THE NARRATIVE EVENT AS AN OCCASION OF EMERGENCE

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Some recent approaches to narratology have presented the event as a basic constitutive element of narrativity. The event is considered either a primitive term or something that just happens or may happen, a change from one state to another. The underlying concepts are identity, state, and being. The article describes the event in general and the narrative event in particular from the perspective of the primacy of becoming, change, and flow, employing especially Whitehead's philosophy of process and also certain concepts developed by reception aesthetics. The narrative event is analyzed in the context of the following concatenation: the event – interconnected events – plot – fictional world – the real world and its potentiality. The aim is to understand a narrative event not as an interruption of the receptive flow, but as its change of course among levels of emergence.

Das narrative Ereignis als Gelegenheit für Emergenz
Einige neuere Ansätze in der Erzähltheorie haben das Ereignis als ein grundlegendes konstitutives Element von Narrativität eingeführt. "Ereignis" wird entweder als einfacher Begriff aufgefasst oder als etwas, das schlicht passiert oder passieren könnte; ein Wechsel von einem Zustand zu einem anderen. Die zu Grunde liegenden Konzepte sind Identität, Zustand und Sein. Der Beitrag skizziert Ereignis im Allgemeinen und das narrative Ereignis im Besonderen ausgehend von einer Priorität des Werdens, der Veränderung und des Fließens; dabei wird besonders auf Whiteheads Philosophie der Prozessualität und gewisse Konzepte der Rezeptionsästhetik zurückgegriffen. Das narrative Ereignis wird im Rahmen der folgenden miteinander verknüpften Begriffen analysiert: Ereignis – Ereigniskette – Plot – fiktionale Welt – Realwelt und ihre Potenzialität. Das zielt darauf ab, ein narratives Ereignis nicht als eine Unterbrechung des Rezeptionsflusses zu verstehen, sondern als etwas, dass die Richtung dieses Rezeptionsflusses zwischen Emergenzniveaus verändert.

The method selected for dealing with the themes in the subject of our enquiry – the narrative event – is analogous to the subject and the role of the narrative event within a given narrative, and analogous to the reception of a fictional narrative text: we proceed by a method of transitions or guided oscillations between levels of generality, from literary theory to metaphysics and back, through the following five steps: the problem of how the narrative event has been neglected in theories of narrativity (Part I); the conception of the narrative event in the theories that do treat it (Part II); the event as a philosopheme, that is, as a philosophical problem (looking at the narrative event taking a detour round the problem of an event as an object in time, especially in the thought of Alfred North Whitehead; Part III); the treatment of the narrative event using the tools of narratology (Part IV), and an outline – in terms of aesthetics and employing the concept of emergence – of the conception of the narrative event as an event received within the entirety of a narrative (Part V).

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I.

To begin with, we may divide past and present theories of narration into two subsets: one (of which Roland Barthes's *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives* is a telling example[1]) contains theories that practically ignore the event as a component, structural unit, or basis of narrativity, and (especially structuralist theories) rely on a methodological abstraction out of time in favour of capturing configurations or long-term relations and projecting the narrative into this or that schematic mould. What would appear to underlie this approach is Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic model, where linguistics is pre-eminently synchronic, and diachrony, as a comparative study dependent on synchrony, is based on the comparison of the prior and subsequent states of a system. It is, then, no accident that this camp of narratologists pays little if any attention to the process of how a narrative text is received. Accordingly, Claude Lévi-Strauss is able to make the following comment on Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*: 'The order of chronological succession is reabsorbed into an atemporal matrix structure'.[2] (For 'matrix' we might easily substitute 'schema', 'structure' or 'configuration'.)

The second camp (Paul Ricoeur and some other narratologists like Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Gérard Genette, and Mieke Bal) recognizes, and above all investigates, the inherent temporality of narration and the role of the narrative event in the structure, build-up, and, ultimately, the reception of a narrative. The two approaches share the proclaimed output (or the confirmed hypothesis) of their analyses, that is, the stratification of any narrative text. We shall now briefly recapitulate these two factors – the stratification of a narrative and the narrative event – in terms of current theories of narrativity.

