



**HAL**  
open science

# Mixing the Frames. Horizontal and Vertical Paralepsis as a Metaleptic Tool for Activating the Fantastic Linkage within a Model of Cognitive and Hermeneutical Processes. The Case of 'Josef K.' by Michele Mari

Paolo Remorini

## ► To cite this version:

Paolo Remorini. Mixing the Frames. Horizontal and Vertical Paralepsis as a Metaleptic Tool for Activating the Fantastic Linkage within a Model of Cognitive and Hermeneutical Processes. The Case of 'Josef K.' by Michele Mari. 2022. hprints-03611153

**HAL Id: hprints-03611153**

**<https://hal-hprints.archives-ouvertes.fr/hprints-03611153v1>**

Preprint submitted on 16 Mar 2022

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

Mixing the Frames. Horizontal and Vertical Paralepsis as a Metaleptic Tool for Activating  
the Fantastic Linkage within a Model of Cognitive and Hermeneutical Processes.

The Case of 'Josef K.' by Michele Mari

Paolo Remorini

Universidad de Granada

[premorini@ugr.es](mailto:premorini@ugr.es)

ORCID: 0000-0002-8127-2993

Abstract

Since Genette first coined the term paralepsis in 1972 to define an unexpected deviation from the focalization statute of a narrative, there have been few narratological studies on this figure. In the light of the works of cognitive science and narratology and some of its postulates, this article propose the construction of a model of the cognitive and hermeneutical processes involved in narrative experience and the placement, within this model, of possible linguistic, narrative and paradigmatic transgression, that can allow the fantastic linkage to emerge. At the same time this article propose an updated definition of paralepsis as a metaleptic tool, as unexpected information that does not concern only an alteration of focalization but an ontological transgression of the levels of narration, delimiting the scope of two potential categories, both with two subtypes (top-down and bottom-up vertical paralepsis; internal and external horizontal paralepsis), and applying its implications to the analysis of the short story 'Josef K.' by Michele Mari (present in the collection *Fantasmagonia* of 2012).

Keywords: cognitive narratology, paralepsis, metalepsis, Michele Mari, fantastic literature.

## Operational cognitive schemes in the hermeneutic of texts

In this article we analyze some narrative resources on the basis of the postulates and principles of cognitive linguistics and narratology according to which cognitive processes are decisive in the aesthetic and hermeneutic success of narrative texts. The cognitive path to the study of narrative focuses on the mental structures and mechanisms underlying narrative experience,<sup>1</sup> enabling the analysis of narrative structures and relationships in literary texts on the basis of fundamental cognitive parameters and frameworks.

Central to cognitive studies has been A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) research into the cognitive cornerstone for creating and understanding stories,<sup>2</sup> and the subsequent concepts of schemata, frames and scripts as categories and cognitive processes involved in understanding and interpreting texts. The investigative hypothesis is that these processes embodied in schemata, frames and scripts govern the hermeneutic elaboration of our experiences and consequently also the elaboration of our readings. Following processes of the same kind, a parallelism can be found between changes in narrative models and paradigmatic models of understanding reality.<sup>3</sup>

Cognitive structures are dynamic, flexible and adaptive as they must be confirmed at all times or deconstructed and reconstructed to accommodate changes. Working with the same processes, narrative experience can contribute to changing the relationships and cognitive structures with which we interpret the world: “Since everyday frames and scripts constructed out of frames are ‘refreshed’ or transformed in fiction, fiction may be considered as an experimental cognitive laboratory, where updating of the mind’s ‘software’ occurs and finds a hypothetical resolution” (Grishakova 2009: 190).

Let us take a moment to look in detail at the definitions and implications of these cognitive structures and relations, starting with the schemata. Schemata are cognitive structures that represent generic knowledge. When reading a text, schemata provide us with predefined background

information for understanding the text, helping us to make sense of the events and descriptions we encounter. Because schemata are situational and sociocultural, they can vary considerably from reader to reader.<sup>4</sup> Schemata are hence critical for establishing the coherence of a narrative because “one of the functions of schemata is to guide the observer’s attention” (Grishakova 2019: 393).

As such, schemata represent, within cognitive processes and relations, the semantic and paradigmatic level of comprehension and interpretation of narrative texts.

Schemata are dynamic as they accumulate details that can be modified by actual later experience. If contexts change and new experiences contradict existing schemata, or make them inadequate to accommodate the changes, then they can adjust to conform to the new generalizations. The linkage between texts and schemata is bidirectional: while schemata tend to establish the sharpened rules for interpreting a discourse, discourses themselves may lead readers to modify previous schemata or create new ones. In narratology, schemata theory has been significant not only for its role in explaining gap-filling in reading, but also in accordance with a reader's knowledge of the general architecture of stories, knowledge called “story schemata”, containing a set of expectations about how the narratives we read might continue. Schemata eventually provide us with experiential maps of our expectations. From this perspective, for example, Schneider moves in this direction, applying cognitive postulates in the study of characters, when he speaks of “the interaction between reader and text appears, above all, as a dynamic process, for the framework of cognitive psychology affords a view not only on such general constraints on information processing and text-understanding as limitations on working memory, but also on the interaction of bottom-up and top-down processing in using inference and forming hypotheses, activating schemas, and constructing categories” (2001:608).

