B. Edwards, 1982).

16 These examples—much like the following ones—carry a great coefficient of reality due to the *context of reception* in which they appear (a point I made a paper presented in Graz in 2008): it is clear that if the cartoon is viewed in the DVD version on a television screen, the wire, shade and celluloid have a weaker coefficient of reality than if it were viewed on a movie screen. When I presented an excerpt of *Who Killed Who?,* in an amphitheatre during the *Cinéma et interdisciplinarité* course offered at Laval University in the fall of 2008, students admitted having believed, for a moment, that someone had *actually* gotten up to leave the room— proof if any that this transgression in function and in effect is geared to the extradiegetic universe. The context of reception is clearly a salient component. On this point, see Limoges (2009).

We find the same trick in *Northwest Hounded Police* (1946), but with a noteworthy enhancement. When the wolf re-enters the scene, whose "normal" progression then resumes, he finds himself in a movie theatre where he sees the very same Droopy appearing in an MGM cartoon, who then salutes him placidly from within this hypodiegetic universe. This additional layer merges two metalepses into one: it is a verbal ascending intrametaleptic transgression (Droopy saluting the wolf from inside the cartoon which the wolf is watching from inside the cartoon we are watching); but it is also a physical descending extradiegetic transgression with a strong coefficient of reality, thus achieving an extrafictional transgression such that the cartoons inhabiting our world suddenly penetrate the diegesis. This last example, as twisted as it may seem, occurs more than once in this cartoonist's work. In watching *The Early Bird Dood It!* (1942), we quickly see that the cartoon allows itself to do just about anything; yet it cannot contemplate itself as a finished work ... but indeed does just that! In the middle of the tale, the bird and the worm are engaged in a wild chase, when suddenly both stop in front of a movie poster promoting *The Early Bird Dood It!* cartoon. That the bird and the worm are speaking, no one questions, but that they stop to exchange a critique about the movie poster for the very cartoon in which they exist will indeed be troubling to virtually anyone. This same metaleptic configuration can be found in *Who Killed Who?* No one questions the notion that the victim is an old dog in a dressing gown comfortably reading a book in a chair. But that the book is entitled *Who Killed Who?* and is inspired "from the cartoon of the same name" is indeed disturbing. How can the cartoon being watched have inspired a book existing inside a universe that it itself has created?

Let us consider one last instance from Tex Avery's works, a horizontal transgression.[17] If a work encapsulates two distinct works, two closed and separate diegetic worlds (not merely two free-floating parallel worlds[18]) and allows characters to pass from one universe to the next, this is horizontal *intradiegetic*[19] transgression. And when characters from one work appear in another work whose diegetic universe is closed and distinct, this is also transgression, still horizontal, but in this case, *interdiegetic*. While the cartoonist does not provide us with an example of the former, surely the

17 We use Schicker's term here in the sense Wagner gave it.

18 I owe this observation to Sonja Klimek.

19 It goes without saying that certain works, which could be considered novels, do not necessarily create closed and different worlds. Balzac's *La Comédie humaine,* Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart* and Proust's *À la Recherche du temps perdu* are made up of many novels constituting only *a single and same diegetic universe*. When Rastignac or Nana or Baron de Charlus move from one book to another, they do not breach any "diegetic" boundaries.

following three examples of the latter will be sufficient to illustrate this type of transgression.

Screwball Squirrel (1944) opens on the scene of a luscious forest filled with chirping birds. We are quickly introduced to Sammy, a bluish squirrel with a voice too cutesy and adorable to belong in Tex Avery's off-the-wall world. Mere moments after meeting Sammy, another squirrel sporting a honking nose and crooked smile, interrupts him to ask: "Heya, what kind of a cartoon is this gonna be anyway?" After Sammy explains that he is "the lead in the picture," Screwy leads him behind a tree, at which point we can only imagine that he slugs him. He returns to tell us: "You wouldn't have liked the story anyway." It's easy enough to believe that Screwy had left his own diegetic cartoon universe to enter Sammy's world. Another clear example is the beginning of *Swing Shift Cinderella* (1945), where a wolf and the Little Red Riding Hood chase one another across the front of the rolling "Swing Shift Cinderella" credits and soon realise that they are "in the wrong picture." They subsequently double back, conceivably to return to their rightful picture. Again, we find this in *Screwy Truant* (1945) when Screwy Squirrel, hiding behind a tree waiting to slug his assailant, is shocked to see the same wolf and Little Red Riding Hood from the "wrong picture" scene chasing each other in Screwy's universe. Unimpressed, Screwy stops the wolf and pulls down a screen on which the cartoon title appears as if to show him that they were "in the wrong picture" again. These examples support the possibility of horizontal interdiegetic metalepses.

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This article adopts a simple definition of metalepsis as its point of departure: a transgression of the boundaries between two worlds. It explores the different ways in which two worlds can be related to each other within a narrative, and it elaborates a functional expansion of the basic definition of metalepsis. Tex Avery's cartoons provide a wealth of examples of these different types of metalepsis.

Also explored are the various potential worlds and boundaries that can be breached. It would have also been interesting to look at the *functions* and *effects* caused by these transgressions (making one laugh, think, feel troubled, etc.) and at the *modalities* of their manifestations (how do these transgressions function? How does one move from one world to another? Are these passages explained or justified? If so, how? With a magic ticket,

a remote control... ?).[20] Similarly for the various *nuances* of potential breaks in the aesthetic illusion (i.e., their perceptibility, the context of their reception, the genre in which they appear, the modalities of their occurrence and their motivation).[21] Tex Avery's cartoons alone seem to offer a nearly exhaustive repertoire of the forms of transgression, almost forcing us to expand Genette's definition and all subsequent versions coined by his followers. But Tex Avery's cartoons also present instances of broken boundaries that would have been difficult to integrate into this typology—proof that as he expands the boundaries of transgression, he also invites expansion of the boundaries of knowledge, a challenge he presents not only to his characters, his producers, and his audience, but also to theoreticians.

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Metalepsis in Comics and Graphic Novels

Towards the end of Grant Morrison's comics series *Animal Man*, things come to a head between the superheroes and the crazed villain Overman. Readers see two men with muscle-packed torsos in skin-tight costumes beating each other up. So far, so conventional in the superhero genre. Then, however, something unexpected happens: between the panel images of the comics page a third character appears. At first he simply watches the fist-fight, but then he decides to intervene and taps one of the caped heroes on the shoulder, addressing him: "Overman?" (Morrison 1989–90/2003: 164). Overman's face is marked with holy terror at this intervention from beyond the panel.

The average reader is perhaps no less surprised to find an instance of metalepsis in superhero comics than the flabbergasted combatant in *Animal Man*. However, metalepsis and metareferences are not an uncommon occurrence in comics and graphic novels.[1] Metalepses have been with comics since their beginnings in the Sunday newspapers at the dawn of the twentieth century. Comics auteurs like Will Eisner, Robert Crumb or M.-A. Mathieu frequently refer to themselves in their graphic novels. Metareferences are standard fare in the humorous comics of the Franco-Belgian tradition. And with the self-reflexive turn in mainstream English-language comics in the 1980s, also the superheroes embarked on quests to meet their authors and take control of their own stories.

Even though metalepsis is not uncommon in comics, a coherent account of the various forms of metalepsis in comics, which would be connected to the narratological discussion at large is, to the best of my knowledge, still lacking. My article is based on two previous discussions of

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1 The word "comics" refers to the medium of comics with its storytelling in words, images and sequences. I also use it in combinations like "comics series" or "comics image" signifying "in the medium of comics" in order to avoid the double meaning of "comic" as pertaining to both humorous literature and the comic book. The "graphic novel" is a particular publication format in the medium of comics. It refers to a self-contained narrative in the comics medium which is published in one volume.

metareference in comics which touch upon metalepsis: Thierry Groensteen's article on self-reflexivity in comics (1990) and Jan Baetens' article on the functions of the gutter, the space between the panels (1991). Groensteen presents various ways in which the production context of comics comes to the fore in comics narrative. Some of these can be considered metaleptic. Baetens suggests that a character crossing from the panel into the gutter is a metalepsis in comics (1991: 374). My own article connects both possibilities of metalepsis in comics, bringing the production context to the fore and crossing the panel frame, to our larger definition of metalepsis in this volume.

In order to arrive at an account of metalepsis in comics, I will begin by identifying the fictional world and the real world, as well as the boundary between them, in the features of the comics page. The fictional world in comics is represented in the panels and the representation of the real world can emerge in the spaces between the panels, in the 'gutter'. The real world is also shown to intervene with the fictional world when conventions of representation, such as the drawing style, are brought to the fore. I argue that, cognitively, metalepsis in comics constitutes the inversion of figure and ground: what forms the 'ground' of the comics narrative, for example, its drawing style and panel layout, largely unobtrusive conventions, suddenly becomes the 'figure', i.e., attracts the readers' attention when characters cross the panel boundaries or alter the drawings of the panel images. Metalepsis in comics works through the foregrounding of conventions of representation.

The first sections of my article will focus on the conventions of comics, such as drawing style and panel layout, and explain how they are foregrounded in metalepses. Rephrasing Genette's definition of metalepsis for the medium of comics, I will then connect my examples of metalepsis in comics to our larger definition of metalepsis as transgression of the boundary between the fictional world and the real world. After this, I will discuss the functions and effects of metalepsis in more general terms for two superhero comics, Grant Morrison's *Animal Man* (1988–90) and Alan Moore's *Tom Strong* (1999–2006). Here, metalepsis works as a strategy in the struggle for power between characters, readers and authors as well as between characters themselves. The stories of superhero comics like *Animal Man* and *Tom Strong* unfold as negotiations of fictionality, characters and authors struggle for supremacy in meaning-making, and metalepsis, embedded in the conventions of the popular genre of superhero comics, is their weapon of choice.

1. Worlds and Boundaries: The Gutter

An image from Will Eisner's *The Dreamer* (1986/2008: 23) brings the nature of the comics page to the point: it shows a building façade with two rows of square windows through which readers can see pencillers, inkers and other comics artisans at work on a comics publication. In the next image, we see a comics artist show a page with a panel grid to a friend. The square windows on the building façade have the same structure as the panels on the comics page. In his article on self-reflexivity in comics, Thierry Groensteen classifies this instance as a "metaphorisation of the code"[2] (1990: 163). For him, the "code" of comics comprises the medium's graphic material, its specific mode of representation, its production processes and the (social) institutions surrounding it (1990: 133). Comics can direct their readers' attention to any of these dimensions of the code and thus become self-reflexive. In the image from *The Dreamer*, Eisner draws on the comics' mode of representation, i.e., square panels ordered in sequence on a page, and translates them in metaphorical fashion into windows granting the viewer visual access to the inside of the house.

While this image from Eisner's *The Dreamer* is itself no metalepsis, it points us to how the worlds, boundaries and possible transgressions of metalepsis can work in comics. What readers see in the panel images on the comics page are settings, characters and depictions of the events of the story as it unfolds. In other words, they show us the fictional world. However, comics panels do not show us the entire fictional world, but only a particular part of it. The image within the panel frame is a selection from the entire possible information which the fictional world holds. Comics studies calls this selection "cadre," i.e., frame (Groensteen 1999: 49). Whatever is outside the frame is not visible. Paintings certainly feature the same kind of framing, limiting the view on the fictional world in which the story takes place. Different from the audience of paintings, however, readers of comics (and viewers of films) are presented with not one, but many framings of the fictional world. With the sequence of panels on the comics page, the story unfolds through time and space, depicting a later stage of the events and potentially a different part of the fictional world in the consecutive images. Like the outside observer of Eisner's window façade, comics readers move their gaze across the panels on the page to learn about different parts of the fictional world.

If the panel images work as windows into the fictional world, then what we see in the images is part of the fictional world: the panel frame

2 All the English translations from Groensteen, Baetens and Genette are my own. The French original reads "métaphorisation du code" (1999: 163).

acts as the boundary between the fictional world and the real world, and the real world is potentially represented in the spaces between the panels. A metalepsis, which is the transgression of the boundary between the fictional world and the real world, should be depicted as a transgression of the panel frame. In his discussion of the function of the 'gutter', the space between the panels, Jan Baetens comes to a similar conclusion, but departs from the perspective of narrative levels: "when the gutter […] enters the world of narration, or when, conversely, the world of the narrative usurps the higher level, narratologically speaking, of the blanks and the larger frame of the page,"[3] then the gutter contributes to metalepsis in comics (1991: 374).

And, indeed, many metalepses in comics are based on transgressing into or out of the gutter: Animal Man leaves his fictional world by climbing out of the panel frame and entering the space between the panels in the example which opened this article. In another instance, he addresses readers as he directs his gaze through the imaginary window pane, which is the surface of the comics page, separating the fictional world from the real world of readers (Morrison 1989–90/2003: 41). There are other kinds of metalepsis possible in comics, and I will discuss these in the following sections, but none of them is as exclusively tied to the comics' mode of representation as the crossing of the panel frame.

The gutter forms the grid of the page layout and thus serves as the basis of the comics' specific mode of expression (see Groensteen 1999).[4] According to Scott McCloud, the gutter is the most important part of comics, because here the reader and the text interact most intimately (1993). As readers move from panel to panel, they connect the panel images into a narrative sequence. The space which comics leave readers for performing this crucial cognitive task is the gutter. In fact, as McCloud puts it dramatically in his *Understanding Comics*, the gutter is the location where readers turn into accomplices of the author in the comics text. He contrives an example of two panels (1993: 66). The first panel shows an angry man wielding an axe and attacking another man who flees from him. Readers see a city skyline and read an onomatopoetic sound of pain ("EEYAA!!") in the second panel. Now readers assume that the weapon from the first panel is used to inflict the pain which the second panel sug-

3 In the original: "quand la gouttière […] pénètre dans l'univers de la diégèse, ou qu'inversement le monde diégétique s'empare du niveau 'superieur', narratologiquement parlant, des blancs et du supercadre" (Baetens 1991: 374).

4 Groensteen identifies the structuring of panels ("decoupage") and the page layout ("mise en page") as two key modes of representation in comics (1999: 187). He also discusses the narrative importance of the gutter, which he calls "the white" ("le blanc"), in Groensteen 1999: 131–135).

gests. Even though readers are not explicitly shown a murder, they infer one from the information of both panels. McCloud answers the question of "who is the murderer?" mercilessly: "All of you participated in the murder. All of you held the axe and chose your spot." (1993: 68). Through their imaginative involvement in the reading process, the readers have killed the character. The crime scene is the gutter. The gutter is thus not a mere spatial separation of the panel images, but it turns into the venue where the minds of readers interact with the comics text. Readers are clearly located in the real world, and it is thus particularly fitting that the gutter, the place left for the reader's minds to connect the events in the panels, is one conventional location for depictions of the real world in comics.

The 'real' world in comics is either the location of the author and the readers on the other side of the imagined window pane which is the surface of the comics page or it is represented in the space between the panel images, which would correspond to the brickwork in Eisner's image. On the average comics page, the panel frames and the gutter generally go unnoticed in the reading process. Once characters cross panel frames, however, the image plane of the comics page falls into two levels: the panel images form the background, and the frames and the gutter, which become the object of our attention. We can also say that frames and the gutter are foregrounded in metalepsis.

2. Foregrounding

Foregrounding is a cognitive process in which one element is perceived against the context of its background. It can be achieved through both verbal and visual means. The theoretical discussion of foregrounding goes back to the figure-ground distinction of Gestalt psychology (see Koffka 1936: 177–210) and has been taken up in cognitive linguistics (see Talmy 2000 or Ungerer and Schmid 1996: ch. 4). The figure, like Superman on a comics cover page, is perceived relative to a ground, which could be a simple city landscape or supporting characters of the story.[5] In literary theory, "foregrounding" refers to unconventional and surprising uses of

5 Superhero comics frequently use foregrounding frequently for dramatic effects. As Ultraman, for example, sets out to prevent Overman's evil deeds in *Animal Man* (Morrison 1989–90/2003: 160), he is drawn in a posture as if he were heading straight out of the panel, the collar of his costume overlapping panel boundaries. However, as the dialogue and the editing of the images tell readers, Ultraman is not leaving the fictional world. Foregrounding his collar over the panel frame thus adds dramatic effects to the event, but it does not imply a metalepsis.

language in novels and poems. Here, foregrounding highlights certain elements of language and makes readers more aware that fiction is fabricated. It was the Russian formalists who discussed the defamiliarising features of foregrounding in literature (see Shklovsky 1925/2001 or Mukařovský 1932/1970).[6]

Metalepsis and foregrounding are closely related. As Wolf Schmid shows in his article "La métalepse narrative dans la construction du formalisme russe" (2005), metalepsis in *Tristam Shandy* is one of the key examples from which Shklovsky developed his notion of "defamiliarisation." The foregrounding in metalepsis switches figure and ground. An unobtrusive point of reference, i.e., panels and their gutter grid, suddenly becomes the focus of the reader's attention, and what readers usually take for granted when reading comics comes to the fore. Foregrounding as a cognitive process can help us understand better our basic definition of metalepsis as a transgression of the boundaries of the fictional world and the real world: as the boundary is transgressed, the traces of the existence of the real world become foregrounded in fiction. In comics, such foregrounding not only highlights the conventions of representation and the implicit presence of the communicative situation of storytelling or the text's production contexts, but also the literal visual layout of the page.