Barthes persuasively asserts that a 'unit [phoneme, word, clause, and so forth] belonging to a particular level only takes on meaning if it can be integrated in a higher level'.[3] His basis for this is Emile Benveniste's theory of levels, which distinguishes two kinds of relations in any meaningful utterance: distributional, that is, relations on one and the same level, and integrational, or transitions from one level to the next.[4] This lies at the heart of the distinction between two levels of understanding a text – merely following it, and understanding it in the true sense of the word – a distinction shared and handed down by many narratologists as well as historians and critics of

1 Roland Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives,' in *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

2 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 138.

3 Barthes, 'Introduction', 86.

4 Ibid.

literature and film, including, beside Barthes, Paul Ricoeur and Peter Brooks.[5] The evolving complexity of the levels or strata in a text and the emerging plot affect the meanings of lower-order levels. Understanding the overall sense of a work, the reflection of the plot, thus requires an integration of the part-meanings without which we can do no more than 'follow' the text, the narrative, and thus form only partial, fragmentary aesthetic wholes of a low order of complexity.

In this sense Mukařovský uses the term 'contexture' (*kontext*) as the type of a whole that evolves and whose part-meanings accumulate 'vertically', having a retroactive effect on the previously achieved grasp of the relevant lower-order distributional and integrational relations.[6] In Roland Barthes' words: 'To understand a narrative is not merely to follow the unfolding of the story, it is also to recognize its construction in "storeys", to project the horizontal concatenations of the narrative "thread" on to an implicitly vertical axis; to read a narrative is not merely to move from one word to the next, it is also to move from one level to the next.'[7] This raises the question of where the rising levels of a text end, and which level provides the space for the total comprehension of the text. Barthes ends with the level of system of the narrative (in descending order below it come narration, action, function, and language), while Tzvetan Todorov concludes that 'the work of fiction effects the transition whose omnipresence conceals its importance and its singularity – from a series of sentences to an imaginary universe'.[8]

On a more general level, which implies the stratification of any narrative as a matter of principle, Ricoeur speaks of narration as a 'fusion of configuration and flow', and, one 'storey' higher, Alfred North Whitehead recognizes two principles ruling the world: the principle of conservation (or endurance) and the principle of change.[9] These two principles may, and in the case of narrative texts must, apply not only 'horizontally', on a single level, but also 'vertically', with integration or disintegration acting between levels. Validation of this view and its obvious applicability to narrativity can also be found in a relatively

5 See Paul Ricoeur, 'Narrative Time', in *On Narrative*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), and Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

6 Jan Mukařovský, 'The Concept of the Whole in the Theory of Art', in *Structure, Sign, and Function* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 73–4.

7 Barthes, 'Introduction', 87.

8 Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 27.

9 'There are two principles inherent in the very nature of things, recurring in some particular embodiments whatever field we explore – the spirit of change, and the spirit of conservation.' Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 289.

remote sphere of thinking – cybernetics. Cybernetics, in the definition of its founder, Norbert Wiener, views endurance and change not as polar opposites, but as complementary characteristics. Wiener explains the complementarity of stability, or endurance, and change by various orders of feedback control: 'Feedback [is] the property of being able to adjust future conduct by past performance. Feedback may be as simple as that of the common reflex or it may be a higher order of feedback, in which past experience is used to regulate not only specific movements, but also whole policies of behavior.'[10] This description of the feedback function is easily reconcilable with narratological accounts of making retrospective sense of the plot as that which has so far unfolded, of the action that has taken place so far, of reinterpretation in the reception process of the constituted *Gestalten*, functions, motifs, and configurations of the events already taken on board (as an example of retrospective reinterpretation, consider Poe's short-story 'Thou Art the Man' with the appearance of the figure of Charles Goodfellow), the adoption of new interpretational strategies (with, for example, the recognition of irony), and the effect of the upper storeys of a narrative on meanings and their components all tally with this description of the feedback function. We shall see how, first, narratological and, second, philosophical treatments of event and change fit into the stratification of a narrative and the background dominion of the two complementary principles of endurance and change (configuration and flow).