Within this context of paradigmatic, but also narrative and linguistic expectations, the notion of “apperception” stands out as very interesting. The term dates back to the 18th century and to the concept of *Apperzeption* coined by the German mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm

Leibniz<sup>5</sup> with the meaning of the act of the mind by which it becomes aware of its ideas as its own. Enlightening is the definition offered by the Merriam-Webster dictionary of apperception as “mental perception, especially the process of understanding something perceived in terms of previous experience”,<sup>6</sup> the same definition as that proposed by Manfred Jahn, one of the few scholars to devote attention to this subject. Jahn elaborates on the cognitive implications of the term, emphasizing the fact that “our necessarily indirect perception of reality is the product of a good deal of personal interpretive processing. Apperception is the mental construct that makes us see (or from an interestingly different perspective: *allows* us to see) the world and what’s in it *as* something” (2011: 90).

Apperception is the cognitive relation with which we treat the world and also narrative texts. Our past mental constructions have a direct influence on the cognitive, hermeneutic and aesthetic processes of narrative experience.

After the higher cognitive structures, schemata, let us focus for a moment on the lower structures, the frames and scripts. A frame is a previously constituted mental structure that adapts to reality by changing the details as needed. The frame theory assumes that each new experience we have is understood on the basis of a constant likening with a stereotypical model, deduced from akin experiences registered in memory, whereby each new piece of information is understood on the basis of a comparison with data already stored in long-term memory, a sort of experiential database.

An example of a direct form of frames is the paratext, in its broadest sense (peritext and epitext), which has a major influence on the aesthetic and hermeneutic expectations and apperceptions on the text.<sup>7</sup>

If schemata represent general knowledge, the frame becomes specific knowledge. It goes from the general to the particular, from the abstract to the concrete. It is in direct and constant relation with the superior structure, schemata, and with the parallel structure, the script.

A script is a structure describing sequences of events appropriate to a characteristic context, a settled and stereotyped chain of actions defining a specific situation. If the frame is a specific knowledge, a particular substance, the script is the form in which this substance materializes. As well as schemata, so do frames and scripts must also be dynamic and adaptive to meet new or divergent situations. The range of frames is broader than that of scripts, considering that “scripts are types of frames designed for the specific task of natural language processing” (Jahn 1999: 6). The frames cover states and situations, while the scripts cover stereotypical action sequences. The frame of a narrative situation and the genre-specific script of that situation are decisive for the cognitive elaboration of the narrative experience.

In this way, frames represent, within cognitive processes and relations, the narrative and syntactic level of comprehension and interpretation of narrative texts, while scripts correspond to the morphological and linguistic level. At the narratological level we can identify a correspondence between scripts and linguistic elements, between frame and narrative structure, between schemata and logical paradigm. The idea is that scripts are the variable concretization of narrative sequences in predetermined relations (frames) that contribute to the emergence of the narrative (schemata), which Fludernik defines as “a representation of a possible world in a linguistic and/or visual medium, at whose center there are one or several protagonists of an anthropomorphic nature who are existentially anchored in a temporal and spatial sense and who (mostly) perform goal-directed actions (action and plot structure)” (Fludernik 2009: 6).

Schemata give the semantic paradigm of an event, its meaning, while the frame constitutes its syntactic articulation (i.e. the order of succession of events), and the script its linguistic articulation. Without the former nothing is understood, without the latter nothing happens.

We see a model that captures the structures, active cognitive levels and their relationships in the processes of understanding and interpretation.

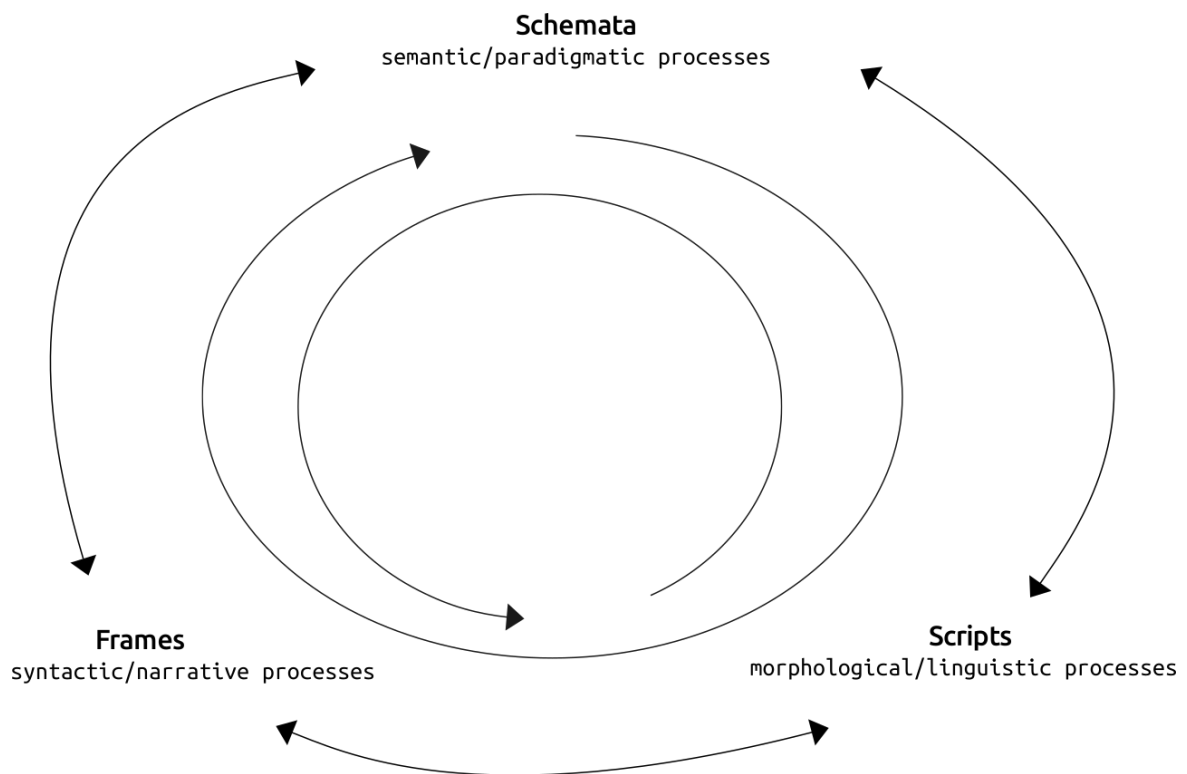


Figure 1 – Cognitive processes.