From early on, comics have used such visual foregrounding for the purposes of metalepsis. English-language comics evolved from caricatures and cartoons in newspapers and political journals (see Kunzle 1973 or Perry and Aldridge 1971 for a historical overview). For the simplifying, cartoonish drawing style, the caricature and the political cartoon are certainly the most important predecessors. For metalepsis, however, another precursor literally jumps straight at us in the newspaper layouts of the early twentieth century.[7] Winsor McCay, one of the founding fathers of US comics, began his career by illustrating stories in the colour pages of the Sunday papers for children. His series *A Tale of the Jungle Imps* would tell in the tradition of Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* of the mischievous jungle imps who vex the animals in the wild until they perform an evolutionary jump and develop a new body part that will defeat the attacks of the jungle imps. In "How the Kangaroo Got its Big Hind Legs" (Cincinnati Enquirer, 1 February 1903), for example, we learn that the jungle

6 Peter Stockwell has developed an encompassing account of how written fiction creates its "texture" through such minute processes of foregrounding in figure and ground. See Stockwell (2009).

7 During my stay at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum at Ohio State University, I profited greatly from the expertise and helpful support of Susan Liberator and Jenny Robb when researching the historical material of this article. Financial support from the Gutenberg Akademie of Mainz University made the research trip possible.

imps liked to grab the original kangaroos by their tails. Only when the kangaroo grows large, muscular hind legs, can it defend itself. And the kangaroo gets back with a vengeance: it kicks one of the jungle imps out of the image frame.

McCay's *A Tale of the Jungle Imps* features both written text and images drawn by McCay. The images are usually surrounded by a clear black frame and thus separated from the written text. In "How the Kangaroo Got its Big Hind Legs," readers follow the written text and the images from the top to the bottom of the page as the story unfolds. Already in the beginning, one of the jungle imps steps across the frame separating words from images in his endeavour to capture a fugitive kangaroo. Once the kangaroo can defend itself, it kicks away the pestering imp with its new hind legs. The imp flies upwards across the images of the previous events of the story. It bounces twice against the frames of these images and breaks them before crashing into the headline of the page and dispersing the letters of the word "leg" with its impact. Foregrounding and backgrounding are employed in order to distinguish between different narrative worlds here: as the jungle imp flies across the frames of images, it performs a metalepsis and leaves the fictional world. Leaving the fictional world, the jungle imp does not encounter its author, but breaks the image frame and disperses the letters. Through this, the letters are no longer unobtrusive and transparent as conventions of representation, but seem to acquire material qualities.

The foregrounding of conventions of representation is self-reflexive, but not necessarily metaleptic. It might refer to the production context of the real world but does not necessarily transgress the boundary between the fictional world and the real world. However, as the jungle imp interacts with the letters of the headline, he has clearly transgressed the boundaries of his fictional world, entering the production context of its comics text and performing a metalepsis. Like the gutter in *Animal Man*, the letters in *Jungle Imps* are foregrounded in the process of metalepsis.

3. Conventions of Representation

The gutter is not the only potentially metaleptic feature of comics. In fact, not all comics have gutters. Metalepsis can also occur in the drawing style of comics or through the interaction of characters and paratextual elements when these conventions of representation are foregrounded.

Panel images are generally drawn in the typical comics style with strong outlines, little texture and flat colour schemes. This drawing style of comics is one of the key conventions of their representation, and in meta-

lepsis it is often foregrounded. Winsor McCay, for example, often presented dreamlike scenarios in his comics. The status of dreams vis-à-vis reality is shifty, and McCay frequently puts the topos to metaleptic use. In an instalment from *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend* (reprinted in McCay 2004: 67; the series ran 1904–13), the fitful sleeper finds himself sitting in a chair. Whenever he changes his position, raises an arm or tries to get up, a blot of ink-smear traces his movements in the panel image until the final panel image is entirely black. The ink-smears seem to emerge from the outlines of the character which are drawn in black. They evoke the material properties of ink and thus foreground the convention of representation of comics characters whose outlines are usually pencilled, then inked and then filled in with colour. We all know that ink smears, but this material property of ink is usually forgotten when we see the finished comics image, the product. When the inked outlines of the comics character smear in *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend*, we are referred back to the production context of comics. The character is aware that he is a drawing in pen and ink, and he keeps ascribing the ink smears to the author's incompetence or lack of concentration, thus transgressing the boundary between the fictional world and the real world through his dialogue as well.

The other steps of the production of a comics image can also be foregrounded in metalepsis. In an example from *Animal Man*, an omnipotent alien reduces a character to its pencil sketch until it disperses (Morrison 1989/2002: 97). Generally, the pencil sketch is the first step towards the drawing of a comics page, and its traces are all but invisible in final panel images. As *Animal Man* refers to this basic pencil sketch, it foregrounds the production process of the comics page, the pencil of its author, and thus performs a metalepsis by referring back from the product to the context of its production. The alien is imbued with the power of the author: it controls both the narrative events ("Your story ends here." Morrison 1989/2002: 97) and their representation as a drawn figure on the page. We thus have a character performing the role of the author in this metalepsis.

In an instance from Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, Nemo and his friends, drawn in McCay's quite elegant lines, walk down a road (2 May 1909; reproduced in Groensteen 1990: 145). In their conversation, they boast of their drawing skills, and as this conversation unfolds, their surroundings are rendered more and more in childish, crude and crooked squiggles. As it seems, the fictional world is represented with the drawing skills of the fictional characters themselves. Again, characters take up the author's stance. The comics text performs a metalepsis as characters are put in control of the production process of comics and thus (implicitly) cross the line from the fictional to the real world. Little Sammy Sneeze, another of Winsor McCay's creations, is a little boy whose sneezes bring

down buildings and whirl whole marketplaces or zoos around (McCay 1904-06/2007). In one instance, Little Sammy Sneeze sneezes so hard that the panel frame bursts. An element of the fictional world, the pressure of Sammy's sneeze, has an impact on a convention of representation, the panel frame, and thus a metalepsis is performed.

Another convention of representation which is addressed in comics metalepsis is the fact that comics are printed on paper and that they have pages with a flipside, which can be turned. In his essay on transmedial metalepsis, Werner Wolf discusses an example from a Donald Duck comic in which the hero gets rid of an annoying monster from space by lifting the corner of a panel and luring it into the space that opens (2005: 96). Lifting the corner of the panel brings out the nature of the page of paper which is lifted during the reading process. Normally, characters in a fictional world are not aware that they are drawn on a sheet of paper. As they display that awareness and turn the page, i.e., as they perform an action which only a reader in the real world should be able to perform, a metalepsis occurs. Donald Duck crosses the boundary between the fictional world and its production context, i.e., the comic book with its pages.

As we have seen, conventions of representation are closely entwined with the comics' potential for metalepsis. When the comics text refers to the drawing style, the process of drawing or the nature of comics as a narrative printed on pages, it foregrounds its production context. When this pointing to the production context implies a role reversal between characters and authors or readers, as in our examples from *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, *Animal Man* or Donald Duck, or when it refers to the author's act of production of the fictional world, as in our example from *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend*, comics can create metalepsis without crossing panel borders. The production of the fictional world in the visual narration of comics is not the act of a narrative voice as in the novel, but it can lead to metalepses just as much. Any foregrounding of the conventions of representation of comics can refer to this process of the production of the fictional world. As this process is actualised, either through characters or through a representation of the author, comics transgress the boundaries between the fictional world and the real world and a metalepsis occurs.

We talk about production context here and not narration, because the narrative voice in comics is clearly tied to the captions, whereas metalepsis, as we have seen, can occur through the foregrounding of many different conventions of representation. Thus, for visual narration in comics, Genette's definition of the metalepsis needs to be redefined. Genette distinguishes between the world in which the story takes place and the world in which the story is told (1972: 245). Drawing on Linda Hutcheon's ar-

gument in *Narcissistic Narrative*, we can describe "the world in which the story unfolds" as the product and "the world in which the story is told" as the production context (1980: ch. 2). We have redefined Genette's worlds as the fictional world and the (representation of) the real world. The fictional world would thus be the product and its production context would contain, in addition to the author as a figure, conventions of representation such as the panel frame or the headline. As the jungle imp crashes into the letters of the headline, an element of the fictional world interacts with the production context and thus transgresses the line between fiction and reality.

This redefinition from "telling" to "producing" allows us to circumvent the question of the narrator, which is a difficult notion for any visual medium, be it film or comics (see also the articles by Keazor, Sarkhosh and Feyersinger). For Genette, it is self-evident that the novel has a narrative voice, be it hetero- or homodiegetic, and his "Discours du récit" includes its account of metalepsis in a discussion of narrative voice (1972: 225–267). Films and comics, however, employ narrative voices only rarely. We know that voice-over narration in film can provide us with an explanatory exposition of the heterodiegetic narrator or with the train of thought of one of the characters. In comics, such instances can be found in the texts of captions. As in film, the explicit narrative voice is all but common in comics. As David Bordwell or Edward Branigan tell us, narration in film is a question of managing visual information rather than an act of telling (see Bordwell 1985: 61ff. and Branigan 1992: 66). The production context of the film, its directing, editing and camera work take care of narration. The same is true for comics: they manage visual information through drawing style, selecting the cadre of the panel image and combining these elements onto a particular sequence onto the page. As comics foreground their production context, they thus perform metalepsis, even though they might lack a distinguishable narrative discourse.

4. Types of Transgression

Because comics feature many different modes of representation, transgression through metalepsis can occur in many different ways. It can be based on the gutter grid of the comics, or it can involve foregrounding other conventions of representation and the production process, as we have seen in the previous sections. The types of transgression employed in the comics medium cut across these possibilities of metalepsis. In the following, I will discuss the ontological and rhetorical types as well as

ascending and descending types of metalepsis for comics before turning to an exploration of their effects in superhero comics in the next section.

The distinction between ontological and rhetorical metalepsis goes back to Marie-Laure Ryan. She presented it at the conference on metalepsis in Paris in 2002, and it was taken up by Monika Fludernik for her typology of metalepsis (2003; see note 1). Ryan herself develops the distinction in her article on "Metaleptic Machines" (Ryan 2004) and in her contribution to the volume edited by Pier and Schaeffer (2005). I take two examples from *Animal Man* to exemplify the difference between ontological and rhetorical metalepsis. When Animal Man leaves the frame of the panel and walks around in the gutter of the comics page (Morrison 1989–90/2003: 164), we have an ontological metalepsis, because he physically leaves the fictional world. When Animal Man turns around and addresses readers through the metaphorical window pane of the panel, saying "I can see you!" (Morrison 1989–90/2003: 41), we a have a rhetorical metalepsis.[8] This rhetorical metalepsis is expressed both visually and verbally, as Animal Man both turns to the readers and looks at them, and as he uses the verbal deixis of "you" referring to the readers.

When Donald Duck lifts the corner of a panel, he performs an action which only readers can perform. When Nemo and his friends seemingly turn their fictional world into a crude sketch, they perform (through their discourse) an action which only the author can perform. Both of these metalepses, involving the foregrounding of the production context of comics, can be termed ontological. Even though neither Donald Duck nor Nemo leave the storyworld entirely, they take up the roles of the protagonists of the communication process from the real world. Authors and readers are of an ontologically different nature than fictional characters, and they can do different things with both the fictional world and the product of the comic book than fictional characters can. When fictional characters are shown doing what should be only in the power of authors and readers to do, they are given an ontologically different role. Most of the metalepses based on conventions of representation in comics, such as dispersing letters from a headline or bursting a panel frame, are such an instance of performing an ontologically different role. Performing an ontologically different role could be understood as a subset of ontological metalepsis, since no physical transgression takes place.

We have distinguished between ontological and rhetorical metalepsis as metalepses of a different nature of the transgression (based on Ryan 2005). The second important set of types of metalepsis are metalepses of a

8 Ryan's "rhetorical metalepsis" is to be distinguished from the rhetorical trope "metalepsis," which Genette takes from classical rhetoric (see Introduction).

different direction in the transgression between fictional and the real world: ascending and descending metalepsis (based on Pier 2005). The fictional world is the product of the real world, i.e., its production context. The real world creates the fictional world and changes it at will. The fictional world and the real world are thus not only ontologically different, but also hierarchically connected. As a character enters the real world, or rather a representation thereof like the gutter, an ascending metalepsis is performed. As an author or reader enters a fictional world, a descending metalepsis is performed.

Both rhetorical and ontological metalepses can be either ascending or descending. When Animal Man leaves the panel image for the gutter, he performs an ascending metalepsis. The same happens when he addresses readers by breaking the fourth wall of the window pane of the panel. The difference is not in the direction (ascending or descending), but in the nature of the metalepsis: the first is ontological, the second is rhetorical.

When characters perform an ontologically different function, the direction of the metalepsis is ascending. Nemo and his friends take up the function of the author and change the drawing style of their surroundings. Donald Duck takes up the function of the readers and turns a page. When the characters are unwittingly affected by the changes in drawing style or other conventions of representation, we have a descending metalepsis, because the author makes his or her presence felt in the fictional world; as when the ink forming the contours of the characters smears and blots out the page.

Of course, fictional characters in comics can also transgress the boundaries between embedded fictional worlds in ascending or descending fashion. In Alan Moore's *Tom Strong* series, characters from famous paintings like van Gogh's self-portrait, the couple from Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini* portrait or Munch's distorted figure in *The Scream* fight the superhero after a villain has set them free (2004–05/2005: 28: 8–21).[9] Tom Strong, van Gogh, the Arnolfini couple and the Munch figure are all fictional characters in *Tom Strong*—four from famous paintings and one from a not so famous comics series. However, van Gogh and the others are first presented in their paintings, framed and hanging on a museum wall. It takes a villain with metaleptic powers to set them free. In this case, the images of Dürer and van Gogh work as fictional worlds embedded in the fictional world of *Tom Strong*. Even though these self-portraits are not, strictly speaking, "narrative," they are fictional in the sense that they are "made." The fictional world of *Tom Strong* functions as a representation of

9 Moore's *Tom Strong* series is non-paginated. I cite it therefore according to the following convention: (author year: running number of the issue: page number of the issue).

the real world here. As the villain has them leave their own fictional world and enter the fictional world of Tom Strong, they perform an ascending metalepsis, going from the fictional world to another fictional world which functions as a representation of the real world. This is what happens in terms of metalepsis. Of course, it is complicated by the fact that van Gogh's self-portrait, the *Arnolfini* portrait and Munch's *The Scream* are paintings within the storyworld of *Tom Strong* and actual paintings within the real world.

5. Functions and Effects: Metalepsis as a Weapon of Choice in Superhero Comics

Most of the examples of metalepsis in comics we have discussed so far are examples of fights—fights for narrative control, for storytelling superiority. The jungle imps tease the kangaroo in *A Tale of the Jungle Imps* until it grows its big hind legs and lashes out with metaleptic consequences. The fight between Animal Man and Overman, recounted at the beginning of this article, continues as Animal Man draws his adversary out of the panel in order to make him aware that he is nothing but a fictional character (Morrison 1989–90/2003: 169). This experience diminishes Overman's powers and confidence. Metalepsis, and the shock of exposed fictionality, decides the battle. In *Tom Strong*, characters from famous paintings wreak havoc once unleashed from the constraints of their fictional worlds, and it takes the concerted action of Tom Strong and his own duplications (made by Andy Warhol himself) to get them back into their images. To be sure, there are many other examples in which metalepses are funny, curious or critically self-reflexive in comics (see Kukkonen 2009). In superhero comics, however, they are employed more often than not in struggles for superiority. In the following, we will concentrate our discussion of metalepsis and its effects in comics on the superhero genre, because here the anti-illusionist and illusionist effects of metalepsis interact with genre conventions in interesting ways.