II.

In her classic *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan defines narration as a sequence of events, where an 'event' is something that has happened and can be expressed by a verb or action noun. An event is further specified as a transformation of one state into another.[11] This definition immediately prompts two questions: Does not the perception of an event, that is, the need to grasp and bring into a single field two states (before and after a change), two constancies, stabilities, or configurations of elements and properties demand distance for reflection, that is to say, a view from level different from the primary action level? In other words, does not this notion imply that a hierarchical stratification of the acts is essential to the extraction of meaning? Clearly, it demands and thus reasserts the inherent stratified character of any narration (and not only that).

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[10] Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (London: Sphere Books, 1968), 32.

[11] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 2–3, 15.

The next question is whether what is considered an event is the process of change from one state to another, that is, the 'space' between two states, or a partial whole embracing both extreme positions. We shall see that the latter is the case. A similar line is taken by Seymour Chatman when, referring to Aristotle's *mythos* as an ordering of incidents, that is, events, he speaks of a story as an ordering of events, where an event is an act, action, or happening. They all are then changes of state.[12] Likewise Genette defines one of the meanings of 'narrative' in the following terms: '*Narrative* refers to the succession of events, real or fictitious, that are the subject of this discourse, and to their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition, etc.'[13] And finally Mieke Bal defines the relevant terms as follows: *text* – 'a finite, structured whole composed of language signs'; *narrative text* – 'a text in which an agent relates ("tells") a story'; *story* – 'a fabula that is presented in a certain manner'; *fabula* – 'a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors'; *event* – 'the transition from one state to another state'. And she adds, like many other narratologists, that an event becomes meaningful to the further development of the fabula only as part of a series.[14]

What is implied in all cases is the conception of change and event as a kind of disturbance of endurance, the primary and basic constancy, an equilibrium of states. But what goes on *between* states? Do the states merely persist throughout? If they do persist, however, the flow has not stopped and states change by their duration being protracted. To find the answer we must leave the narratology level.

III.

For the sake of simplicity, we may divide the philosophical conceptions of 'event' into two subsets, according to the status of persistence. An event is either momentary (see Roman Ingarden[15] and the non-physical event of the Stoics), or it has a time-span, duration. Since the essence of narration is the interlinking of distinct and discrete factors – that fusion of flow and configuration, and the narrative event as a 'building block' of narratives, is then the outcome of syntheses or acts of configuration, applications of the concept of event with duration inherent appear to be more tenable. The key question

12 Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 43–4.

13 Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 25.

14 Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 5.

15 Roman Ingarden, *Time and Modes of Being* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1964).

then becomes how to sustain both the passage – in our case, the unfolding of the story, at the same time continuously grasping the configurations, *Gestalten* – and the constitution and reception of the events – in other words how to explain the simultaneity of following the text and the unfolding story against the constant presence of the accumulating whole and the process of distinguishing and grasping *Gestalten* that are in principle discrete and enclosed, and so constantly entering and leaving the flow and the passage.

As stated by Francis Herbert Bradley, one of the forerunners and wellsprings of the 'philosophy of process': 'An event itself, as one member in a temporal series, is only itself by transcending its own present existence.'[16] Analogously, if in the more specific context of narratology, Ricoeur states: 'The plot, therefore, places us at the crossing point of temporality and narrativity: to be historical, an event must be more than a singular occurrence, a unique happening. It receives its definition from its contribution to the development of a plot.'[17] Here, an event's being 'historical' means that it signifies something and is 'inscribed in the memory', characteristics that also appertain to a narrative event. It is no accident that 'event' has been described in similar terms by the philosopher of history, Paul Veyne:

> Historians relate plots [that is, they are story-telling], which are like so many itineraries that they mark out at will through the very objective field of events (which is infinitely divisible and is not made up of eventworthy atoms); no historian describes the whole of this field, for an itinerary cannot take every road; none of these itineraries is the true one, is History. In short, the eventworthy field does not comprise of spots to be visited and that would be called events; an event is not a being, but an intersection of possible itineraries.[18]

For 'itinerary' we might easily insert plot, or even Bradley's temporal series or, narratologically speaking, vector of meaning as the intersection of strata in the narrative. Here an event appears as an emergent virtuality or epiphenomenon of an act of cutting across strata. Then, depending on one's particular interpretation strategy, certain events emerge as significant, others constituting the background, receding from the event-creating level.

And Whitehead makes a similar analysis (though in a different context): 'The disclosure in sense-awareness of the structure of events classifies events into those which are discerned in respect to some other individual character and those which are not otherwise disclosed except as elements of the structure.

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16 Francis Herbert Bradley, *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 281.

17 Ricoeur, 'Narrative Text', 167.

18 Paul Veyne, *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 36.

These signified events must include events in the remote past as well as events in the future.'[19] Compare this with the division by narratologists (such as Barthes) into functional events, which open up various options and lead to making a choice, and the non-functional, which do not move the action forward, merely adding to the characterization of some functional event or to the pre-existing configuration. Whitehead's conception of 'event', one of the key concepts of his metaphysical system, is determined by three factors: extension, meaning the overlap of one element across subsequent elements in such a way that the one is a whole and those that follow are its parts. (Compare the relationship between the plot and the various narrative events – taking this view, we can treat the whole text as an event, which is indeed what Wolfgang Iser does, as we shall see in due course.) The second feature of an extensive series – an event – is that it is endowed with innate properties, such as intensity; and the third feature is individuality, tantamount to Whitehead's creativity. A key factor in Whitehead's event is prehension, the grasping of input data. Any event has a subjective (for example, emotional) form of prehension and so too a subjective aim (compare Veyne's choice of itinerary). The final phase is satisfaction and outcome – the 'superject'. An actual entity (the basic type of event, in the present context synonymous with 'actual occasion', where 'event' is a nexus, a chaining of actual entities) has, then, three characteristics: one due to its past, one that is its own subjectivity and the goal towards which it tends in the process of concrescence (co-participation in the whole that is the world), and, thirdly, that feature of superject – the specific outcome, which transcends the event and constitutes a 'datum' for some new event.[20]

IV.

Many of the these factors of Whitehead's conception can be 'translated' into narratological discourse, especially if we extend the whole process of the reception of a narrative by differentiating between an event and its superject, and further into events represented by the text as building blocks of the narrative, their horizontal concatenation and stratification (vertical arrangement), and the process of the prehension (in Louis O. Mink's narratological terms, the 'configurational comprehension'[21]) of these events within the gradual construction of the plot as the text is received.

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19 Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (1920; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 52.

20 Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, corrected ed. (New York: Free Press, 1978), part II, ch. 3, esp. 87.

21 Louis O. Mink, 'History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension', *New Literary History* 1 (1970), 549–52. Mink's notion of configuration is discussed in Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 155–61.

The authority here is Wolfgang Iser. According to this aesthetician of reception, the reception of a text resides in the formation of *Gestalten*, sub-wholes in which possible links between signs have been sufficiently reduced for a *Gestalt* to be concluded (compare prehensions, including negative prehensions, in Whitehead, and superject as a type of conclusion), and also in our own projections, which are the share in the *Gestalten* (Ricoeur's 'configurations') that we create and in which we are directly involved (the subjective form and goal of prehensions within an 'event' in Whitehead). This involvement is never total (recall the effect of the past as a datum for the constitution of a current event), because *Gestalten* are encumbered by options that have been excluded (the rejected itineraries). These two constituent lines give rise to tension in the recipient's engagement or involvement in the understanding of the text, tension between his total engagement, involvement, immersion and, on the other hand, his latent retraction. This is, in Iser's words again, the tension between forming and annulling an illusion. This conflict can be resolved only by the emergence of a third dimension, brought about by the continual oscillation between involvement and observation (oscillation in the context of aesthetic distance would take too long to discuss here). In this way the reader may experience a text as a living event (or nexus of events, as Whitehead puts it). An event splices together all the contradictory, counter-running and divergent threads, lines, and takes on an essential openness by exhibiting those options that have not been excluded in the process of selection (configuration) and are now impacting on the *Gestalten* that have been concluded.[22]