On the same level are the cognitive structures of schemata, frames and scripts, and the corresponding semantic/paradigmatic, syntactic/narrative and morphological/linguistic levels. Cognitive processes are interconnected and interact seamlessly with each other, and are characterized by their protean quality and their ability to adapt and change.

Another important contribution concerning the cognitive processes determining the narrative experience is given by Stockwell, who distinguishes “three different fields in which schemas operate: world schemas, text schemas, and language schemas” (Stockwell 2002: 80).

World schema includes schemata dealing with content. It represents the formal semantic level and the substantive paradigmatic level of the texts.

Text schema represents our expectations of how the world schema appears to us in terms of sequence and structural organization. It represents the formal syntactic level and the substantive organizational level of the narrative structures of texts.

Language schema contains our idea of the appropriate forms of linguistic pattern and style. It represents the formal morphological level and the substantive linguistic level of texts.

Stockwell equates text and language schema: “Taking the last two together, disruptions in our expectations of textual structure or stylistic structure constitute discourse deviation, which offers the possibility for schema refreshment” (80).

Any anomalies in the two lower structures, narrative and linguistic, therefore produce an alteration of the narrative discourse from which a change in the pattern may emerge.

Returning to the model of cognitive relations, we can draw a parallelism between structures, levels and operational cognitive schemes, active in narrative experience.

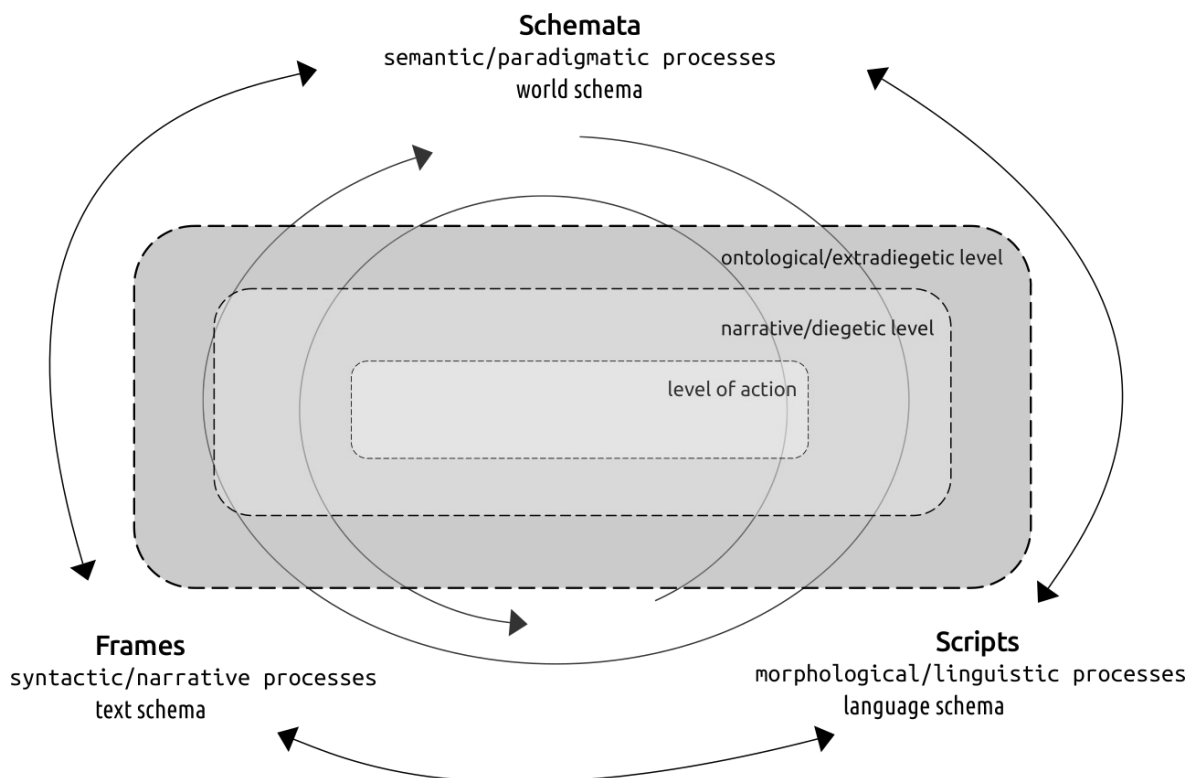


Figure 2 – Operational cognitive schemes in narrative experience.

World schema operates at the same level as semantic/paradigmatic structure and cognitive schemata; text schema at the same level as syntactic/narrative structure and cognitive frames; language schema at the same level as morphological/linguistic structure and cognitive scripts.