Superhero comics are among the most popular of genres. They have emerged from comics, a medium which is part and parcel of the popular mass culture of the twentieth century and which, for the better part of its history, has been perceived as little else than a commodity to be read and disposed of.[10] Even though non-mainstream comics, like Art Spiegelman's

10 Comics (in the English-language context) emerged with twentieth century mass culture. Winsor McCay's comics, for example, were published in the Sunday pages of newspapers. The comic book is a magazine format which is published bi-weekly and used to be sold at newsvendors' before the advent of the specialist comics shop. Only in recent decades have

Maus, are at the centre of academic attention at the moment,[11] the popular nature of superhero comics in particular continues to mark reception of the medium in the English-speaking context. The stories of superhero comics allow readers escape into a world in which good invariably triumphs over evil and which offers the gratifying fantasy of an all-powerful hero to identify with.[12] Superhero comics rely heavily on the immersion of readers in their story. At times, such immersion is represented in superhero comics themselves, as in Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, which features a mise en abyme of a comic book, or Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* series (1995 to present), which is set in a city where superheroes are admired and comics series are written about them. Neither *Watchmen* nor *Astro City*, however, features metalepses which would transgress the boundary of fiction and reality.

The two comics series I shall now discuss, each take a different stance on the debates surrounding popular culture: *Animal Man* by Grant Morrison is a comics series deeply engaged in the political and social issues of its time, while *Tom Strong* by Alan Moore reflects on the superhero genre as escapist entertainment. Both series negotiate their own fictionality. Animal Man sets out to meet his author, Grant Morrison, and to demand justice after villains have killed his wife and children. Morrison, however, shows his character Animal Man mercilessly that he is in his hand. When they meet, the author demonstrates how he can create and annihilate superheroes at will (Morrison 1989–90/2003: 15f.). Tom Strong, on the other hand, travels through space, time and across the boundaries of fictional worlds in search of adventure. The series is one of Moore's explorations of the superhero genre, but here Moore is much less concerned with political issues than in *Watchmen*. In *Tom Strong*, he takes a self-reflexive stroll through the genre.

Metalepsis, the transgression of the boundaries of the fictional world, brings threats from other worlds into the main fictional world of the story in both *Animal Man* and *Tom Strong*, and in both comics metalepsis is used as a weapon. In the course of Grant Morrison's run of *Animal Man*, the superhero realises that he is a character in a comics series. At first, only

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we seen a re-evaluation of the comics medium in this respect, and more prestigious publication formats including expensive hardback editions become more prevalent.

11 As Marianne Hirsch puts it, "everyone is rushing to write about *Maus*" (online interview qtd. in Chute 2008: 457). Spiegelman's *Maus* has also been discussed for the author's metalepsis it employs (see Schuldiner 2002).

12 This is the case in the classical instances of the genre during its so-called Golden Age (the 1940s and 1950s). With the self-reflexivity and dark, gritty realism which entered superhero comics in the 1980s with Alan Moore's *Watchmen* (1986) and Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns* (1986), it is no longer a given in the genre that superheroes are good, nor that they triumph at the end of the story.

readers see the occasional screen of the comics scriptwriter (1988–89/1991: 8: 1) or the painter's brush (1988–89/1991: 5: 24). Through these metalepses, the awareness is triggered that the story we are reading is created by authors. Then, also characters start to notice that their fictional world is a creation. Animal Man becomes aware that readers can see his actions through the window panes of the panels, and he turns around to address readers in the rhetorical metalepsis I discussed earlier (1989–90/2003: 41). By and by, Animal Man learns how he himself can transgress the panel frames, and he leaves his fictional world in order to gain superiority over other superheroes in a fight (1989–90/2003: 164) and later in order to take his maker to task for his fate (1989–90/2003: 207ff.).

The serial structure of both *Animal Man* and *Tom Strong* places metalepsis as a weapon and metalepsis as a threat to the integrity of the fictional world in a series of other combats. Animal Man, for example, can absorb the special powers of any animal: he can fly like a bird, become strong as a bear or as enduring as a camel, or he can multiply himself like an amoeba. Metalepsis is just another weapon in his outlandish repertoire, it seems. Tom Strong fights villains as varied as a suave rogue scientist, a self-reproducing mind and computer-literate Aztecs who aim to conquer the entire multiverse, i.e., the set of alternative realities in which superhero narratives are generally set. The metaleptic attack of the figures from famous paintings is just another instance in a series of rather fantastic events that defy traditional realism. Integrating metalepsis as weapon or metalepsis as threat into the superhero genre's standard situation of the climactic battle between good and evil certainly contributes to naturalising it or to obfuscating its potentially anti-illusionist effects. In these instances, metalepsis does not disrupt the mimesis of the narrative even though it does not reproduce the communicative situation (see Schaeffer 2005). It rather goes together with the generic expectations of the genre, much like metalepses in comedy or fantasy do, and thus it is not perceived as disruptive.

As the story of *Animal Man* continues, however, readers are made aware that the frequent metalepses are part of a larger critical strategy of its author, Grant Morrison. As I have detailed elsewhere, with *Animal Man*, Grant Morrison aims to draw attention to animal rights issues, and the final encounter between author and character, in which the author destroys and reconstructs characters at will, is meant to represent the "might makes right"-philosophy of people who ignore animal rights (see Kukkonen 2009: 509ff.). At this point, metalepsis turns into an anti-illusionist device, because it tears viewer's attention out of the fictional world and redirects it to issues of the real world. Reading is a constant process of recalibration and re-evaluation of textual information, and with

the new information of Morrison's critical agenda, all the previous metalepses can then be reinterpreted as anti-illusionist rather than illusionist.

Repeatedly, the reality status of the fictional world in *Tom Strong* is destabilised, for example when Tom and his wife Dhalua hallucinate that they are granted their most intimate wishes (2000–01/2002: 14: 9–16), when three full issues tell the 'what if'-story of Tom Strong being the son of a different father (2003–04/2004: 20–22) and when Tom Strong is suddenly enthralled in a dull, everyday existence induced by a mind-controlling villain (2004–05/2005: 29–30). Readers do not expect the mimesis of the fictional world to hold up in *Tom Strong*: it can always be revealed as a fantasy, a hallucination or a nightmarish illusion. However, what Tom Strong experiences and what is true for Tom Strong is also true for the readers. Through Tom Strong, this consistent reader surrogate, readers are not disrupted in their immersion in the fictional world—either by the frequent changes of reality status or by the metalepses in the museum.

Different from *Animal Man*, *Tom Strong* does not establish a higher, ontologically different reality from the main fictional world of its narrative. The metaleptic threat of the famous painting figures is embedded in the fictional world. A villain of the fictional world, the "Eyeopener," releases the figures from the paintings and unleashes them to wreak havoc. Tom Strong and his team come to the rescue. There are so many paintings however, that Tom Strong is overwhelmed. Only when the Eyeopener is tricked into bringing several copies of Tom Strong himself (in Andy Warhol's style) to life, can Tom Strong overcome the villain. Moore's story comments cleverly on the comics' status of easily reproducible art which displaces higher art in visual culture and confines it to the museum. However, the story never addresses these real-world issues openly, and the fictional world of *Tom Strong* always remains the highest hierarchical level represented in the comics series. Other than in *Animal Man*, in *Tom Strong*, the illusionist effect of the metalepsis as weapon remains intact.

In the superhero genre, metalepsis can pose a threat to superheroes, but it can also be used as a weapon. As the climactic battle of good and evil is the standard situation in the genre and as strange weapons and superpowers are commonplace, metalepsis can easily be naturalised through generic conventions. Then, it does not have a paradoxical or anti-illusionist effect, but contributes to the immersion of readers in the genre narrative. As seen in the example from Grant Morrison's *Animal Man*, an overt metalepsis referring to the real world outside the fictional world can disrupt the immersion and lead to a retrospective re-evaluation of the metalepsis as anti-illusionist. As seen from the example of Alan Moore's *Tom Strong*, as long as the fictional world of the superhero remains the

highest hierarchical level of metalepsis, its potentially disruptive effects can be recuperated as part of his fantastic adventures.

6. Conclusion

Comics can present metalepses in the same way as the novel or the drama when their characters verbally address readers or author. They have also developed metalepses based on their modes of representation, such as headlines, pages or drawing style, and on their own medial build-up of panels on a page. The panel images present a view into the fictional world, and the panel frames and gutter grid are usually ignored by readers as transparent features of the medium. With metalepses, however, these transparent features are foregrounded: the panel images turn into the location of the fictional world, the frames turn into the boundaries of the fictional world, and the gutter grid into a space where the real world can be represented.

Metalepsis draws readers' attention to the representation conventions of comics and thereby foregrounds the traces of the real world in a work of fiction. As characters cross the panel frames, they leave the fictional world. As characters interact with drawing styles, paratextual elements and the physical nature of the comics pages, they perform a writerly or a readerly function. Such metaleptic foregrounding has been current in English-language comics since the beginning of the twentieth century. It is not necessarily at odds with the popular culture status of comics. In fact, it ties in well with genres like the superhero comics with their fantastic fictional worlds and outlandish battles. In some superhero comics, like *Tom Strong*, metalepsis supports an illusionist effect; in others like *Animal Man*, it can lead to an anti-illusionist effect.

As we have seen, most conceivable types of metalepsis are possible in comics if we are willing to expand Genette's definition to suit media which do not employ a verbalised act of telling. Hutcheon's notion of product and production helps us broaden our conceptual grasp of metalepsis. I propose that the cognitive process of the inversion of figure and ground in metalepsis could be another useful conceptual tool in understanding metalepsis across media. Comics seem to offer very important tutor texts in this endeavour, because they perform the switch both visually and conceptually.

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Metalepsis in Live Performance: Holographic Projections of the Cartoon Band "Gorillaz" as a Means of Metalepsis

In 2005, the British rock band "Gorillaz" played a concert at the MTV Europe Music Awards in Lisbon. To a viewer at the back of the big hall, their performance might, due to the distance, have seemed at first sight like any other rock show: the band members sang or played their instruments in front of the large audience, displaying some of the inevitable rock poses and walking around the stage or interacting with their fans. However, Gorillaz is a virtual band, made up of cartoon characters. They do not exist in a physical form. This concert thus marked a significant point both in music history and in the history of visual media: it is said to be the "world's first 3D hologram performance" (eyeliner3d.com, Musion Eyeliner Website).[1] The live show had only been made possible with the use of video projectors and transparent foil, and the band, who appeared to be standing on stage, were pretty much "smoke and mirrors"—an artificially created optical illusion.

This article explores the metaleptic potential which lies in such holographic images, for they make fictional characters seemingly come to life by having them step out of their animated environment and into our world.

First, I will give some information on the process of creating the illusion. Then, I will take a close look at two Gorillaz-shows, which serve as the case studies for this article: one performance at the MTV Europe Music Awards and another at the Grammys, where they shared the stage with Madonna. Based on these performances, I will discuss whether metalepsis comes into play and what boundaries are crossed in what ways. Next, the focus will be on the different levels of fictionality and reality in the performances. I will then go on to explain the functions and effects of

1 This claim is made on eyeliner3d.com, which is the website of Musion, the company which produces the projection system for Gorillaz concerts.

the metalepses. And finally, the concluding pages will provide a look into the future of holographic projections as a means of metalepsis.

Before the performances can be analyzed in detail, however, it is necessary to consider holography and other forms of visual trickery historically, which has, in fact, fascinated mankind for centuries.

1. A Brief History of Holography and Projection

In order to understand the concept of holography, one must first know what makes a hologram. In the simplest terms, "[a] hologram is usually recorded on a photographic plate or a flat piece of film, but produces a three-dimensional image" (Hariharan 2002: 1). This characteristic of its three-dimensional appearance leads to our eyes perceiving a holographic image differently from a flat photo or a video on a screen. The word "hologram" is derived from the Greek words "holos" (the whole) and "graphein" (to write). Modern holography was invented by scientist Dennis Gabor in 1948. In the 1960s, new laser technologies facilitated the process, leading many more scientists to develop holograph technology further. In 1962, the first three-dimensional laser hologram was created (Burr et al. 2007: 1206–1207). Since then, this seeming three-dimensionality and plasticity has characterized holographic phenomena.

The fascination with visual gimmicks, however, is not reserved to modern societies. In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, optical illusions gained significant popularity. This fascination was started by the "camera obscura," a device which could project real-world images onto a white wall (Gronemeyer 2004: 31–32, 136–137). The Italian scholar Giambattista della Porta became famous for inventing this device, but the phenomenon had already been known in the ancient world (Gronemeyer 2004: 95). Della Porta however, was the first to suggest using the "camera obscura" to show performances to an audience or to scare people by projecting ghosts into dark rooms (Gronemeyer 2004: 97–99). Another notable man in this field was Athanasius Kircher, a German Jesuit scholar of the mid 17th century, who experimented with projection and the "magic lantern" (laterna magica), an early kind of slide projector (Warner 2006: 137–138). Kircher, like della Porta too, was fascinated by the possibility of creating fantasy-images such as devils and demons, rather than showing the real world and existing creatures. He let creatures from a different world reach over into the real world, making fiction and reality mingle, so to speak. This concept was taken further by showman Etienne-Gaspard Robertson, who called it "Fantasmagorie" and used it for large-scale public stage shows. He mounted his magic lantern onto wheels to create

growing images, moved the light source to make his projections seem alive, or projected different images onto each other and so created the illusion of movement. Robertson also used sound and music for a stronger effect (Warner 2006: 147–148). It can be said that he staged the first multimedia performances. All these achievements can be seen as the first form of projected animation, although they are only examples of projection in its early stages. In the context of this volume, they must also be seen as early attempts to make the audiences experience a metaleptic phenomenon in a very fresh, previously unknown manner: people did not encounter metalepsis in the traditional way by reading about it in books, but by being part of the mystery themselves, by taking part in an illusion, which made it seem that they, as real human beings, shared the same room with fictional creatures—"face to face."

As dramatic as early projection devices like the "camera obscura" and the "laterna magica" must have seemed to a startled audience, their disadvantage was that, while the devices were in use, no real actors could appear on stage simultaneously because the projected images would have shown up on their bodies. This was indeed a major downside: though the audience could watch the projected fictional creatures, it was not possible to show a perfect illusion of a physical interaction between a real human being and these fantastic figures. This made the attempted metaleptic experience somehow one-dimensional and limited its use tremendously. In the 19th century, however, English engineer Henry Dircks, came up with a solution for this problem: he suggested using a glass pane in front of the stage to reflect images onto the scene. The idea, however, could not convince theatre owners, and it was soon dismissed. Years later, fellow engineer John Henry Pepper modified Dircks' concept: he tilted the glass pane in front of the stage so that it was practically invisible to the audience but at the same time showed them a ghostly reflection of the mirrored objects. An actor would, for example, hide under the stage, where he acted out his scenes while his semi-transparent image would simultaneously appear to move around on stage through the glass.

Unlike the images of the "camera obscura" or of the "magic lantern," the glass pane could be used while real actors were on stage, and it was thus often employed in scenes where, for example, a character in a play encounters a ghost, such as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This was indeed a big step forward and helped to increase the invention's popularity. Also, it widened the metaleptic potential for theatre-companies enormously: suddenly, it was no problem anymore to stage a seemingly three-dimensional metaleptic encounter, where humans and fictional characters shared the same stage at the same time, interacting in front of the same audience. This theatre-trick thus opened a whole new range of

(metaleptic) possibilities. Soon, the optical illusion became widely used and John Henry Pepper gained fame and recognition for the invention which, strictly speaking, was not his own. Nevertheless, it became known under his name as "Pepper's Ghost" (Speaight 1989/2000: 489–490).

2. Gorillaz and Their Performances

a. Gorillaz: Fictional or Real?

In order to describe the use of metalepsis by Gorillaz in their performances, it is necessary to first establish, who Gorillaz are, and more importantly, how fictional they are.