V.

Even from the brief outline of Iser's conception of the reception of a narrative text it follows that reception moves vertically, perpendicular to the various horizontal strata of meanings and meaning-constituting units. This vertical movement implies the process of emergence of an event. We therefore need, lastly, to examine whether the concept of emergence is suited to the proposed conception of narrative event as an emergent, synthetic formation within the total narrative, one with, moreover, an inherent aesthetic quality attributable to the nature of the syntheses of positive prehensions and to the recipient's satisfaction with the superject.

According to Stephen C. Pepper, the theory of emergence embraces three propositions: '(i) that there are levels of existence defined in terms of degrees of integration; (ii) that there are marks which distinguish these levels from one

[22] Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), chapter 3.

another over and above the degrees of integration; (iii) that it is impossible to deduce the marks of a higher level from those of a lower level, and perhaps also (though this is not clear) impossible to deduce marks of a lower level from those of a higher.'[23]

In this respect, we may say that a plot, its specific character and progression, cannot be deduced from the lower levels of a story's construction because it is a formation of configurational acts that are conditioned by factors not present at lower levels. Likewise we can say that a fiction narrative, as one of Iser's 'live events', is emergent by nature and the narrative event as a structural unit of this live complex event is an emergent superject in the process of reception.

We shall end with some evidence that the narrative event has an inherent aesthetic quality, for which we turn not to an aesthetician, but, again, to Whitehead with his broader conception of the aesthetic. For Whitehead, the inherent character of the aesthetic quality follows from the aforementioned process of concrescence of the actual occasion, but a similar view can be found in other approaches as well – for example, in Kant's understanding of composition as the manifestation of formal reflection, where the form of the (aesthetic) object is the reflection of the object in the imagination,[24] in Czech Structuralism, in Mukařovský's concept of 'contexture' as a kind of whole in art, or in the phenomenological notion of aesthetic object (Roman Ingarden, Moritz Geiger, Richard W. Lind).[25] To put it briefly, no matter how incomplete it is, every synthesis of the aesthetic object during its constitution or every partial synthesis within an aesthetic attitude brings to the whole of the aesthetic object and to the whole of aesthetic value a specific aesthetic quality, or an aesthetic value as a tertiary quality.[26]

In a less widely cited work Whitehead writes: 'The birth of a new aesthetic experience depends on the maintenance of two principles by the creative purpose [recall that this is typical of any event in the aspect of its individuation and directionality]: (1) The novel consequent must be graded in relevance so as to preserve some identity of character with the ground. (2) The novel consequent must be graded in relevance so as to preserve some contrast with the ground in respect to that same identity of character. These two principles

23 Stephen C. Pepper, 'Emergence', *Journal of Philosophy* 23 (1926): 241.

24 On composition, see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), § 14, 72.

25 See Jan Mukařovský, 'Concept of the Whole'. For Ingarden, see, for example, his *Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); Moritz Geiger, *The Significance of Art: A Phenomenological Approach to Aesthetics* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1986); Richard W. Lind, 'Attention and the Aesthetic Object', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 39 (1980).

26 See Samuel Alexander, *Beauty and Other Forms of Value* (London: Macmillan, 1933).

are derived from the doctrine that an actual fact is a fact of aesthetic experience. All aesthetic experience is feeling arising out of the realization of contrast under identity.'[27] These contrasts are described using a different terminological apparatus by Wolfgang Iser, likewise by narratologists in their conception of the strata in narrative discourse.