From Stockwell's study taken up by Shen, we can clearly see the distinction between story (the content area) and discourse (the two presentation areas), which has to be taken into account given that “since the level of presentation contains both organizational (narratological) and language (stylistic) choices, focusing only on one aspect will result in a partial picture of ‘how the story is presented.’ In order to gain a fuller picture of narrative presentation, it is both desirable and necessary to combine the concerns of narratology and stylistics” (Shen 2005: 142).

We thus add to our model the ontological space of history and the narrative space of discourse.

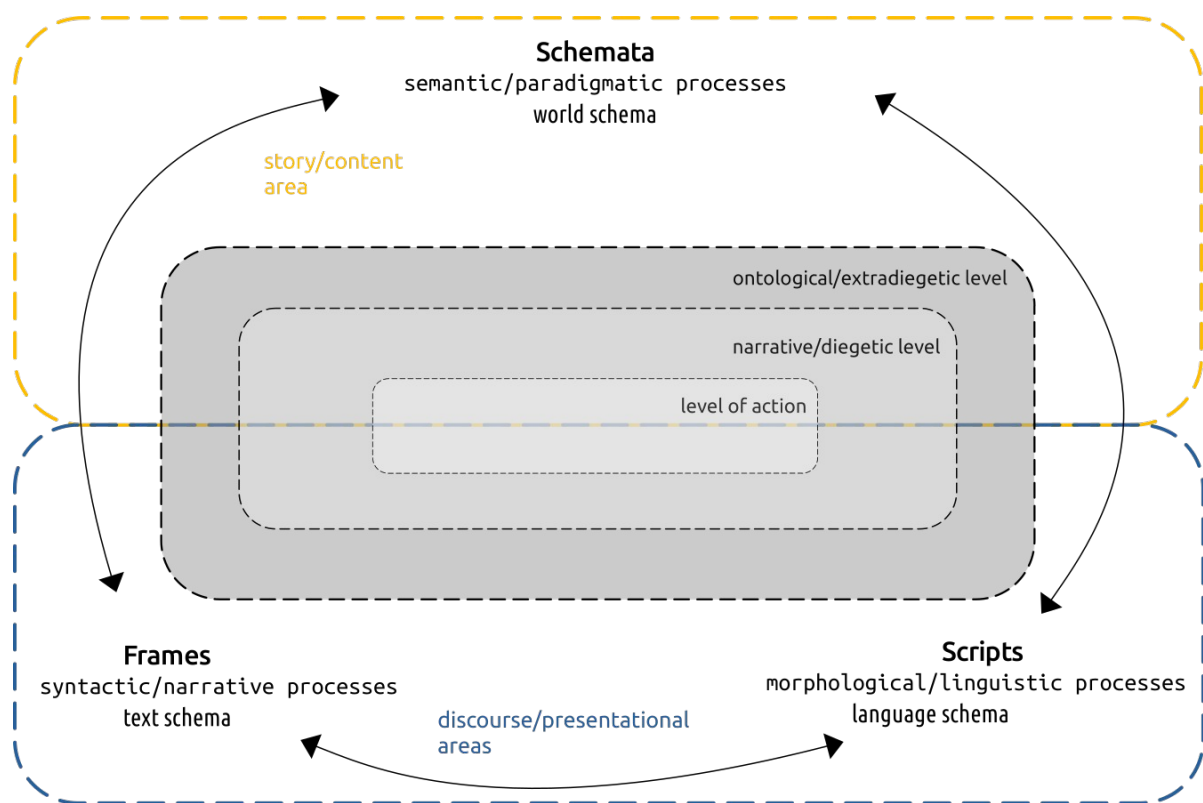


Figure 3 – Content and presentational areas in cognitive scheme.

The distinction between the space of history, of substance, of meaning, and the space of discourse, of form, of signifier is obvious. The three levels and the two spaces interact with each other at every moment of cognitive operations and hermeneutical processes.

Within this model and these relationships, we can see how anomalies, alterations and transgressions may arise at all levels, requiring the updating or transformation of the schemes involved.

Studies of fantastic literature share the consideration that one of the properties of this type of narrative is its ability to transgress narrative boundaries, to challenge reality, to alter hermeneutic processes. Among others, the following are of this opinion Gil Guerrero (*Lo fantástico como transgresión. Postulación fantástica en los relatos borgianos* 2006), Lang (*Prolegómenos para una teoría de la narración paradójica* 2006), Martínez (*Subversion or Oxymoron Fantastic Literature and the Metaphysics of the Object* 2008), Roas (*Tras los límites de lo real. Una definición de lo fantástico* 2011), Sandner (*Critical Discourses of the Fantastic, 1712–1831* 2011), Leléñ (*The Fantastic as a Technique of Redynamizing Mimetic Fiction* 2014), Wicher (*Basic Categories of Fantastic Literature Revisited* 2014), Carnevale (*La "parola fantastica": logopoiesi, retoriche dell'indicibile e mostri verbali* 2019).

One of the most recognized experts on the fantastic, David Roas, describes it as a discourse in a steady intertextual relationship with that other discourse which is reality (2011: 9).<sup>8</sup> He enumerates four basic concepts that characterize fantastic literature: its necessary connection with the idea of reality; its limits; its emotional and psychological effects on the reader; and the transgression it implies for the language (10).

Up to Gil Guerrero's decisive affirmation, according to which it can be postulated that the fantastic invariably presupposes an act of transgression.<sup>9</sup> Through paradox (and fantastic literature is paradoxical by nature) the boundaries between what is allowed and what is not allowed within a narrative system are crossed and transgressed.