On the band's official website, they are described as "a virtual hip-hop group consisting of four members,"[2] including Stuart "2-D" Pot (vocals, keyboard), Murdoc Alphonce Niccals (bass), Russel Hobbs (drums) and Noodle (guitars). The band, which look like cartoon characters, was created in 1998 by comic artist Jamie Hewlett and musician Damon Albarn, who is the front man of the band Blur. When it comes to Gorillaz' level of fiction, the band's official website offers two explanations: on the one hand, they state that there are real people behind the band; on the other hand, detailed biographies about the band's fitional characters are provided, including information such as their place of birth (existing places in the UK, the US and Japan), exact height, family members and personal backgrounds.[3] An episode of MTV's *Cribs*[4] even featured Murdoc's house, located in Essex, UK, which supposedly has 48 or 49 rooms. The aired footage contained collages made up of drawn cartoon and filmed images of real objects. Even before that, in 2006, *Rise of The Ogre*, their official "autobiography" was released. The book is an impressive collection of fictional interviews with the band members, comics and artwork. It creates the paradox that, although it is called an autobiography, it is, as a puzzled reviewer stated: "[n]ot quite a biography, clearly not an autobiography. True to Gorillaz's [sic] form, they've again come up with something that doesn't have a name" (Draper 2009, Record Collector Website).

So how fictional are the band really? Their physical appearance is very fictional: they are obviously animated (cartoon) characters in both their

2 This information about the band is taken from the Official Gorillaz Fan Wiki on the band's website.

3 Again, the Gorillaz Fan Wiki and its sections about the individual members serve as a source here.

4 *Cribs* is a program on MTV, where celebrities show the viewers their houses and cars.

looks and behaviour. A sense of spatiality, if there is any (e.g., in some their videos) is achieved only through drawn perspective. Also, their names and life stories have been invented. There are, however, real people behind them who create their voices and their music. Gorillaz, like any other comic or novel heroes, need their creators in order to exist. However, the virtual band and their inventors are not the same people. In this respect, the relationship between Gorillaz and the real people behind them is the same as the relationship between stage- or movie-characters and actors: real people are needed to bring the fictional creations to life. Such is the case of Tom Hanks, who becomes Forrest Gump in his role for the movie: without Hanks, the actor, and Robert Zemeckis, the director, Forrest Gump would not exist. Nevertheless, when you watch the movie, you see and hear Forrest Gump, not Hanks. No-one would say "Oh look, Tom Hanks is fighting in the Vietnam War," because it is the character of Forrest who does this. The same goes for Gorillaz: the group is an invention of comic artist Hewlett and musician Albarn who draw them and perform and write the music for them; but the audience sees Gorillaz on stage, not Albarn or any other members. The real people behind the band are the performers, just like actors; but Gorillaz, the cartoon figures, are the stage characters, seen by the audience as the official representation. This difference becomes even clearer when one watches a Gorillaz show: at Gorillaz concerts, you never get to see real people (i.e., the performers, who actually create the music) play in front of the audience. The real musicians make sure that they are not mistaken for Gorillaz. Instead, it is always only the two-dimensional comic characters, which embody the band on stage. This choice is obviously something very different in live music and thus breaks an unspoken rule, for usually, the "[c]o-presence of performer and spectator is an enduring generic convention in pop performance" (Kelly 2007: 106). But with Gorillaz concerts, what the audience really sees are invented, artificially created stage characters. Their creators stepping into the background bring them to life, with fame and publicity going to the cartoon figures, which, in this cartoon form, are just as fictional as Mickey Mouse, Popeye or Homer Simpson. Gorillaz can thus clearly be situated on a fictional, diegetic or mimetic level (Ryan 2005: 11).

b. The Performance at the MTV Awards 2005

In the beginning, Gorillaz live performances were made possible with the use of big projection screens, which showed the cartoon band as the main focus, and of coloured transparent screens, behind which the human

performers were playing as silhouettes (Kelly 2007: 115). It was, so to say, a "hyper-medial" mix of animation, illustration, live performance and shadow play (2007: 118). Often, the music was produced live, but sometimes it was also pre-recorded (Auslander 2008: 107).

At the MTV Awards 2005 in Lisbon, however, the cartoon band appeared on stage "live" and three-dimensional for the first time, playing their hit *Feel Good Inc.*[5] This was made possible through the use of a holographic trick and the technique, which engineers Dircks and Pepper had already used in the 19th century to make their "ghosts" come alive.

In an interview with *Times Online*, Cara Speller of Passion Pictures, the producer of the show, does indeed describe it as a modern version of Pepper's ghost. However, instead of an actor, as in Victorian times, a high-quality recording of the animated cartoon characters was projected. And instead of heavy glass panes, thin transparent foil was attached in front of the stage. The images created with this method seemed strikingly real and very convincing, as could be seen from the startled reaction of the audience. However, from a physical point of view, the end result is strictly speaking not a hologram. The images reflected are actually two-dimensional, and they are shown on an equally flat foil. Nevertheless, the mirrored projection is perceived as three-dimensional by the human brain, and the illusion is successful (Sherwin 2005, Times Online Website).

The audience thus sees a cartoon band which has seemingly transgressed from its restricted two-dimensional world into our three-dimensional one. The musicians can move around freely and behave like "normal rock stars": during the performance, 2-D, the singer, looks at the audience, becomes bored after a while and starts playing around with his mobile phone. Murdoc, the bassist, strikes poses and makes obscene gestures. The band members seem to be alive, have a will of their own and interact with their fans. As if this was not puzzling enough, the viewers are confronted with two different types of performers on stage: halfway through the song they played, the rap-group De La Soul also enters the stage halfway through the performance. They, however, perform in the flesh (Musion Eyeliner Hologram Blog 2008). This difference is important and brings in an interesting factor, because it underlines the ontologically different levels[6] which intermingle in this whole performance: there is the real-world level of the rappers (and the present live audience), who are all

5 The following analysis is based on a recording of the live broadcast of the MTV Europe Music Awards in Lisbon that took place on November 3rd, 2005, and on a recording of the 48th Grammy Awards on February 8th, 2005, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

6 Here and on the following pages, Marie-Laure Ryan's stack metaphor taken from her article "Metaleptic Machines" (2004) is used and adapted to the Gorillaz performance in order to clarify the different levels and worlds.

human beings, three-dimensional and physically present in the room. In contrast to this, the Gorillaz are located on the strictly fictional cartoon level: they are invented, animated cartoon drawings by artist Jamie Hewlett, they are two-dimensional, and they are in fact an optical illusion on a flat canvas (the foil). In the eyes of the TV and live audience, however, it seems as though the band has stepped out of their two dimensional world for the first time and become three-dimensional. This "crossing over" undoubtedly has a metaleptic effect on the viewer.

c. The Performance at the Grammy Awards 2006

The band made use of professor Pepper's illusion again when they performed the same song on stage in Los Angeles at the 2006 Grammy Awards show. Again, the rap-group De La Soul supported them. This time, however, pop-singer Madonna also joined the performance after a while, eventually even taking over the song and singing her own hit, *Hung Up*. On stage, Madonna seems like her normal self: she dances a lot, sings (although it seems to be playback), flirts with Gorillaz bassist Murdoc, walks around him and blows him a kiss before she leaves the stage. What most of the audience probably did not know, was that when she performed the first parts of her song with the band, she, too, was but a holographic projection on the transparent foil. A real person could never have got so close or walked a circle around the virtual band and interacted with them, because the transparent foil would have been in the way. Before the audience has time to figure this trick out, however, the scenery changes again, and the camera shifts away from the Gorillaz' stage. Then, shortly after the virtual Madonna has left, the real Madonna enters the stage on another podium. Singing live this time, and with real dancers surrounding her, she duly finishes her performance, which ends with loud applause from the audience.

This time, in contrast to the MTV performance, the viewer is even confronted with no fewer than three different representations of artists. For once, there is the real singer Madonna and once again, the rappers. Then, there is the virtual band Gorillaz, represented by a projected, holographic image. And finally, there is also the holographic version of Madonna, which is projected onto transparent foil, just like the band. But does that make her equally fictional? These different representations of artists raise some interesting questions which will be explored and discussed later in part four of this article: "Levels of Fictionality and Reality." First, however, the question of whether or not metalepses indeed occur in Gorillaz performances must be tackled.

3. Gorillaz Crossing into the Real World: Metalepsis or Illusion?

In the two concerts, the band's fictional appearance does not fully vanish: the members still look like cartoon characters, from the bright colours of their bodies and hair to their pointy tongues, their hollow eyes, and the extraordinary dimensions of their limbs. But, as it has been established, spectators at Gorillaz concerts witness a powerful optical illusion: the formerly two-dimensional cartoon characters seemingly become three-dimensional, and they do seem to perform and interact on a real-world stage. This optical illusion gives rise to a kind of metaleptic phenomenon. Some of the features of their cartoon identity are changed: the flat bodies of the cartoon characters are moulded into 3D and appear round; the band members are no longer restricted to flat pictures on screens, and the ontological characteristics of their cartoon identity are changed. So can these concerts be considered as employing metalepses? And if so, of what kind? What boundaries have been crossed?

If one looks at the rappers of De La Soul, who are ontologically distinctively flesh-and-blood individuals, one might be tempted to see the answer in exactly this ontological difference. As Marie-Laure Ryan points out , there are two types of metalepses: "(1) the rhetorical type, described by Gérard Genette, and (2) the ontological type, described by Brian McHale in conjunction with postmodern narrative" (Ryan 2004/2006: 206). The latter can be seen as a mix of different levels or worlds which are clearly ontologically different to each other (2004/2006: 205–207). This can be applied to Gorillaz performances, where the audience and the rappers (and the original Madonna) are real people and the band members themselves are cartoon characters;—and yet they seem to interact and perform together on the same stage. Also, these ontological differences seem to create a boundary separating the two worlds, which is seemingly crossed in the metalepsis process. As Ryan points out further: "the border between levels may be of two kinds illocutionary or ontological. […] The second type occurs when a story is told as fiction, creating […] a change of world" (2004/2006: 205–207). This can again be observed during Gorillaz performance, as soon as they enter the stage in their "new" three-dimensional bodies, they step out of their world and cross this border. Their ontological metalepsis across an equally ontological boundary takes place.

However, Ryan also firmly insists that real metalepsis (almost) never really affects the real world level—or "the world of ground zero," as she calls it (2004/2006: 209–210). In other words, cartoon characters will never REALLY step out of their comics and into our world. Nor do

movie heroes REALLY climb out of the projection screen, and nobody REALLY gets physically sucked into a story like Bastian Bux in *The NeverEnding Story*. These things just do not happen in the real world. And if they seem to, then we are tricked by an illusion. For example, the reality which we seem to witness is in fact only a representation of reality, and in this artificial representation, metalepsis is possible. In the case of the Gorillaz, this would mean that the band we see is not the real three-dimensional deal, but only looks like it. As it has been established, the Gorillaz are in fact a flat projection on transparent foil. Our eyes are tricked into thinking they have become three dimensional and "real." This has to do a lot with how our brain perceives the projection, but also with what Kendall Walton called "[m]ake-believe […]—a truly remarkable invention" (1990: 67). Children often play such make-believe games: they will, for example, agree that all tree stumps are bears, to be wary of, and then spend hours outside in the woods, sneaking up on these "bears" and observing them. Strictly speaking, of course, the tree trunks remain pieces of wood, not bears, and they will never be. But the children believe it, and this belief is stronger than reality (1990: 37). This phenomenon plays an important role whenever we watch a movie, a play or—in the Gorillaz' case—a concert: anything can happen, writes Walton, if we are willing to not question something, which "others (artists) construct […] for us," but rather give in to the illusion, fall under the spell, believe and enjoy (1990: 68).

It is very likely that the audiences at Gorillaz concerts experienced this effect; that they wanted to believe that the two-dimensional cartoon figures really did step over into our world. Make-believe is a powerful force, which can make reality and fiction seem to mix. Of course, this does not change the fact that the band's cartoon characters are not really alive and in the flesh, but it does give us this illusion. By Ryan's definition, we thus cannot observe a real metalepsis in a Gorillaz performance. Instances of metalepsis at the ground level, Ryan argues, are very rare, although they do exist—if, for example, a "real-world actor […] could stab another actor to death rather than faking a murder" (2004/2006: 226). Here the fictional character's murder would result in death, which would be no illusion—it would have physical consequences in the real world. Gorillaz performances, on the other hand, employ illusions of metalepsis (albeit very good ones!).

So how can the illusion-engendering quality of Gorillaz performances be qualified if not metaleptic? Ryan calls such examples "quasimetaleptic [i.e.,] a form of playing with levels that remains compatible with a rational explanation such as a rhetorical metalepsis or effects of *trompe l'œil* that fool the user for a short period of time," or again: "pseudometalepsis,

[where one level] only *seems* to invade [another] temporarily" (2004/2006: 218). Of course, on the one hand, Gorillaz' seeming transgressions from the cartoon world into the real world, are not all that mysterious, but they result from the Pepper's Ghost projection. On the other hand, however, are not metalepses always illusions which are based on quite simple logical explanations? Bastian Bux can climb into *The NeverEnding Story* because he merely a character out of a novel, and his movie alter ego does the same with the help of illusionary special effects. The conventions of fiction and film allow such strange things to happen. Every reader of the book and every viewer of the film knows this is not possible, but yet they believe because they expect it from a fantasy book or movie. Is reading a metaleptic book or watching a metaleptic movie thus not as much part of a game of make-believe as the metaleptic Gorillaz concerts were? It seems that the terms "quasimetalepses" or "pseudometalepses" do not do the powerful effects of these concerts enough justice. Also, not seeing them as real metalepses would mean that many wonderful examples of the comic and animated cartoon world would have to be disregarded as "fake metalepses" (and thus excluded from this volume) for, no cartoon character ever really runs out of a picture frame or directly addresses the readers or viewers.

However, an intelligent way of drawing—or a clever use of special effects and post production—can make it seem as if they do just that. These are illusive techniques, of course. However, the effect of such a cartoon drawing can be equally powerful, and feel equally metaleptic as when one reads the part in *The NeverEnding Story* where Bastian enters the fictional world Fantasia. The main difference is that Bastian goes from a diegetic to an intradiegetic level, where "true" metalepsis is accepted, whereas the cartoon characters (seemingly) go from a diegetic (i.e., comic) to an extradiegetic (i.e., real world) level, where it is not accepted. The first is thus usually unquestioningly considered a metalepsis, the latter not. This dilemma raises the question of whether the definition of metalepsis should be sufficiently broad to include metaleptic illusions as well. If one takes Genette's initial definitions of metalepsis as the "passage from one narrative level to another"[7] and as the mixing of "the world where narration takes place and the world which is narrated"[8] (1972: 243, 245), it would be necessary to exclude Gorillaz performances from the phenomenon, since this strict definition of metalepsis prevents the concerts from serving as fully accepted examples of metalepses. There is no real passage between worlds so that the ontologically different worlds

7 Translation by K. Kukkonen, see page 4 in this volume.
8 Ibid.

do not really mix. However, Genette later expanded the term considerably, when he wrote"[t]oute fiction et tissée de metalepses"("[a]ll fictions are woven through with metalepses"[9]; 2004: 131).

The future might hold another solution for the dilemma. As Ryan points out, virtual and augmented realities, where reality and fictionality are blended together with the help of projection, do hold metaleptic potential after all. This only applies, however, if the illusion is so perfect that it would literally stimulate the same areas in the brain, as real objects do: "[A] computer could create images of objects and feed into our brains […] the day when technology becomes sophisticated enough to make us perceive images as the real thing, its 'victims' will have no knowledge of the metaleptic takeover. Metalepsis could thus affect the real world, but we would be unaware of it" (Ryan 2004/2006: 227–229). The paradox effect would be hidden to them. In the Gorillaz' case, again, we have this necessary startling, metaleptic effect, perceiving the cartoon figures as three-dimensional, but we lack the feeling of total conviction. Nevertheless, this glimpse into a possible future of virtual reality underlines the importance of metalepsis as a mode of perception and belief.

4. Levels of Fictionality and Reality

The Gorillaz performances should not only be seen as possible examples of metalepsis, but also as a colourful bouquet of different stages along the spectrum of fiction and reality. As pointed out earlier, the concerts contain a number of different representations of artists. The main focus, of course, lies in the projections of the band and of Madonna. Neither Gorillaz, nor the projected Madonna are physically present, and yet the viewers seem to perceive the projected version of Madonna as "more real" than the band. After all, the Gorillaz have been created and drawn entirely by an artist. The Gorillaz representation, therefore, is entirely fictional, a projection based on Hewlett's cartoons and animations. The Gorillaz transform into a 3D projection, but even the newly gained three-dimensionality of the cartoon characters does not convince us that they truly belong to our world. We see them with our own eyes, standing on stage and performing, and yet we cannot quite believe what we see, for the band member's bodies still look cartoonish. Madonna, on the other hand, has always been three dimensional, and she certainly has not been designed by a comic artist, but she is situated in the "real world." Her

9 Ibid.

projected self is a pre-recorded video of this real, living person (Johnson 2006, Live Design Website): Madonna is transformed into a projection, but she in the eyes of the audience she appears her real self. Madonna's projected self can hardly be distinguished from the original and thus from a real human.