In addition to *Gestalten*, Iser also talks about a connection between intentional sentence correlates, which create handholds of sorts that help readers to 'climb aboard' a text, making them accept perspectives implied in the correlates, which in turn leads to the interaction of these correlates.[28] This contrasting interaction leads precisely to the emergence of sub-wholes, *Gestalten*, units. Moreover, Whitehead's 'realization of contrast under identity' corresponds with Iser's view on the simultaneous functioning of the act of reading at two levels: the reader's consciousness is split between the alien 'me', which thinks somebody else's thoughts (the character's, the narrator's), and the real 'me', which is not cancelled by the alien 'me' and retains its virtual force.[29] The interaction and synthesis of contrasts thus happens not only in the constituting text, but also in the reader and his 'me'. An analogous idea, similar to that of contrasts within identity as well as to that of the emergence of a narrative event, is introduced by Iser also in his later work, where the interconnection of signs, their implications, the mutual influences of these signs, and the reader's acts of identification create a *Gestalt*, an identity of contrasts, and it is through such *Gestalten* that a text exists in the reader's mind.[30]

As *pars pro toto*, we have from the narratologists' camp already selected Barthes's conception of the three descriptive levels of a narrative work: functions, actions, and narration, which are interwoven in the mode of progressive integration. But a unity of contrasts and an emergence of meaning originate as well among different types of signs, for example, among words and images: 'Here [in cartoons and comic strips] text (most often a snatch of dialogue) and image stand in a complementary relationship; the words, in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level, that of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis.'[31] A possible objection might, however, be raised: Have we not, by applying Whitehead's ideas to narratology, wilfully switched from the

27 Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 101–2.

28 Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 277.

29 Ibid., 293.

30 Iser, *Act of Reading*, 121.

31 Roland Barthes, 'Rhetoric of the Image', in *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 41.

analysis of an (only potentially aesthetic) object to the problem of the aesthetic object's reception or, in more general terms, to cognitive acts on the side of the subject? But this metaphysical distinction between what is and our cognition of it does not hold for Whitehead's metaphysical system, because at the heart of his cosmology (and therefore also 'ontology') lies as a building block whose actual occasion or fundamental feature – its phase of concrescence – is an aesthetic supplement. The cognizing subject is of a much higher level of complexity than this basic plane, so a sharp caesura between the knower and the known cannot be located.[32] For the present purposes, it suffices to say that Whitehead's conception of the event can usefully be employed in narratology.

We therefore conclude that a narrative event is an emergent, synthetic, and inherently aesthetic factor in the process of the reception of a narrative text, and one which explains the attractiveness and aesthetic satisfaction of the process of its reception. The vertically tending vector of the synthesis of a narrative event ensures the continuity of passage in such a way that an act of configuration, the creation of an enclosed *Gestalt*, on one level disturbs, if not interrupts, the flow, and continues on a higher level while dropping back in parallel to the lower level. Oscillations between the levels thus supply the 'third dimension', where continuity of flow, simultaneity, can be preserved, or the extensions of individual narrative events overlap in time without arresting the flow. The narrative event so conceived thus preserves the essential nature of narrativity as a fusion of flow and configuration (in Ricoeur's terms) and the simultaneous working of the principles of conservation and change.

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[32] See his *Modes of Thought* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), esp. chapter 3, 173–232. An aesthetic dimension penetrates the whole conceptual and categorical structure of Whitehead's system: 'An actual fact is a fact of aesthetic experience' (*Religion in the Making*, 101–2). It therefore needs to be said that the prevailing use of the terms 'aesthetic' and 'aesthetic object' is narrower and different from Whitehead's in its limited focus on the human lived world and the possible worlds of human culture. The interesting topic of Whitehead's specific use of the aesthetic and the way it differs from its usual treatment by contemporary aesthetics is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

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