One of the main mechanisms that allows the fantastic linkage to emerge from the texts is metalepsis. The term metalepsis is mainly used to indicate shifts between the various narrative levels, primarily between the world of the narrator and the world he/she describes. The etymology of the word, from the Greek μετάληψις "substitution", takes up the Greek affixes μετά, "beyond", and λήψομαι, "I take", with the meaning of "a figure of speech consisting in the substitution by metonymy of one figurative sense for another" (Merriam-Webster).<sup>10</sup> Although the term metalepsis dates back to Quintilian and Roman rhetoric, as v. Möllendorff also explains,<sup>11</sup> and there are attestations of the word dating back to the 16th century, its use in narratological studies is due to Genette who in 1972 was the first to use it to designate a narrative transgression. Metalepsis indicates the breaking of diegetic levels, of narrative communication situations. Any insertion of the narrator or extradiegetic narrator into the diegetic universe, or conversely, produces an effect of extravagance that is amusing or fantastic.<sup>12</sup> Genette considers it a modification of narrative levels, within the category of "voice", and relates it to other alterations in discourse space, all connected to possible changes in diegetic levels. Narrative metalepsis is therefore a textual transgression of hierarchical diegetic universes that reveals the internal architecture of the text. As such, it is a paradoxical narrative element because it confronts the reader with the artificial quality of the text, and for this reason it has been the subject of in-depth study and research, including that of Nelles (*Stories within stories narrative levels and embedded narrative* 1992), Malina (*Breaking the Frame. Metalepsis and the Construction of the Subject* 2002), Fludernik (*Scene Shift, Metalepsis, and the Metaleptic Mode* 2003), Ryan (*Metaleptic Machines* 2004), Lang (*Prolegómenos para una teoría de la narración paradójica* 2006), Meyer-Minnermann (*Narración paradójica y ficción* 2006), Prince (*Disturbing Frames* 2006), Cohn (*Metalepsis and Mise en Abyme* 2012), Gobin (*Textual Effects of Metalepsis* 2014), Hanebeck (*Understanding Metalepsis: The Hermeneutics of Narrative Transgression* 2017), v. Möllendorff (*Metalepsis* 2018), Jahn (*Narratology 2.3: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative* 2021).

Metalepsis is fully concerned with cognitive processes because it involves by definition a lack of apperception and implies a crossing of the boundaries between the diegetic and extradiegetic levels of narration. One of the most thorough definitions of metalepsis is that of Hanebeck: “Metalepsis designates (the construction of) a narrative entity or entities (e.g. a character or existent, etc.) that literally moves across or denies the boundary separating the world(s) of the representation from the world(s) of the represented. Moving from either of these worlds to the other, it thus belongs (at least temporarily) to distinct spatio-temporal frames of reference, which results in a fiction-internal paradoxical transgression defying representational logic” (2017: 25).

Metalepsis thus produces a shift in the spatio-temporal references of the narrative construction. Several studies have extended the concept to include ontological transgressions, and differentiated between two major areas of possible metalepsis: that of discourse and that of story. The metalepsis of discourse is linked to the referential structures of the diegetic level, while the metalepsis of story with the referential structures of the ontological level. Within each area, there are different sub-categories of metalepsis. For example Fludernik, following Genette's first intuitions, distinguishes between authorial metalepsis, ontological metalepsis 1 (narratorial metalepsis), ontological metalepsis 2 (lectorial metalepsis), and rhetorical metalepsis or discourse metalepsis (2003: 389). Or Hanebeck himself, between ontological metalepsis with the subtypes recursive metalepsis and immersive metalepsis, and figurative metalepsis with the subtypes epistemological metalepsis and rhetorical metalepsis (2017: 83).

Apart from the different nuances within the various classifications, we note that there is a proposed binomial nomenclature for these two basic types of metalepsis: ontological metalepsis and rhetorical metalepsis (Ryan 2004: 441, which takes up the terminology of Genette and Fludernik); metalepsis of theme and metalepsis of technique (v. Möllendorff 2018); extradiegetic metalepsis and diegetic metalepsis (Gobyn 2014: 121); story metalepsis and discourse metalepsis (Jahn 2021);

ontological metalepsis and figurative metalepsis (Hanebeck 2017: 25); *in corpore* and *in verbis* (Meyer-Minnermann 2006: 61).

In the last decade, however, there has been a growing search in another direction for possible metaleptic transgressions. If in fact all the definitions and classifications seen previously concerned the breaking of boundaries between different narrative levels, more recent criticism has focused its studies on possible internal breaks of the different narrative levels. As Hanebeck reminds us, “it was Frank Wagner (*Glissements et déphasages: note sur la métalepse narrative* 2002) who first introduced the notion of ‘horizontal metalepsis’, a transgression between two parallel worlds at the diegetic level” (2017: 38). In this case, the crossing of boundaries and the shifting of spatio-temporal references fall within the respective narrative or ontological areas. Prince proposes to name these types of displacements *perilepsis*,<sup>13</sup> taking the Greek prefix *peri-* as word-forming element in words of Greek origin or formation meaning "around" and the suffix *-lepsis* (from *lambano*), i.e. taking up. The etymology of the term *perilepsis* would therefore indicate “something is added around”.