These different perceptions of the respective fictional statuses of the Gorillaz and of Madonna raise another question: although the visual medium (projection) is the same, the projected figures are perceived differently. This is explained partly by the origins of the "originals": namely in Gorillaz' cartoon self and Madonna's real self, and partly in how the projection films are created by using an artificial computer animation or real film footage. The last important factor in the differently perceived statuses of reality is the spectators' shared expectations, experiences and conventions they agree on. All these factors lead us to perceive the projected Madonna as more "real" than the projected Gorillaz. But there are even more subtle levels and differences to be taken account of.

If one sticks to Marie-Laure Ryan's stack metaphor, the "real world" or "ground level" (0) would be occupied by the audience. These are real people with a physical, three-dimensional identity. It is on this level that Madonna's real, non-celebrity self Madonna Louise Ciccone is placed. Madonna, the stage performer and artist, is situated on a slightly more fictional level (1). She too is a real person with physical, three-dimensional features, but on stage (unlike other, more conservative musicians) she is not her private self, but partly playing a role. She is a more or less artificial stage persona, and just as an actor, she performs a rehearsed performance and wears a costume. As Kelly points out, "[t]he presentation of pop music is a re-enactment [… it] displays a preparedness evocative of ritual that works against notions of improvisation and free play" (2007: 109). Even more fictionalized is her projected self on the next level (2). This representation of her looks much like the stage persona Madonna, but is in fact only a pre-recorded, two-dimensional image on a flat projection foil. This is especially striking, since, as mentioned before, performer(s) and spectator(s) are usually both physically present at a live concert (2007: 106). This convention is broken, but hardly anyone in the audience realizes it, because it is not a projection of Madonna the public expects to see, but "real" Madonna. This expectation is also what surprises us when the projected Gorillaz enter the stage. We expect to see performers in the flesh and not cartoon figures. The band members, however, are then situated on yet another level (3), even above the projection of Madonna. They, as well, seem three-dimensional, but in fact are equally projected and flat. However, they do not look human, but fictional. Nevertheless, their computer animation did add more "realness" to them than their

usual cartoon style did. On the last level (4), is where these original cartoon-Gorillaz would usually be situated: flat, two-dimensional, never appearing three-dimensional, and obviously drawn by an artist. One could now think of even more abstract and fictional levels to insert (e.g., stickmen figures of the band)or more realistic representations (e.g., actors who are dressed up as the band members).

The borders between these levels are hard to define, and during the Gorillaz' MTV and Grammys performances, all these different representations of characters (0–3) seem to blend, mix and interact. As discussed in part three of this essay, it depends on the definition adopted as to whether one calls this moment a "true metalepsis" or a "pseudo-" or "quasi-metalepsis." However, it can be safely said that this appearance of level-blending and -mixing is, when and why the audience experiences their "metaleptic moment," the "metaleptic effect," which has been created. The spectators witness a transgression between fiction and reality which should not be possible, but seems to occur anyway, and to no one's astonishment.

5. Functions and Effects

For any metalepsis, it is interesting to analyse the effects it has on the people who have experienced it: the readers of a book, the viewers of a movie or, in the Gorillaz' case, their live audience. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to find eyewitnesses to the shows, as the MTV Awards and the Grammy Awards are not open to the general public. Relying only on accounts of TV viewers would also offer only a limited view of the shows, because the live effect and experience might have been very different. Nevertheless, it is possible to analyse the metaleptic effects of Gorillaz performances by examining the aims these illusions are intended to achieve. Werner Wolf lists a number of different functions of metalepsis, most of which were first defined by Marie-Laure Ryan (Wolf 2005: 101-104). These functions can be applied to cases of metalepsis in different media, and thus also to the holographic Gorillaz performances. In fact, most of the functions mentioned by Wolf are fulfilled in the performance. Some, however, are more prominent than others and so we shall focus on these.

One of the oldest and most popular metaleptic functions is the so-called *"ludic function"* (Wolf 2005: 102). It underlines the playfulness of the phenomenon. This playfulness can definitely be found in the metalepses of both Gorillaz performances. The MTV Awards are especially known for their amusing and colourful programme, the main purpose of which is

to entertain the audience. The Grammy Awards might at first sight not seem to be such a laid-back occasion, but they also seek to put on a good show. Use of the Gorillaz metalepsis as a gag indeed created a free and entertaining approach to performance, breaking a lot of conventions and challenging traditional beliefs.

The freedom and novelty of the unconventional stage show leads to another important function of metalepsis identified by Wolf, also clearly also intended by the producers, namely the "sensational function" (ibid.). As already mentioned, the MTV show became famous as the "world's first 3D hologram performance" (eyeliner3d.com, Musion Eyeliner Website), resulting in extensive publicity, for both the band Gorillaz and for the show's production company Passion Pictures and Musion. Many reviews from fans bear witness to the strong impression these shows made on the people who followed them. The comments on Youtube,[10] where the videos of the performances are available, range from a thrilled "UBERCOOOOOLLLL" to an astounded "how the hell do they do this" and "the animation WAS THE BEST OF IT ..." to an awestruck "this is just fully sick" (meant as a compliment). Clearly, the Pepper's Ghost technique has not failed to make an impression on 21st century audiences.

Combined with these playful and sensational functions of metalepsis we also find a strong *"comic valorization"* (Wolf 2005: 102) in Gorillaz' metalepses. The band's live performances are a celebration of the medium of comics and cartoons. Although the shared understanding of comics is stretched and altered, Gorillaz' roots still clearly lie in their cartoon shapes and looks. Putting the band in this new, three-dimensional and animated context, however, only emphasises the great creative potential of comics as well as the power of cartoon images to impress the public even today.

Together with the medium of comics, the creators of the illusion are celebrated by the performances, a function Wolf refers to as *"celebrat[ing] the author"* (2005: 102). On the one hand, the use of metalepses contributes to celebrating the band's creators, Damon Albarn and his colleague Jamie Hewlett. As Gorillaz' manager Niamh Byrne explained in an interview: "…only now has the technology caught up with Damon and Jamie's vision" (Sherwin 2005, Times Online Website). Having their designs come alive in such a vivid and graphic manner for the first time, was indeed a crowning achievement for the whole idea behind the concept of a virtual band. On the other hand, the creators of the technical side of the illusion are also celebrated through the use of this metalepsis—the production company as well as the "founding fathers" of the holographic illusion,

10 These are some of the viewer responses posted together with the different videos of the Gorillaz' MTV performance on Youtube. The variational capitalization in these quotes adopted by the people who posted these comments is maintained.

Henry Dircks and John Henry Pepper. Their idea is reborn in a modern way, or, as the director of Musion, puts it, it is "[a] 21st century take on Pepper's Ghost" (Johnson 2006, Live Design Website). The resurrection of their theatrical concept has no doubt pleased the inventors.

This reference to the past can also serve as another interesting function or effect of metalepsis, namely "draw[ing] attention to *historical developments"* (Wolf 2005: 104). Before the Gorillaz performances, most people had probably never heard of the Pepper's Ghost technique before. After the Gorillaz shows, however, journalists started doing research on how the illusion had been created, thanks to the Victorian invention (Sherwin 2005, Times Online Website).

Another function of the Gorillaz metalepsis is their *"anti-illusionist effect"* (Wolf 2005: 103). In the Gorillaz' case, cartoon characters "perform" live on stage. Although they seem three-dimensional to the human eye, play instruments, sing and move around, their appearance and their looks remain fictional. One would never confuse them with human performers. And yet, they behave like real people. This discrepancy between observation and conventional wisdom creates a strong anti-illusionist effect within the viewers. As Wolf writes, it "reminds them, through the frequently comic 'impossibility' of the metaleptic transgression, of the fictionality of the represented…" (ibid.). The paradox is that, although the virtual band behaves like most real bands on stage, the spectators cannot believe their eyes because experience has shown them that cartoon characters cannot escape their diegetic level and enter our world. And so the Gorillaz metalepsis seemingly brings them to life, while at the same time, it marks their fictionality. This is the fascination of it.

The last important function of the Gorillaz metalepsis is clearly "highlighting [...] the *imagination"* (2005: 102). Cartoon characters are not generally known to perform a concert in 3D, but this has happened—twice. Since such rational and logical borders have been crossed, one starts to question the traditional rules and boundaries and wonders, what else might be possible?

6. What The Future Holds

The Gorillaz performances at the award ceremonies undoubtedly activated the imagination of the people involved and sparked some interesting ideas for further concerts in this manner. After the concerts, there were plans for a world tour of the holographic band together with George Lucas' studio and more visual gadgets (Sherwin 2005, Times Online Website). Other sources talked about the band's plans to

collaborate with Passion Pictures again and go on tour in 2007 or 2008 (Johnson 2006, Live Design Website). This would have taken the concept of a metaleptic encounter between the virtual band and their fans a big step ahead. However, to this day, these plans have not been put into action and fans are still waiting for another opportunity to see the band live and in 3D. Even though the tour has not yet taken place, the Gorillaz' metaleptic performances have started a process of thought about future metaleptic scenarios with the help of similar holographic images and projections. What else is possible? So far, the Pepper's Ghost technique has already been used for conferences and presentations around the world (eyeliner3d.com 2008, Musion Eyeliner Website). But could other fictional characters be brought to life in the way this has been done with the Gorillaz?

Here, one might be reminded of the short animated film *Gertie The Dinosaur* (1914)[11] by Winsor McCay. On thescreen, the animated cartoon dinosaur can be seen walking around, while her creator, McCay, stands in front of the picture, (seemingly) interacting with her by giving commands or signs to which Gertie obeys. Here, metalepsis unfolds at a rhetorical, language-based level. At the end of his presentation, though, McCay would step behind the screen and then appear as a cartoon character in Gertie's world, where she would take him for a ride. Here, the illusion shifts from the rhetorical to the ontological. Certainly, even as early as in 1914, McCay could have used the Pepper's Ghost set-up for this trick, and thus enhanced the metaleptic illusion. It was probably unfeasible at the time to install huge glass plates in cinemas and project the whole movie onto them. Had modern technology (with the thin foil) been available, the reactions of the audience would probably have been even more enthusiastic than they were, for the effects would have been more impressive. In this case it could have been only a matter of time until a **Gertie The Dinosaur 2* or something very similar to it appeared—but this time in the "Gorillaz' style" with a three-dimensional animated dinosaur, who enters the 'real' world through the wonders of Pepper's Ghost and modern technology.

Another scenario might be drawn from "The Kugelmass Episode" (1980)[12] by Woody Allen. In this short story, a frustrated professor meets an inventor whose machine is able to beam him into fictional worlds. Professor Kugelmass, a married man, then travels into Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*. When he encounters the heroine of the book, he falls in

11 This short film is often mentioned as one of the best known and most popular examples of metalepsis in the early history of film.

12 This short story is another widely-known and popular example of a narration which contains several examples of metalepsis.

love with her. From then on, he keeps sneaking off to repeat his metaleptic adventures with the young lady. Finally, he even decides to import Emma Bovary into his own world. The story almost ends in a disaster because there are technical problems with the machine and Kugelmass is unable to send his lover back into her fictional world. Could holography not provide a solution here? If a small Pepper's Ghost kit were available on the market, everyone could create their own 3D holograms of fictional characters right in their own living room. Small children could project their heroes Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse into their nurseries, while grown-ups might prefer some handsome "virtual" crushes like Lara Croft of *Tomb Raider* or Indiana Jones himself. These characters would have to be pre-produced on film, together with some funny little interactions for the users. At home, one would only have to put up some transparent foil and switch the projector on and then sit back and watch the fictional scenario become three-dimensional. Of course, a Gorillaz-like illusion would require extensive pre-production and a professional stage setup, but holograph technology might become smaller and more affordable for the general public. Maybe, in ten years time, someone will actually say: "You know what? I have a really cool metalepsis of Batman at home. Would you like to visit and interact a bit with him?" And, on a side note, with a Pepper's Ghost projection you could, unlike Professor Kugelmass, just pull the plug when the holographic characters get too annoying. Would that not be a big advantage?

At first, this "home-use" might seem ridiculous and out of place, in a discussion on a future metaleptic potential of holography. However, one must not forget that Gorillaz shows were also created with the main goal of entertainment, fascination and fun, as has been discussed in part five above with regard to Wolf's *"ludic function"* of metalepsis (2005: 102). The technology used in the 19th century for "serious" theatrical productions like *Hamlet*, was applied to rock shows performed by cartoon characters. As unscientific as this application might have seemed at first, sceptics were proven wrong by the sheer mind-blowing effects these shows created. In just a few minutes, a large TV- and studio-audience was confronted with a metaleptic phenomenon, and they were clearly intrigued by the demonstration. The day may therefore not be too far off when a metaleptic home-entertainment-system will be developed and become a popular pastime. One would not have to visit theatres or cinemas anymore, but just switch on their metaleptic device to experience the effects.

Of course, this would be the private side of it. But the possibilities of what could be done with holography in regards to metalepsis are really

endless. And of course, one must assume that also public uses will continue to exist. Right now, the Pepper's Ghost illusion is already being widely used in the media or live for entertainment, though this is not always recognized by the spectators. An example is Disney's *Haunted Mansion* in theme parks, where, just as professor Pepper originally did, ghosts are "brought alive" by projection and mirroring. Musion, the company that created the Gorillaz' holograph, has also produced other illusions with 3D computer or fantasy characters. Both are examples in which fiction and reality merge and metalepsis takes place. The popularity of these installations is growing, and so too is the possibility for metaleptic uses. Who knows whether we may soon encounter a scenario like in *Looney Tunes: Back in Action* (2003), where animated characters or other fictional creatures can be encountered in museums (e.g., in the Louvre, as shown in the movie)? However, instead of having them run around and "ruin" paintings, why not use mythological characters (like Achilles, Hercules, Zeus, etc.) as seemingly three-dimensional, colourful museum guides? Why not create an educational metaleptic encounter with fictional creatures, so to speak? Who could provide information about ancient Greece, the Trojan War or the Acropolis and the Parthenon better (and more excitingly) than them? Designing, animating and synchronizing these figures would likely mean investing a lot of money and work, but once the setup was ready, it would enable many visitors to experience these mixed reality tours, which would also never differ in quality and would ensure that the exact same tours could take place in different places simultaneously.

In addition to virtual guides, museums could, and of course should continue to employ real humans as guides. This would take the metaleptic potential even further: tour-guides could "communicate" with the projected characters, by discussing controversial issues or by asking them about their "eyewitness" opinions about historic events. Basically, this scenario of "reality meets fiction" would be no different from members of the Gorillaz performing on stage with rappers or from when actors and ghosts would share the same scene in theatres. Metaleptic museum-tours would simply apply the same, old concept, but to a new area of use. Would these technologies and effects not make museums and the like much more attractive and interesting for children and adults?

What the Gorillaz performances have clearly shown is that modern technology can help to produce many interesting metaleptic phenomena. When Damon Albarn and Jamie Hewlett founded the band in 1998, they probably did not expect to ever see their creations live and in 3D. What their performances have also shown is the public interest and even

fascination with these illusions. Most viewers will not know that what they witness is a kind of metalepsis, but this in no way dampens their enthusiasm. Sometimes, of course, as in the Gorillaz' case, the worlds, levels and boundaries across which metaleptic transgression takes place, are hard to single out. Is it our real world level mixing with a mimetic fictional level, or do the cartoon-band-members stay in their world, while we are tricked into thinking otherwise? The answer to this is also the answer to the next questions. Are borders really crossed, or are they just blurred? Is what seems to be a transgression only a clever optical illusion? Is it a real metalepsis or not? As it is, everything depends on how the term is defined, either narrowly or broadly. And of course, sometimes the boundary between "real" and "fake" is slim, and imitations of reality can move and affect us as much as reality itself. In addition, holographic projections as a means of metalepsis are a new field of study, about which much remains to be discussed. The future of virtual reality might even add to this confusion—or solve the problem, depending on what we expect from it. It is obvious, however, that metalepsis and metaleptic experiences continue to amaze and astound us. With the availability of new and future technologies, metalepses will continue to proliferate.