An effective proposal for classifying and defining all the possible transgressions at any level, including the possible metalepsis, is offered by Lang. In this typification, metalepsis is part of a system of four possible paradoxical alterations of the structure of a narrative text that also includes *hyperlepsis*, *sylllepsis* and *epanalepsis*.<sup>14</sup> Lang reserves to the metalepsis of classical narratology the adjective "vertical", whose definition concerns "elements of the discourse and/or story plane of a story and/or the discourse and/or the story as a whole appear on the discourse and/or story plane of other story(s) situated at a diegetic and/or ontological level lower or higher than their own level. It is a rupture of spatial and/or temporal boundaries" (2006: 40).<sup>15</sup>

Following Wagner, she therefore proposes the adjective "horizontal" for the metaleptic type of internal transgression within the levels: “elements of the discourse and/or story plane of a story and/or the discourse and/or the story as a whole appear on the discourse and/or story plane of the

same story and/or of another (parallel) story(s) situated on the same diegetic and/or ontological level. It is a rupture of spatial and/or temporal limits” (40).<sup>16</sup>

Horizontal metalepsis moves within the same narrative and/or ontological level, while vertical metalepsis moves to another narrative and/or ontological level.

So let us return for a moment to our model to see where all the different transgressions are located, both in narrative and ontological space.

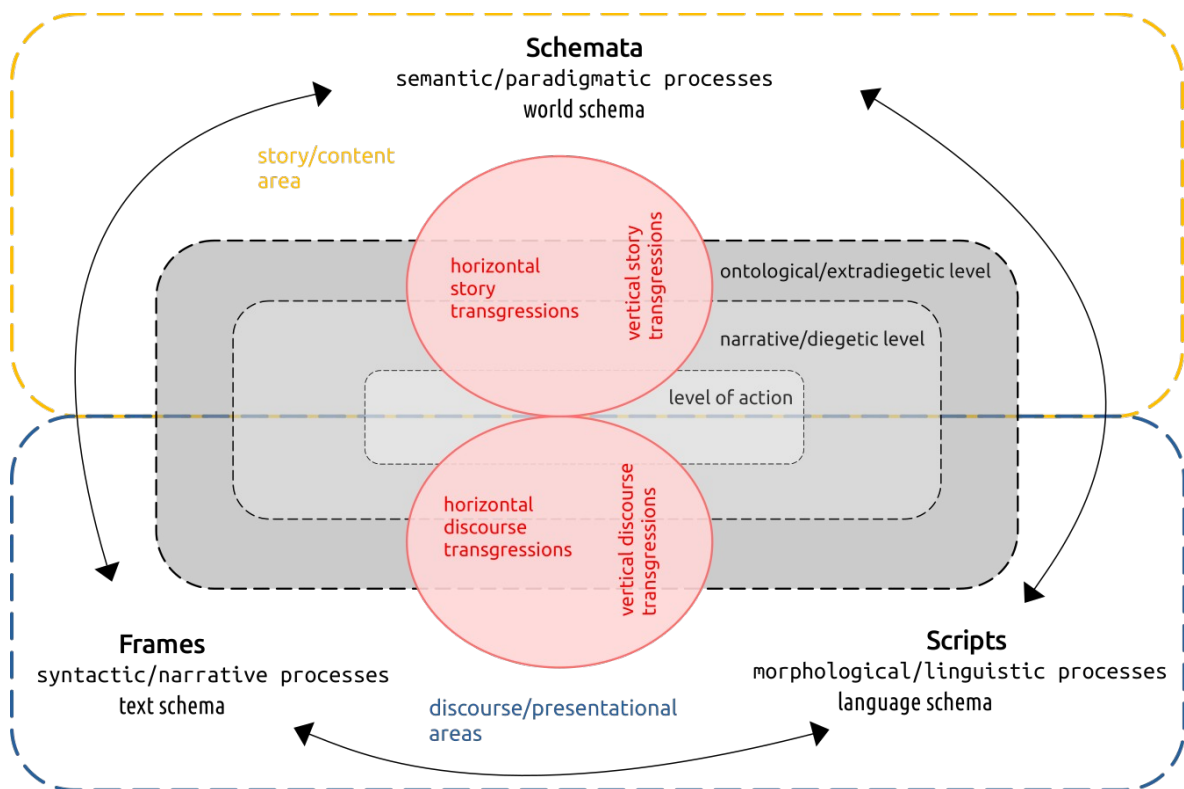


Figure 4 – Horizontal and vertical transgressions in cognitive processes.

We can see how the different transgressions can remain within their respective levels or break the boundaries between the communicative levels in the direction of both the content area, represented by the cognitive process schemata, the semantic/paradigmatic hermeneutic levels and the world schema, and the discourse area represented by the cognitive processes frames and scripts and the respective hermeneutic syntactic/narrative and morphological/linguistic levels and text schema and language schema.

## Paralepsis as a metaleptic tool

One possible textual alteration to materialize narrative transgressions is paralepsis. Again, the term "paralepsis" was coined by Genette in 1972, deriving it from rhetoric in consonance with "paralipsis" (from Gr. παράλειψις *paráleipsis* "preterition"), to allude to discordance with the focalization statute as the narrator exceeds his or her own degree of knowledge of the facts: "Les deux types d'altération concevables consistent soit à donner moins d'information qu'il n'est en principe nécessaire, soit à en donner plus qu'il n'est en principe autorisé dans le code de focalisation qui régit l'ensemble. Le premier type porte un nom en rhétorique, et nous l'avons déjà rencontré à propos des anachronies complétives: il s'agit de l'omission latérale ou *paralipse*. Le second ne porte pas encore de nom; nous le baptiserons *paralepse*, puisqu'il s'agit ici non plus de laisser (-lipse, de *leipo*) une information que l'on devrait prendre (et donner), mais au contraire de prendre (-lepse, de *lambano*) et donner une information qu'on devrait laisser" (1972: 253).<sup>17</sup>