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Pop-Culture in History: Metalepsis and Metareference in German and Italian Music Theatre

Music is a reflector
Music reflects rain, sun, tempest, storm
Music reflects rivers, lakes, oceans
Music reflects fury, crying, laughing
Music reflects internal thoughts
Music reflects externals
Music reflects madness and reason
Music reflects YOU
Judith Sarah Fricke: WORLDS BETWEEN [1]

Opera has been, from its very beginning around 1600, a favourite place for artistic metareference and metalepsis—most of all in the 'popular epoques' of the genre: Even the very first operas in history by Peri or Monteverdi on ORFEO showed a singer singing the fictional impersonation of a mythological singer. Since then self-reflexive metareference has never ceased to be exploited in musical theatre—sometimes in operatic tragedies ("Pagliacci"), but mostly in comic operas ("Viva la mamma!") or at least in tragicomedies ("Ariadne auf Naxos"). As my article traces metalepses and metareferences in popular opera, a short historical survey leads to the presentation of two outstanding examples: Rossini's Buffa "Il Turco in Italia" and the more melancholic "Capriccio" by Richard Strauss.

My article investigates which shapes metalepsis and metareference take in popular opera and why popular opera is so full of 'meta-instances' in the first place. In order to classify these 'meta-instances' in popular opera, I propose to expand the basic definition of metalepsis of this volume, "the transgression of the boundary between two worlds," with re-

1 J. S. Fricke (1998: 116) [my translation: in original German, the lines from the poem 'Musik' read: "Musik ist ein Spiegel / Musik spiegelt Regen, Sonne, Gewitter, Sturm / Musik spiegelt Flüsse, Seen, Meere / Musik spiegelt Zorn, Schreien, Lachen / Musik spiegelt Gedanken / Musik spiegelt Äusseres / Musik spiegelt Wahnsinn und Vernunft / Musik spiegelt DICH"].

gards to the ways in which these two worlds reflect and reiterate each other.

However, we first of all need to answer an obvious question:

Is opera a popular genre? Not in our times, of course—where it is often regarded or even suspected to be a post-aristocratic, i.e., an elitist as well as expensive amusement for 'the happy few'. But in London in Haendel's 18th century, in Paris in Meyerbeer's 19th century, and in Italy or Austria for more than two centuries, it used to be the most popular among all forms of art.

And from these times on, opera has always been the most metaleptical of genres. How on earth is this possible? Why is it just *opera* (as 'Gesamtkunstwerk'), and other historically popular, nevertheless highly complex genres such as the *sonnet,* the *fantasy novel*, *boulevard theatre* or *cinema* that most repeatedly invite metareferential elaboration? A hypothetical answer is given here in relation to questions of recognizability, artificiality, and semantic recursivity. In short, opera gives rise to so many metalepses, because of its highly formalised nature which allows conventions to be easily referred to and reflected.

These are some of the questions my paper will try to elucidate. But coming to them from more general items of literary theory,[2] my first interest is in terminology. Since the days when German romantics such as Novalis, Tieck and Fr. Schlegel, in the footsteps of Shakespearean *metatheatre* as well as Fichte's philosophy of self-constructing subjectivity, explicitly discovered the literary trick of *ipso-reflexivity* and gave it the mathematical name of *Potenzierung*, a considerable number of zoological names have been given to our favourite pet, UROBOROS, the famous self-swallowing snake of Greek mythology.

The result has been a rather chaotic terminological hurly-burly of world-wide repercussions. A few years ago, I tried to gather most of the respective terms in my Encyclopedia article on *Potenzierung/ Mise en abyme* (Fricke 2003: 144–147). It does not exist except in German; nevertheless most of the international terms for our phenomenon can be found, at least up to the year 2003.

Among this chaotic terminological situation between '*mise en abyme', autoreflexivity, Potenzierung* and *métalepse*, this paper tries first to give an outline of a systematic explication of terms, thus making it a *Terminological field* of metareference in a stricter sense of scientific concepts. I understand metalepsis (and other kinds of metareference) first and foremost to be based on repetition—repetition of formal features which invite self-reflexivity. Different types of step-up repetition in ipso-reflective relations

2 Cf. among others Fricke (1981): ch. 2.12.; Fricke (2000): ch. 4.3.

can be categorized either as *Gradated iteration*, *Infinite iteration*, *Recursive iteration*, *or Paradoxical iteration*; and it might well be possible to reformulate these types of metalepses within the wider terminological frame of 'metareference'.

1. Theory

In the meantime, two more serious candidates for terminological leadership have come across.

The first of them is, of course, *metalepsis*—pushed forward again by Genette in his new book on old problems (Genette 2004), entitled "La Métalepse" and critically discussed, among others, by Dorrit Cohn (Cohn 2003) and in the conference proceedings (see Pier and Schaffer 2005). But I am somewhat afraid that *métalepse* might soon share the fate of much other Genettian vocabulary—which has turned out to be rather too clumsy and often idiosyncratic for really making it into 'normal language' use of *international* literary criticism. And being a clearly narratological concept, *narrative metalepsis* used to suffer from the same defects for which I never liked the word *metafiction* in its wider use for 'the whole stuff'. Firstly, *metafiction* is just fiction—as any normal case of literary narrative; which, of course, has always made use of meta-language as soon as it tells us, for example, that 'Gilgamesh *spoke* to Enkidu'. That is why I fully agree with some critics (e.g., Wolf 2007: 29) that a fundamental concept of *metaization* in all its everyday contexts seems to be by far too general and all-inclusive to be of any use for literary research.

— What we do need here is a bit of *META-metacritism* concerning the all too wide-spread use or abuse of terms beginning with *meta-*: not everything in literature showing a bit of reflection is *ipso facto* a case of meta-literature! (Even the Old Testament has passages in the *Book of Jeremiah* [ch. 8] where people read from the *Thora*—so we might have to learn that meta-literature started as early as the Holy Bible, *ho biblós*, the fundamental book of occidental culture?)

— In general, the discussion should take stronger account of the *type-token* opposition—which is so often neglected, but seems to be crucial in this context: Referring to any special object *of my own kind*, and even to *all* objects of my own kind, has not at all the same alienating, sometimes puzzling consequences as a message referring to this very same message itself.

To avoid such ambiguities in theories and terminologies of metaization, it would be a good idea to take a second look (or I am afraid, for some even

a *first* look) into the classical texts by the inventor of *meta-language* (i.e., of the term "Metasprache"), by the logician Alfred Tarski. And you do not need to learn Polish for this: Tarski's famous book from Warszaw 1936, "Der Wahrheitsbegriff in den formalisierten Sprachen" was written in German (Tarski 1936), and several of his very first basic articles were published in original English or French. Of course, for reading this you should know a bit of formal logics; but I really doubt if it makes any sense to talk on *meta-relations* without basic knowledge of logics...

And again, concerning the term of *metafiction*, one cannot correct often enough the wide-spread *cliché* of 'every literature being fictional': A panegyrical poet praising his king means exactly what he says (and if he is *lying* in his poem, this very fact proves the more that he does not produce fiction). Similarly, we could pick up another literary genre often used in an ipso-reflexive way: 'Aphorisms on aphorisms' are neither *fiction* nor *metafiction*. But undoubtedly they are *meta-referential*, and thus special types of *metalepsis* (cf. Spicker 1994; Fricke 2006).

So among all the candidates for our daily TV show "In Search of the Superterm", the second new candidate will be *metareference* (cf. Wolf 2009). And talking of *metareference*, I guess, seems to be a very well chosen proposal for the 'baptism' (cf. Wagenknecht 1989) of our central term in the fields of meta-art and meta-literature: On the one hand, the term *metareference* is capable of precisely and unmistakably denoting the complex phenomenon we are talking about; on the other hand, it is wide and variable enough to be applied (from Russell and Tarski up to Magritte and Pirandello) to most various fields of research such as logics, linguistics, optics, cinema, and last but not least to the history of arts and literature—as a technical term for 'transmedial' studies on self-reflexivity, integrating all the different forms of *gradated repetition* in semiotic fields of every kind, especially in the arts.

That is why here I try to give an English version or re-formulation of my own conceptual systemizations within the new terminological frame of *metalepsis* and *meta-referential structures*. By this, I stick to the conviction that this type of terminogical explication and explicitness is absolutely necessary—as long as you do not mistake *terminology* as a synonymon for *new vocabulary*. Terminological corroboration in the humanities does not mean 'new words' or 'the invention of technical terms'—it simply means, making clear what you mean by your terms, whenever it turns out to be useful or even necessary. (Along exactly these lines, our *Reallexikon der Literaturwissenschaft* was begun and finished as the collective attempt by 486 scholars to offer a reliable 'Fachsprache' ('terminology') for literary criticism *within* the frame of the already existing stock of words among critics; cf. Fricke et al. 1997–2003; Fricke and Weimar 1996.)

One of the most positive things about the new term *metareference* is that at last we can get rid of the clumsy term *mise en abyme* (difficult to spell, difficult to pronounce, but for some time almost unavoidable even in many languages besides the original French). André Gide's heraldic metaphor dating back to 1893 has been worked out by Lucien Dällenbach into a generalized *terminology* of international literary theory. In his own French encyclopedia article (Dällenbach 1997), he has resumed his sometimes meandering concepts in the form which I try to translate into English here. He, therefore, meanwhile sums up three elementary types of *mise en abyme*:

— 'simple ipsoreflection' (*réflexion simple*: the box in a box; the television screen in a TV programme; the inner story within a framework story);
— 'infinite ipsoreflection' (*réflexion à l'infini*: the puppet in a puppet in a puppet...; Ludwig Tieck's play within a play within a play...; the Swiss song-writer Mani Matter's complete "men's choir of me alone" in a three-fold hairdressing mirror[3]);
— 'aporetic ipsoreflection (*réflexion aporistique*: Escher's 'hands drawing each other'; Jean Paul's 'novel character as the author of this very novel'; my late daughter's 'drama characters revolting against their actors'[4]).

But even in this last version of Dällenbach's concept, the use the term *mise en abyme* often turns out to be rather ambiguous, where more than once, tokens of evidently different types are mixed up. My own proposal for a better set of terms (original German version: Fricke 2001) therefore preferred to talk of different degrees of *iteration* (*Gestufte Iteration* / *Unendliche Iteration* / *Rekursive Iteration* / *Paradoxe Iteration*). As far as I can see, by now this can easily be transferred into the more international terminology of *metareference*. Of course (to avoid some misunderstandings that might have come up) this is not a classification of all types of metareference, but lists up types of artistic ipso-reflexivity (or *mise en abyme*, that is: *gradated metareference*) in *terms* of metareferential relations:

— **(A)** *Gradated Metareference*: Without breaking the rules from Tarski-Russell's logical *theory of types* (demanding a strict separation of hierarchic sign levels), a semiotic relation is repeated on the next higher level—either in the same way [*token metareference*] or in an analogous way [*type metareference*] (e.g., the actor Bernhard Minetti plays the role of

3 "e Männerchor us mir alei ... es metaphysischs grusle." Mani MATTER: *Bim Coiffeur*. Matter (1969: 54–55).

4 J. S. Fricke (1998: 175–178).

'Minetti' in Thomas Bernhard's play "Minetti"; the opera diva Maria Callas sings the role of Puccini's opera diva Floria Tosca).

Thus the following two subtypes A.1/A.2 remain still within this conceptual frame of 'Gradated Metareference':

(A.1) *Infinite Metareference* by means of a basically never-ending sequence of the gradated repetition (e.g., well known from the internationally popular children's song "Oh Henry, oh Henry...," or compare equally circular and thus never-ending: "Wenn der Topf aber nun ein Loch hat...").

(A.2) *Recursive Metareference* by means of a technically produced feedback of the gradated repetition (e.g., following the easy process of 'mirror within a mirror', or a trifle more modernized: a video telecast of its own control screen).

— **(B)** *Paradoxical Metareference* (or *metalepsis* in the stricter sense): By breaking the rules from Tarski-Russell's logical *theory of types* (demanding a strict separation of hierarchic sign levels), a semiotic relation is projected back from the next higher level to this very level or even to a level below—either in the same way [*token metareference*] or in an analogous way [*type metareference*] (e.g., the painted painter paints the painter painting him; a fictional character invents his author; a call center is called by phone to ask for the phone number of this very call center).

2. Case Study: *Metalepsis and metareference in Musical Theatre*

The four above-mentioned types of metareference have never ceased to be exploited in a special field of preference for all kinds of ipso-reflexivity, that is, in musical theatre. As a kind of introduction, to the rich realms of *meta-opera* or *opera within opera* or, as we could by now put it in defined terms, on *metareferential opera*, I start with the opening of Gioacchino Rossini's most sophisticated Opera buffa: *Il Turco in Italia*—a title interesting enough not only for friends of paratexts such as Hermann Danuser (2009) for in 1814, it certainly indicated some intercultural surprise as would be today, let's say, a TV soap opera with the title "A Taliban in Austria"...

In the first scene of Rossini's comic opera, we do not see the notorious opera singers as 'a soprano in despair' or 'a fat heroic tenor waving his sword'; instead we see and hear a character named *Poeta*—that is: a singing opera librettist, obviously suffering from a heavy attack of writer's block, from an evident crisis of creativity.

In the marvellous *mise en scène* and DVD production from the Zurich Opera House (2002/Arthaus 2004), our poor poet will find inspiration

from two sources. First from the *Poeta Suggeritore*, the prompter as a kind of twin brother trying to prompt him his very own words—and then from *Santa Cecilia* herself, from Cecilia Bartoli as the central character of *Donna Fiorilla*: By her very looks and then even more by her singing, La Bartoli sive *Fiorilla* inspires our poet with the *buffa sujet* of a 'desperate housewife' looking around for a new lover or *cicisbeeo*.

But already in her first entrance on stage, this exuberant person is heavily mocking at her own inventor, the poet. Here we may already discover a case of *Paradoxical Metareference*: The fictional *creature* Fiorilla does not care a damn about what her fictional *creators* want her to do!

In fact, Opera has always been, from its very beginnings around 1600, a favourite place for artistic self-reflection, theatrical metareference and metalepsis.

Already the very first operas by Peri or Monteverdi on *Orfeo* showed a singer singing the fictional impersonation of a mythological *singer*. And more than that: In Alessandro Striggio's libretto for Monteverdi, we first meet *La Musica* herself as an allegorical character singing the prologue—and in the following scenes, no other subject is so often mentioned and musically discussed by everyone as singing, singers and songs.

Of course, they cannot yet mention the future artistic genre of opera—but no later than in the early 18th century, we find lots of true *meta-operas* especially in Italian buffo works. From then up to today the long chain of metereferential operas has never been interrupted—sometimes in operatic tragedies (like "Pagliacci"), but mostly in comic operas (like "Viva la mamma!") or at least in tragicomedies (like "Ariadne auf Naxos").