It should also not be forgotten that Genette considers it an alteration of focalization, within the category of "mood", and includes this rhetorical resource in the same system that includes the metaleptic transgressions: "*Métalepse* fait ici système avec *prolepse*, *analepse*, *sylllepse* et *paralepse*, avec le sens spécifique de : 'prendre (raconter) en changeant de niveau'" (321).<sup>18</sup>

He relates it primarily to an extradiegetic narrator and an external focalization: "peut consister en une incursion dans la conscience d'un personnage au cours d'un récit généralement conduit en focalisation externe" (254);<sup>19</sup> while not giving importance to other possible types of paralepses arising from other types of narrators or other types of focus: "Ce peut être également, en focalisation interne, une information incidente sur les pensées d'un personnage autre que le personnage focal, ou sur un spectacle que celui-ci ne peut pas voir" (254)<sup>20</sup>. In contrast to the previous metalepsis, paralepsis has not found particular critical success. The concept of paralepsis remains within the manuals of narratology, taking up the distinction offered by Genette without

expanding its meaning or implications. Paralepsis is thus conceived as an alteration, a transgression of the level of internal focalization of the text. Following the etymology, we find that “para-” means “to the side”. The root -lepsis means “to add something”, so we can define paralepsis as “something is added to the side”. Just going back to the etymology of the word, Bal defines paralepsis as lateral information (1985: 152). Niederhoff adds that alterations in focalization statute can only be accommodated within the internal construction of the narrative text. There are no alterations “a priori”, there are only alterations with respect to a concrete narrative structure.<sup>21</sup> Jahn, on the other hand, has the great merit of adding a new relation of paralepsis to cognitive processes. Considering that narrative situations are standard models of structure, the presence of transgression in the text is not enough. The alteration must be recognized as such and strategies must be found to deal with it, which Jahn tries to list: “Cognitive strategies for handling alterations include: (a) 'naturalizing' them so that they become acceptable data consistent (after all) with one's current frame of interpretation; (b) adapting the frame so that it allows for the alteration as an 'exception'; (c) treating it as a stylistic 'error'; (d) search for a replacement frame” (2021: 57).

However, the fact remains that for Genette and subsequent scholars of the subject, paralepsis only concerns the focalization, only the giver of the information, without taking into account the content of the information. We therefore propose that we also reckon with the type of content that the paralepsis expresses, and thus distinguish (in the same way as Lang proposes for metalepsis) between vertical and horizontal paralepsis, and for both categories two subtypes:

— Vertical paralepsis: when the additional information belongs to a different narrative/diegetic or ontological/extradiegetic level. We can distinguish between top-down paralepsis, when information crosses from the ontological/extradiegetic level to the narrative/diegetic level (possibly the most common type of paralepsis), and bottom-up paralepsis, when information crosses from the narrative/diegetic level to the ontological/extradiegetic level (the



short story 'Josef K.' by Michele Mari that we will analyze in the next section is a clear example of this).

— Horizontal paralepsis: when the additional information belongs to the same narrative/diegetic or ontological/extradiegetic level. We can distinguish between internal paralepsis, when information belongs to the same narrative/diegetic level (also this subtype will be object of analysis in the story 'Josef K.'), and external paralepsis, when information belongs to the same ontological/extradiegetic level (such as the continuous references and winks to the Reader in Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler* [*Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*]).

We also think it is misleading to consider metalepsis and paralepsis on the same system level. Since metalepsis is a spatio-temporal referential shift (i.e. a transgressive relation between different planes of narration) and paralepsis is unexpected information as well as the source of this information, it seems more appropriate to consider paralepsis as a possible instrument with which the referential shift of metalepsis is manifested. In our opinion, paralepsis (horizontal or vertical) is therefore a means of achieving metaleptic transgression and bringing out the fantastic linkage within the narrative.

Josef K., Michele Mari (*Fantasmagonia*, 2012)

Let us try to summarize and better define the functional contours of this definition of paralepsis, which causes a metaleptic transgression of narrative levels and leads to an alteration of cognitive frameworks, taking as an example the short story 'Josef K.' from the book *Fantasmagonia* by Michele Mari.<sup>22</sup>

It is the story of the protagonist Josef K.'s childhood and subsequent search for his father. The story, in general, is built on a few pairs of characters and authors (Josef K./Kafka,

Scardanelli/Hölderlin, Pinocchio/Collodi), but what makes it fantastic are the final transgressions of a determined character who could not/should not have had some relevant information.

The main character, Josef K., does not know who his parents are. The only information he has is that his father was a carpenter. For this reason, and because he is a little sluggish in his movements, his classmates at school call him "Scardanelli" (the teacher had told the class that the German poet Hölderlin signed his poems with this name during the years he lived in a carpenter's house). After being teased by the football coach and his first and only girlfriend, Lena, he decides to go in search of his father. He asks for information from a rabbi, a Lutheran priest and an Orthodox priest, who are unable to tell him anything. A Catholic priest instead directs him to Italy (from Prague, where we understand he was living). Already on his way, a cobbler told him to go to Pescia, near Pistoia, in Tuscany. Here, an old beggar woman immediately recognizes him by his movements as the son of the town's old carpenter, and finally takes him to his first home, revealing his true double identity: Josef K. is Pinocchio (called Pino), son of Geppetto but also of Carlo Collodi.