In the following list, I give my actual collection of work titles belonging in one way or other to this special tradition of *meta-opera:*

Marcello: IL TEATRO ALLA MODA (1720)
Sarro: L'IMPRESARIO DELLE CANARIE (= Intermezzo in Metastasio: *Didone Abbandonata,* 1724)
Gluck: I CINESI (1754)
Marc Aurel Floros: PRIMADONNE (1760, = Goldoni: *L'Impresario di Smyrna)*
Haydn: LA CANTERINA (1766, = D. Macchia: *Intermezzo*; comp. + Conforto 1754, Piccinni 1760)
Gassmann: L'OPERA SERIA (1769)
Gazzaniga: DON GIOVANNI (Venedig 2/1787: parodistically embedded in *Il Capriccio drammatico*)
Salieri: PRIMA LA MUSICA, POI LE PAROLE (1786)
Mozart: DER SCHAUSPIELDIREKTOR (1786)
— DON GIOVANNI (1787)

Cimarosa: IL MAESTRO DI CAPELLA (1790)
— L'IMPRESARIO IN ANGUSTIE (German transl. Goethe 1791)
Fioravanti: LE CANTATRICI VILLANE (1799)
Gnecco: LA PROVA DI UN' OPERA SERIA (1805)
Rossini: IL TURCO IN ITALIA (1814)
Mayr: I VIRTUOSI DI TEATRO (1817)
Donizetti: LE CONVENIENZE ED INCONVENIENZE TEATRALI
(= "VIVA LA MAMMA!", 1827)
— IL FORTUNATO INGANNO (1823)
— IL CAMPANELLO (1837)
Halévy: CLARI (1828)
Lortzing: SZENEN AUS MOZARTS LEBEN (1834)
— ZAR UND ZIMMERMANN (1837)
— HANS SACHS (1840)
— DIE OPERNPROBE (1851)
Adam: LE POSTILLON DE LONJUMEAU (1836)
Berlioz: BENVENUTO CELLINI (1838)
Flotow: ALESSANDRO STRADELLA (1844)
R.Wagner: DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG (1845, 1861–67)
Cagnoni: DON BUCEFALO (1847)
Pedrotti: TUTTI IN MASCHERA (1856)
Offenbach: MONSIEUR CHOUX-FLEURY RESTERA CHEZ LUI LE… (1861) (~Molière: *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*)
— LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN (1881) (around Mozart: *Don Giovanni)*
Tschaikowsky: PIQUE DAME (1890)
Leoncavallo: PAGLIACCI (1892)
Giordano: ANDREA CHENIER (1896)
Mascagni: IRIS (1898)
Rimsky-Korsakow: MOZART AND SALIERI (1898)
Puccini: TOSCA (1900)
R.Strauss: FEUERSNOT (1901)
— DER ROSENKAVALIER (1911)
— ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (1912)
— INTERMEZZO (1924)
— DIE SCHWEIGSAME FRAU (1935)
— CAPRICCIO (1942)
Cilea: ADRIANA LECOUVREUR (1902)
S.Wagner: DER KOBOLD (1903)
Schreker: DER FERNE KLANG (1912)
— CHRISTOPHORUS oder DIE VISION EINER OPER (1933/1978)
Pfitzner: PALESTRINA (1917)
Prokofiev: L'AMOUR DES TROIS ORANGES (1919)

Korngold: DIE TOTE STADT (1920)
Janacek: THE EXCURSIONS OF MISTER BROUCEK (1920)
— THE MAKROPOULOS CASE (1926)
— FROM THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD (1930)
— FATE (written 1903–07, first performed 1958)
Hindemith: CARDILLAC (2nd Version) (1926)
— NEUES VOM TAGE (1929)
Krenek: JONNY SPIELT AUF (1927)
Graener: FRIEDEMANN BACH (1931)
Schoeck: MASSIMILIA DONI (1937)
Berg: LULU (1937)
Porter: KISS ME, KATE (1948)
Britten: LET'S MAKE AN OPERA (1949)
Martinu: GRIECHISCHE PASSION (1961)
Henze: DIE BASSARIDEN (1966)
Birtwistle: PUNCH AND JUDY (1967)
Kagel: STAATSTHEATER (1971)
Bialas: DEF GESTIEFELTE KATER ODER WIE MAN DAS SPIEL SPIELT (1975/1987)
Berio: UN RE IN ASCOLTO (1984)
Webber: THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1986)
Zender: DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA (1989–91)
Eder: MOZART IN NEW YORK (1991)
Corigliano: THE GHOSTS OF VERSAILLES (1991)
Battistelli: PROVA D'ORCHESTRA (~ Fellini) (1995)
Lund: Hexe Hillary geht in die Oper (1998)
G. Kreisler: DER AUFSTAND DER SCHMETTERLINGE (2000)

Clearly, a list like this can always be completed and yet will never be quite complete, and in this paper, I had to refrain from running through all the titles of the list (cf. Fricke 2001). I should only like to add my latest personal experience with a brand new meta-opera which, in many respects, turned out to be a kind of post-modern counterfeit to Mozart's well-known persiflage *Der Schauspieldirektor* ("The stage director"; cf. Armbruster 2001). This is Giorgio Battistelli's opera *Prova d'Orchestra* (1995, adapting Fellini's famous movie *Orchestra Rehearsal* from 1978). The opera version was explicitly[5] called an "Experimentum mundi" by its composer: Here, the characters (who are mostly *singing* orchestra musicians) start to revolt, on open stage, not only against their tyrannic conductor—but in the end against the tyranny of *music* in general, against the dictatorship of

5 Interview Giorgio Battistelli (repr.: *Prova d'orchestra.* Programmheft Stadttheater Bern 2007: 19).

measure, bar and rhythm. Finally—that is, in the great *Finale*—a *meta-conductor* metaleptically enters the stage and brings the ever-lasting *Dacapos* to an end, which is then repeated by the *Meta-meta-conductor* in front of the true orchestra in the pit...

3. Explanation

This astonishing continuity in the tradition of metareferential and metaleptic musical theatre obviously calls for an explanation. We find metalepsis in many other historically popular genres such as *film comedy* (Helmut Käutner's "Film ohne Titel," Woody Allen's "Purple Rose of Cairo") or in *well-made plays* of the *théâtre du boulevard* (Sacha Guitry, Ferenc Molnár, Curt Goetz, Noël Coward).[6] But why is it just *opera* (this most complicated *Gesamtkunstwerk* of all), that has, notoriously and for centuries, invited authors and composers to metareferential elaboration?

It might be helpful to take a short look at other genres with a comparably steady inclination to metareference, for example complex genres such as the *fantasy novel* (cf. Klimek 2010 as well as her article in the present volume) or the *sonnet* (cf. Fechner 1969). Not only in the history of German poetry is it known how often famous sonnets deal with the possibilities and restrictions of their own lyrical forms and norms—from Goethe's early criticism ("Das Sonett," 1800) and his later reverence to the 'measured lines' of the sonnet ("Natur und Kunst") up to the postmodern (but perfectly laborated) sonnet about 'I hate sonnets' by the very popular poet Robert Gernhardt ("Sonette find ich so was von beschissen," 1984). My example is less famous—but it ought to be, for here the masterly Rudolf Borchardt presents his personal and epochal *Farewell to the Sonnet* (1912) in one of the most impressive and philosophically deepened metareferential sonnets I have ever read:

6 This will soon be made very clear by a forthcoming doctoral thesis from the University of Fribourg (cf. Mirjam Hurschler: "Selbst-Reflexion des Boulevards: Studien zum Metatheater bei Curt Goetz und Sacha Guitry." Thesis lic.phil. Freiburg (Schweiz) 2004, BCU Fribourg: UM 2004: 211).

Rudolf Borchardt: FAREWELL TO THE SONNET

Oh Sonnet: When everybody thought you dead,
I spoke: "Stand up!" When they called you ossified,
You took your heart and veins from me: So your mouth
And pulse went burning up from newborn want.
They grumbled: "That is all? that should be food
For urge?" And then your strong arms tensed
In double strength and made it. Those aware of you
Were living on your meals; were given your goblet

From hand to hands. This goblet, for the last time,
Today I fill: It is all over. The music and the woe
Of all great times were measured in your size:
I cannot pour a meaner stuff into the gauge
From which I drank eternal love. What once was mine
In thee has found eternity. Immortals, store this glass.

This melancholical or even resigned gesture of "It's all over"[7] will be found again in Richard Strauss' opera "Capriccio" discussed later in this paper; and it seems to have something to do with the typical *Spätzeit* attitude of many metarefential works of art.

More generally speaking, it looks as if all genres especially inclined to metareference are highly structured forms—normally showing a lot of *over-determination* in their internal rules. Just like the artistic device of parody, therefore, the artistic device of metareference seems to depend on fixed patterns, on impressive forms easily remembered and recognized. Their reception needs a kind of *generic anagnorisis*: Only on this condition the meta-referred genre can quickly be identified, and the attentiveness of the public will be directed to aspects of the artistic organization.

Further, this condition is never so well fulfilled as in opera, with its unmistakable repertoire of traditional forms. The genre of opera has its very own type of *Künstlichkeit*—to make use of the ingenious technical term introduced by Clemens Lugowski in his famous literary theory of a *Mythical Analogon* (Lugowski 1932). The normal English translation for *Künstlichkeit* would, of course, be "artificiality" —but for the completely

7 Borchardt (1950–89, Vol.3: 102) [my translation: in original German, the poem 'Abschied vom Sonett' reads: "Sonett, als alle sagten, du bist tot, / Sprach ich 'steh auf!' Als sie dich beinern nannten, / Nahmst du mir Herz und Adern fort: da brannten / Dir Puls und Mund von neugeborner Not. / Sie schmälten: 'Das ist alles? das ist Brot / Für Durft?' Und deine strengen Arme spannten / Sich doppelt und erschufens; die dich kannten, / Hast du ernährt, von Hand zu Händen bot / Dein Becher sich; den ich das letzte Mal / Heut fülle: es ist aus. Musik und Qual / Der großen Zeiten ward dir vollgemessen: / Ich gieße nichts Gemeinres in das Maß, / Draus ich die Minne trank: was ich besessen / Ward in dir ewig: Götter, nehmt das Glas."].

positive connotations in Lugowski (cf. Martínez 2000), I prefer to render it as *The artefactuality of opera:* It is just the unmistakably operatic pattern of 'dramatic fiction being sung on stage' that makes opera so capable of being re-iterated in metareferential constructions of all kinds.

4. Exemplification

That is why I should like to close my short contribution with a second example, this time taken from—as I feel—the supreme token, the utmost culmination of metareferential artefactuality in opera.

In general, no other composer is marked by the metareferential constellation of 'opera within opera' more than Richard Strauss. Already in his second opera FEUERSNOT (*Fire Famine*, 1901), Strauss focusses on the flop of his own first opera GUNTRAM (1894—very much along the lines of Richard Wagner) and on hostilities against Wagner and himself in contemporary Munich. In Strauss' far more successful opera ROSENKAVALIER (*The Knight of the Rose*, 1911), an Italian singer (a tenor, of course) presents himself with the old aria "Di rigori armato il seno" at the morning reception of the Marschallin.

Completely metareferential is, evidently, the second version of ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (1912/1916—clearly modelled on Molière's comedy *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*): By command of the paying ignorant of a sponsor, the *Opera seria* of the 'Abandoned Ariadne' and the *Commedia dell'arte* of Zerbinetta and Harlecchino have to be performed at the same time and on the same stage.

For the libretto of an opera entitled INTERMEZZO (1923), his usual poet, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, left it to Strauss himself to write the text—only too readily, because the autobiographic story turns out to be rather indecent: Its hero is an opera conductor and desperate husband under the half-pseudonym of *Storch* instead of *Strauss* (so in the German names, one bird stands for another, a *stork* for an *ostrich*).

And in DIE SCHWEIGSAME FRAU (*The Silent Woman*, 1934), the opera version of Ben Jonson's famous Elizabethan comedy—adapted for Strauss by the exiled poet Stefan Zweig—the comical plot around the noise-hating Sir Morosus is dominated by the entrance of an opera company—the loudest possible, of course.

But the structural summit and final chord of this long series of metareferential operas by Richard Strauss in 1942 was called CAPRICCIO (thus quoting the title of Bertati's metareferential frame comedy "Capriccio dramatico" from 1787, embedding Gazzaniga's opera *Don Giovanni*). And it is not by chance that CAPRICCIO by Strauss has turned out to be

the last piece of musical *Weltliteratur* in the repertoire of all the opera houses in five continents.

For in most of the works mentioned before, we have met 'opera within opera' only in its rather harmless version, that is as a case of *Gradated Metareference* (or Dällenbach's *reflexion simple*). Even this type, of course, can produce thrilling tokens of interferential relations between the levels of inner play and dramatic frame. This is certainly the case in PAGLIACCI (Leoncavallo's *Bajazzo* opera) where the erotic triangle of *Canio, Nedda* and *Silvio* is bloodily re-iterated in the stage relations between their actors *Pagliacco, Colombina* and *Arlecchino*. But looking up our Tarski and Russell *theory of types*, all this still remains without serious concerns. No feelings of ipsoreflexive *vertigo*, of intellectual dis-orientation will be caused in our minds and no metalepses actually happen.

It is, however, in CAPRICCIO, written and composed by Richard Strauss and his friend Clemens Krauss, at that time Chief conductor and General manager of the Vienna state opera, in the apocalyptic atmosphere of 1942, that we finally hit upon a clear case of *Paradoxical Metareference* or of metaleptic short-circuit. For the fictional characters, in the course of fictional actions, collectively and step by step *invent* exactly this opera with exactly these (i.e., their own) fictional characters, in which they all have been already acting since the beginning of the action. Thus here the snake (Ouroboros) of opera really bites his own tail.

To be more precise, midst a triangular love story of Countess Madeleine (the lovely impersonation of opera herself), faltering between the poet Olivier and the composer Flamand, we once more hit upon the old discussion on the priority of word or music in opera, here disguised into an allegory of great virtuosity. *Prima la Musica, Poi le Parole?* (Strauss 1942/1988: 11, 80[8]). Or should it be, *First the words, then the music*? This question was already discussed in 1607 between the two Monteverdi brothers; it was clearly decided in favour of music by Mozart; and was made an opera title by his rival Salieri in 1786 (cf. list above).

But Strauss' CAPRICCIO does more than rediscuss an old question. This opera playfully resumes and condenses the complete history of opera in itself—by means of immensely rich allusions in text as in music, which does not only quote many outside works, but several operas by Strauss himself, such as ARIADNE or DAPHNE.

And in the end of arguments, examples and discussions, all participants join in the decision well-known from an opera title by Benjamin

8 All direct quotations from: Strauss, Richard, Clemens Krauss. *Capriccio. Ein Konversationsstück für Musik in einem Aufzug. Libretto.* Mainz, London: Teubner 1942; translations following the English version of Maria Massey in the CD booklet to DGG 419023-2 (1988).

Britten: "Let's make an opera!" In fact, they decide to write, compose and prepare an opera, showing just what has happened between them during that very day. And from the planned details we learn that this will come out as exactly the opera in which they have been acting for more than two hours.

For even the domestic servants, in finally cleaning up the stage (Strauss 1942/1988: 82), contribute collectively to the metareferential and metaleptic construction in singing:

> They spoke about some reforms in the theatre [...] I have a notion that they will shortly introduce domestic servants into their operas. The world is going crazy, all of them stagestruck! ["*Die ganze Welt ist närrisch, alles spielt Theater.*"]

Even more evident, the ipsoreflective status becomes in the words of *La Roche*, the experienced theatre director. He is a bass-buffo and is most afraid of the future opera in which, as he puts it, "I see myself erring around as a bass-buffo, I really do!" And his last audible words on leaving the stage (Strauss 1942/1988: 116, 121) give a wonderfully ironic comment on his bumptious vanity: "And remember—see that I get especially effective exits! You know, a really striking exit very definitely helps for great success [...] the last impression a figure can give (*His words are going lost. Exit La Roche.").*

The climax of musically reflected meta-referentiality comes up with the famous 'Final scene of CAPRICCIO'. (Ironically, this nowadays is often presented as a favorite concert piece for soprano and orchestra...). Amidst all the darknesses of World War II, this was melancholically meant to represent something as 'the very last scene of occidental opera history', as a *Farewell to Opera*—exactly in the same spirit as Borchardt's above-quoted sonnet as a final *Farewell to the Sonnet*: It's all over...

For in the end of our opera, Countess Madeleine is still reflecting on the crucial question of how "the end of our opera" could be found—a question she asks of no other person than of her own reflection in a mirror-glass.[9] "Can there be an end of our opera that is not trivial?", Madeleine asks her reflected image (Strauss 1942/1988: 131). And the answer promptly comes from her major-domo: "Madame, your supper is served."

Indeed, could a last sentence of a drama or opera be more trivial than this banal commonplace communication on 'supper being served'?

And, from the composer's point of view, could a last musical phrase sung in an opera be more trivial than the banal and oversimplified *cadenza* on which it is sung?

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9 One of the most successful opera composers of our post-modern days, Manfred Trojahn, has just published a short, but worth-while, essay on these very last sentences and musical phrases of CAPRICCIO (Trojahn 2006: 238–239).

But it is exactly here that we deeply dive into the magic of artistic metareference. Could an end of any opera be *less* trivial than this of CAPRICCIO?

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Afterword

The emergence of metalepsis as a concept of narrative theory in the context of structuralist poetics is not a coincidence, nor is the occurrence of the phenomenon we now characterize as metalepsis restricted to postmodern or to avant-garde experimental fiction. A figure of substitution with links in the rhetorical tradition to the tropes of metaphor and metonymy as well as to synonymy, metalepsis (*transumptio* in Latin) entered narratology in the form of "narrative metalepsis," heir to such practices earlier known as *evidentia*, *phantasia*, hypotyposis, prosopopoeia and "author's metalepsis." As presented in Genette's foundational and still fruitful formulation, narrative metalepsis results from an intrusion of the world of the narrated by the world of the narrating, or vice versa ("antimimesis"), and has the sense of "taking hold of (telling) by changing level" (1972/1980: 235 n.51). With the violation of boundaries, such paradoxical maneuvers produce a feeling of "strangeness," or perhaps an effect of "humor" or of "the fantastic" (or some combination of the two); and indeed, creative imagination itself may be a function of metalepsis. Because it destabilizes the distinction between levels, narrative metalepsis represents a "deliberate transgression of the threshold of embedding" (Genette 1983/1988: 88).

With the hindsight of nearly forty years, it now appears that the term "threshold" is appropriate to describe metalepsis in more ways than one. First conceptualized in the days of classical narratology, metalepsis, which drew only limited attention until rather recently, brings into the open a number of issues that seemed irreconcilable with the positions adopted by more formalistic theories. On closer consideration of these issues, however, it would appear that metalepsis was a threshold lying in wait within structuralist narratology, later to contribute to a new take on the theory of narrative and, more broadly, on various forms of artistic representation. Genette himself, during a conference in 2002, expanded the scope of narrative metalepsis from figure to fiction, declaring that "[a]ll fictions are woven through with metalepses" (2004: 131); and in doing so, he also stepped over the thresholds between genres and between media

and even those between disciplines in order to demonstrate the presence of what was earlier considered an isolated and local device of narrative in theater, film, television, painting and photography.

Among theories of artistic representation, metalepsis has the peculiar interest of having been formulated as a concept that was subsequently to serve as a framework for discovery. This has allowed for enlightened discussion, within a general theory of narrative, of a phenomenon that was often ignored, misunderstood or discarded as an artistic inconsistency or incoherence in the literary work: one need only refer to the obtrusive eruptions of the narrator in character discourse in Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste* or to the incompatibly multiple endings in Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*—two works that illustrate the fragility of the boundary that separates the world of the telling from the world of the told. Thanks to this unique status and to a relative consensus with regard to its defining features (a consensus not shared by the disputed notion of implied author, for example), metalepsis provides a threshold toward redrawing the contours of the object of study in which it is found. A form of 'defamiliarization' in the sense proposed by the Russian formalists, it casts a new light on existing concepts and principles, establishes new connections or discovers old ones anew and opens up for examination and debate forms of expression that might otherwise remain off the radar screen.

Given this context, *Metalepsis in Popular Culture* is an outgrowth of a theoretical concept which is both natural and necessary. It is a natural outgrowth because the numerous varieties of transgression of boundaries in cultural representations of different types now find in metalepsis a powerful conceptual and analytical tool. And it is a necessary contribution due to the fact that, to date, studies devoted to metalepsis have concentrated mainly on works of high culture and tend to limit their investigations to avant-garde works in the written medium, with only occasional forays into the visual media or into works employing multiple media. By adopting a transmedial perspective on metalepsis such as the one outlined by Werner Wolf (but also with reference to Marie-Laure Ryan's proposals for a transmedial narratology) and by stepping over the threshold between high culture and popular culture, but also by examining a corpus of works as varied as it is extensive, the contributors to this volume offer not only a sustained look at the pervasiveness and multiple forms, effects and functions of metalepsis in popular culture but also penetrating insight into the workings of popular culture itself. As readers of this volume will come to appreciate, it is often thanks to the conjunction between genres or subgenres and various media, particularly through technical innovations, that the most novel and startling metaleptic effects in popular culture are achieved, and sometimes with the most far-reaching ramifications.

In her introductory text, Karin Kukkonen sets out a blueprint for the study of metalepsis, and she does so in such a way as to allow for its mutations in the various environments in which it occurs. In order for metalepsis to apply across media, and not merely in written narratives, it is proposed that "levels" be expanded to "worlds" in a sense close to that of the possible-worlds theory of narrative. Within this context, metalepsis, which is incompatible with factual forms of representation, plays a singular role in the already notoriously elusive dividing line between the "fictional" world and the "real" world. A number of articles support the idea that metaleptic transgressions can occur not only between the world of the fictional work and external reality but also at the level of the "inner" reality of a work. The latter situation prevails in written narratives such as popular fantasy fiction where, as shown by Sonja Klimek, metalepsis operates according to ascending, descending and complex (or "Möbius strip") patterns that occur within textual levels rather than in the space between fiction and external reality (see Klimek 2010 for a full-length study). This contrasts significantly with the lyrics of pop songs such as Carly Simon's "You're so Vain" as analyzed by David Ben-Merre. Here, due not only to use of the pronoun "you" and to the generic convention of "authenticity" characteristic of pop songs but also to the convergence of several media in musical performance, the urge to contextualize the song in the real world tends to override fictionality (hence for some fans, the "you" in this song designates Warren Beatty but for others, Mick Jagger). Arguing that pop music is by nature metaleptic, however, and stressing the deictic qualities of personal pronouns, Ben-Merre demonstrates that within the space of the song, Carly Simon's "you" more likely designates the "I" of the performing persona than it does a "real" person. On the whole, the essays seem to suggest that although metalepsis is not a defining feature of fictionality, it nonetheless brings out into the open some of the thorny complexities of the issues by displacing or unsettling the constituents and parameters of storyworlds, reminding us of Nabokov's observation that the one word never to be used without quotation marks is "reality."

Kukkonen further outlines a "basic matrix of types" of metalepsis, a particularly crucial consideration given the diversity of genres and media employed by popular culture. Here again, the criteria are judiciously specified in transmedial terms so as to accommodate the various positions and typologies adopted by the contributors in their examination of specific corpuses: metaleptic intrusions between fictional and real worlds are accounted for in terms of direction (ascending or descending) and nature (rhetorical or ontological), while leaps across fictional worlds (which bear only some metaleptic qualities or effects) have been described either as

"heterometalepsis" (Rabau) or as "intertextual metalepsis" (Wagner). The most elaborate development of this matrix has been worked out by Jean-Marc Limoges. Rather than oppose fictional world and real world, however, Limoges adopts "actual real world" vs. "represented real world," thus adding a third level so as to account for additional worlds produced by "embedded" and/or "parallel" structures, the boundaries of which are also susceptible of transgression. The "modes" of metalepsis are *in verbis*, or "verbal," and *in corpore*, or "physical" (Meyer-Minnemann). However, to fully apprehend metalepsis in a genre employing multiple media such as cartoons, Limoges also introduces metalepsis in its "visual" and "auditory" dimensions.

It is in fact one of the achievements of *Metalepsis in Popular Culture* to demonstrate that if metalepsis is a transmedial concept, the various typologies derived from this concept are not immune from the medium or media employed or from the genre by which it is adopted. Thus Klimek finds that while metalepsis in the performing arts may spill over into "our" reality, in written narratives it occurs *within* artifacts; in the latter case, it is appropriate to focus on ascending, descending and complex (or logically paradoxical) metalepses. The other article devoted to written literature, by Liviu Lutas on detective fiction, points out the incompatibility of metalepsis with this genre in its traditional form and then examines a more recent metafictional corpus of "anti-detective novels" in which use of the device serves to allegorize the process of reading and writing. These aspects of metalepsis are all the more appreciable in that the remaining articles are concerned with artifacts that incorporate several media, language as a written medium (in cases where it is employed) being one medium among others. Thus analysis of comics, as Kukkonen shows, reveals the role of the space between panels (or "gutters") in the transgression of boundaries between fictional and real worlds (e.g., when an element of a drawing is projected outside the panel into the gutter); consequently, the emphasis in comics falls on ascending and descending metalepses, but also on rhetorical and ontological metalepses. In his discussion of music videos, Henry Keazor adopts Monika Fludernik's systematization of Genette's implicit typology (authorial metalepsis; type 1 ontological or narratorial metalepsis; type 2 ontological or lectorial metalepsis; rhetorical or discourse metalepsis). He then goes on to examine cases of metalepsis in music videos which are either "represented" (e.g., a character transgressing the boundary between a fictional world and an embedded fictional world) or "enacted" (transgression of the primary fictional boundary, as when a music video highlights its own medium). A similar distinction is proposed by Keyvan Sarkhosh under the terms "fictional" metalepsis and "narrative" metalepsis in his article on popular

comedy film. Here, however, the emphasis falls on reformulating Genette's conception of metalepsis with the aim of investigating, within the framework of Souriau's "seven planes of existence of the filmic universe," the ways in which boundaries in the film medium are breached.

Indeed, it is thanks largely to innovations in the mass media and in videographic technologies over the past century, now increasingly connected with the digital technologies, that popular culture has become so widespread. Although the essays in the present volume do not directly address the issues of digitization and popular culture (an undertaking requiring a volume in its own right), they do provide evidence of the role of "media affordances" in works of popular culture, and in particular the influence exerted by the affordances peculiar to each medium on metalepsis and related phenomena.

A case in point is the television "crossover" studied by Erwin Feyersinger. Whereas metalepsis occurs "vertically" between worlds that are ontologically inaccessible to one another, crossover, similar to transworld identity in possible-worlds theory, allows for a "horizontal" transfer between fictional worlds. Also called "intertextual metalepsis," a crossover joins worlds sharing the same ontological level; it is particularly relevant in TV shows, spin-offs and remakes that project a fictional world over a number of discrete broadcasts. On this basis, but also with an illuminating discussion of the dynamic and static modes of connection between fictional worlds, Feyersinger develops a graduated six-term typology ranging from realistic, non-paradoxical crossovers to intentionally paradoxical transgressions, or metalepsis, thus providing a medium-specific variant of the basic matrix of types. Equally medium-specific, though with less emphasis on typology, are the possibilities opened up by the remote control device that enables TV, DVD and VCR viewers, both extradiegetic and intradiegetic, to act on the fictional world or to be acted upon by it. Through the "metaleptic remote," as Jeff Thoss terms it, the viewer can feign transitions between the real world and the fictional world or become entangled in ontologically distinct worlds, and in works that employ this device, the story-discourse dichotomy may even be obliterated.

A survey of the literature will show that theories of metalepsis have developed along two lines of reflection, as encapsulated in Ryan's (2005) distinction between rhetorical and ontological metalepsis (see also Pier 2009/2010). All in all, the latter variety is heir to the problem of logical paradox in logic and mathematics resulting from the conflict between recursivity through the addition of meta-levels and self-reference. In *Metalepsis in Popular Culture*, these issues are addressed by Harald Fricke, who sets out a typology based not on the direction and nature of metalepsis that define the basic matrix of types, as outlined in the Introduction,

but rather on the problem of metareference derived from the Russell-Tarski theory of types. This typology develops along a spectrum extending from "gradated metareference," which, together with its two subtypes—"infinite" and "recursive"—respects the hierarchical separation of levels, to "paradoxical metareference," or metalepsis. Such a distribution, in following logical rather than ontological criteria in Fricke's case, reconfigures metalepsis by placing it along a continuum with the traditional *mise en abyme* rather than within a rhetorical strategy in which the world of the telling is made to merge with the world of the told.

Readers of this volume are sure to have observed that the typologies vary as to the degree to which they reflect media affordances. Some (e.g., Fricke's or Limoges's) are not media-specific, while others (e.g., Klimek's or Sarkhosh's) are partly tailored to the characteristics of the medium in which a metalepsis might be found. It further appears that the occurrence of a metalepsis points to a certain correlation between medium/media and genre. Thus, one is more likely to find ascending, descending and complex metalepses in postmodern fiction than in television or cinema remakes, which seem to favor more "horizontal" forms of transgression. By com-bining several media, theatrical productions and certain types of pop music create an environment more conducive to ontological metalepsis than do works of popular fiction that employ only the written medium. These and similar insights are gained thanks in no small part to the necessity of accounting for the multimodal nature of works of popular culture. It is by drawing attention to such correlations that the con-tributors to this volume have opened up yet further avenues for future investigation.

Among a number of important insights to be gained from the essays collected in this volume is that theories which distinguish between rhetorical and ontological metalepsis do so largely with reference to single-medium works. Readers will find that, faced with the multimodal works of popular culture, this distinction needs to be rethought in part. If metalepsis can be defined as "the transgression of boundaries of the fictional world," as stated in the Introduction, then the rhetoric of metalepsis—its effects and functions—must be understood in terms of pragmatics. Originally noted for its disruptive, anti-illusionistic effects, metalepsis has since come to be seen as inherently bound to no specific effect, but rather productive of a wide variety of effects, in some cases even illusion-inducing. This possibility is evoked in a number of the contributions to Pier and Schaeffer, eds. (2005), but it is with the corpus of multimodal works examined in *Metalepsis in Popular Culture* that this threshold in the study of metalepsis comes more clearly into focus.

Although the authors do not specifically refer to the pragmatics of metalepsis, such a pragmatics effectively emerges from two interrelated considerations: discussion of the role of metalepsis in the communicational strategies adopted by certain works or genres; the influence of fictional immersion which, in some cases, may actually be strengthened by metaleptic transgression. One example, already mentioned, is the metaleptic use of "you" in the lyrics of pop music (Ben-Merre), another being the allegorization of fictional communication when metalepses are introduced into anti-detective novels, thus challenging the rational nature of the traditional genre (Lutas). In a similar vein, the occurrence of metalepsis in comics and graphic novels is a metareferential device that contributes to the foregrounding of genre conventions, notably in superhero comics, where themes of good vs. evil are paramount: here, intermedial metalepsis serves both anti-illusionistic and illusionistic ends, as it enters directly into the power struggle between characters but also into the communication between authors and readers (Kukkonen).

Such issues are addressed in various ways by several of the contributions. However, they are brought to the fore most prominently in an analysis of metalepsis in fan vids and fan fiction and in a discussion of the highly illusionistic use of holographic projections in live rock music performances. Regarding the former, Tisha Turk contends that theories of metalepsis pertain, for the most part, to "read-only" cultures with a focus mainly on intratextual metaleptic effects and destabilization of the boundary between reality and fiction. Vids and fan fiction, by contrast, are a phenomenon of "participatory" or "read-write" culture: they call into question the separation between audience and creator, producing extratextual metaleptic effects, as it is the spectator/reader who intervenes in the fictional world rather than the director or the writer. These genres are thus characterized more by "performative" metalepses than they are by "narrative" metalepsis. By rendering boundaries "infinitely expandable," they elicit a strong immersive response in the reader/ spectator.

If the pragmatics of vids and fan fiction engender immersive effects by redrawing the lines defining communicational roles, the use of holographic projections on the concert stage triggers a play between metalepsis and illusion through the intermingling of levels of reality. Conceding that with ontological metalepsis characters do not in fact step out of their fictional worlds, Roberta Hofer explains how, thanks to the artificially created optical illusions produced by holographs, a flesh-and-blood performer (Madonna), transformed into a projection perceived by the public to be as "real" as the original, appears in the same visual medium alongside a rock band (the Gorillaz), portrayed as three-dimensional cartoon characters. What is apparently a metaleptic merging of ontologically

distinct levels is in fact a projection by means of the same holographic medium, and the spectators are tricked—though not always unreservedly—into seeing performing artists before their eyes at a level of physical reality identical to their own. Such technologically-enabled maneuvers not only confirm that metaleptic effects are potentially most dramatic in a multimodal environment, where the extradiegetic space favors heightened audience immersion, but they also stretch the Coleridgean dictum of "willing suspension of disbelief" to the limit.

The corpuses studied by the contributors to this volume are drawn from popular culture of the past few decades, and they emanate, in large part, from works and artifacts made possible by the modern mass media. However, popular forms of culture date back much further in time, a fact Fricke reminds us of by pointing to the popularity of the opera in Europe over several centuries. The opera repertoire is of course both richly intertextual and remarkably multimodal (cf. Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*), and comic opera in particular has proved from the beginning to be metareference- but also, at times, metalepsis-friendly. Within the framework of his metareferential approach to metalepsis, Fricke comments on the operas of Richard Strauss, and most notably *Capriccio* (1942), heir to a long tradition of metareferential opera and a noteworthy example of paradoxical metareference in the performing arts.

Metalepsis occurs with the transgression of boundaries—or "of the threshold of embedding," as Genette has put it. But as suggested at the beginning of this commentary, the term threshold might also serve to describe the role of metalepsis: to act as a threshold of discovery—a point of entry—in a double sense. As a theoretical concept, metalepsis destabilizes categories and calls for new modes of analysis of existing and emergent genres with their various media affordances, taking account of the metaleptic potential of multimodality and of the disruptive/immersive impact of transgressive border crossings, not to speak of the nooks and crannies, yet to be explored, produced by this paradox-engendering device. As a practice shared by cultural representations of many types, metalepsis is a threshold that Henry James neglected to provide his "house of fiction" with: granted that this house is provided with a million windows through which to observe the world, how does one enter it? Metalepsis is a threshold to that house into which we may be allowed access or not, or over which we may be forced to leave or wish to flee.

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