Let us take a moment to consider the different informative contributions that the other characters bring to the protagonist throughout the development of the action.

- Diegetic information between characters n.1: Hölderlin, Scardanelli.

The teacher tells Josef K. and his classmates about Hölderlin and how, when the German poet lived in a carpenter's house, he signed his poems with the pseudonym Scardanelli. Since Josef K. was also the son of a carpenter, his classmates by association began to call him by the same pseudonym: Scardanelli.

- Diegetic information between characters n.2: Ø.

After failure in his social life, where the football coach throws him out because of his “wooden” movements, and failure in his private life, where in his only sexual experience, Lena

rejects him because of the same 'wooden' movements, he decides to start his “anamnestic investigation” in search of his father. He then asks a rabbi, a Lutheran priest and an Orthodox priest for possible information, to no avail.

- Diegetic information between characters n.3: Italia.

A Catholic priest finally advised him to go to Italy.

- Diegetic information between characters n.4: Pescia

When he arrived in Italy, a shoemaker told him he had to go to a village in Pescia, near Pistoia, in Tuscany.

- Diegetic information between characters n.5: Pino, Geppetto, Carlo Collodi, Kafka (vertical analepsis).

Once he arrives in the village, an "old beggar woman" immediately recognizes him as the son of the old carpenter and finally reveals to him his true double identity: Josef K. is Pino (from Pinocchio), son of Geppetto, from whom he has inherited the "wooden" movements, but he is also the son of Carlo Lorenzini aka "Collodi", the writer and author of *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino*, from whom he has inherited the anguish (as Kafka accused his father of having transmitted it to him, hence the comparison with Josef K., the protagonist of Kafka's novel *Der Process*, “The Trial”).

At this moment, the bottom-up vertical analepsis materializes: the old beggar possesses information that does not belong to the diegetic level, but to the extradiegetic one, as we can see on this figure.

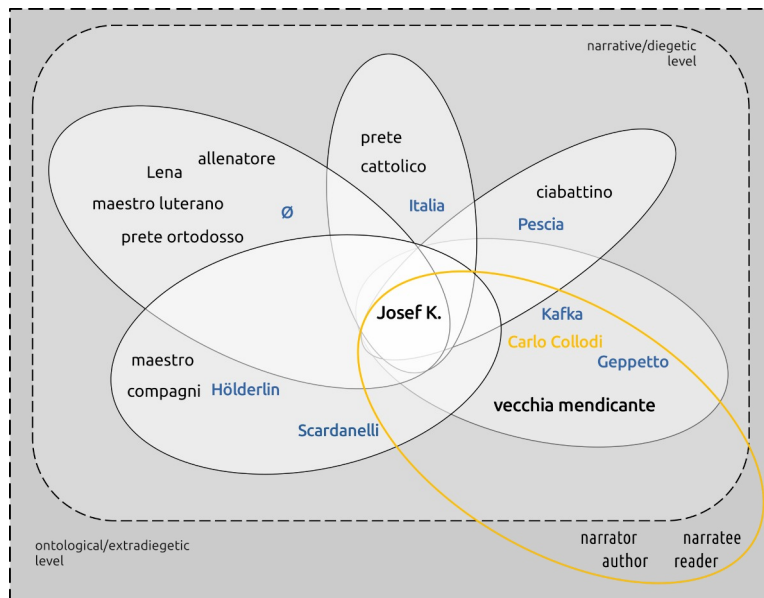


Figure 5 – Vertical paralepsis in 'Josef K.'.

- Diegetic information between characters n.6: Scardanelli (horizontal paralepsis).

After leaving Josef K. alone in his father's carpenter's house, the "old beggar woman" greets him by calling him "Scardanelli", as his schoolmates used to call him.

Here, at the end of the story, internal horizontal paralepsis takes place. The character of the old beggar woman says more than could have been expected, since, according to the internal structure of the story, she could not have this diegetic information, which was only available in the place from which the protagonist set out on his quest.

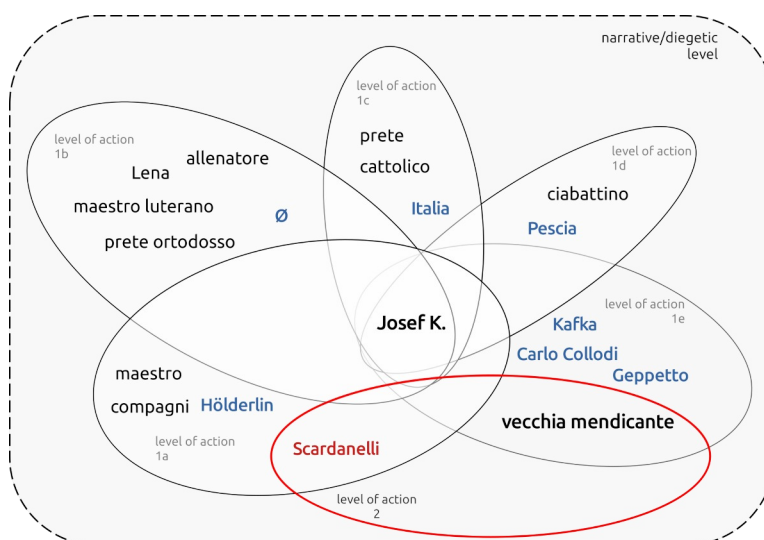


Figure 6 – Horizontal paralepsis in 'Josef K.'.

We summarize the different informative contributions and the appearance of the two paralepsis, vertical and horizontal, in a single figure:

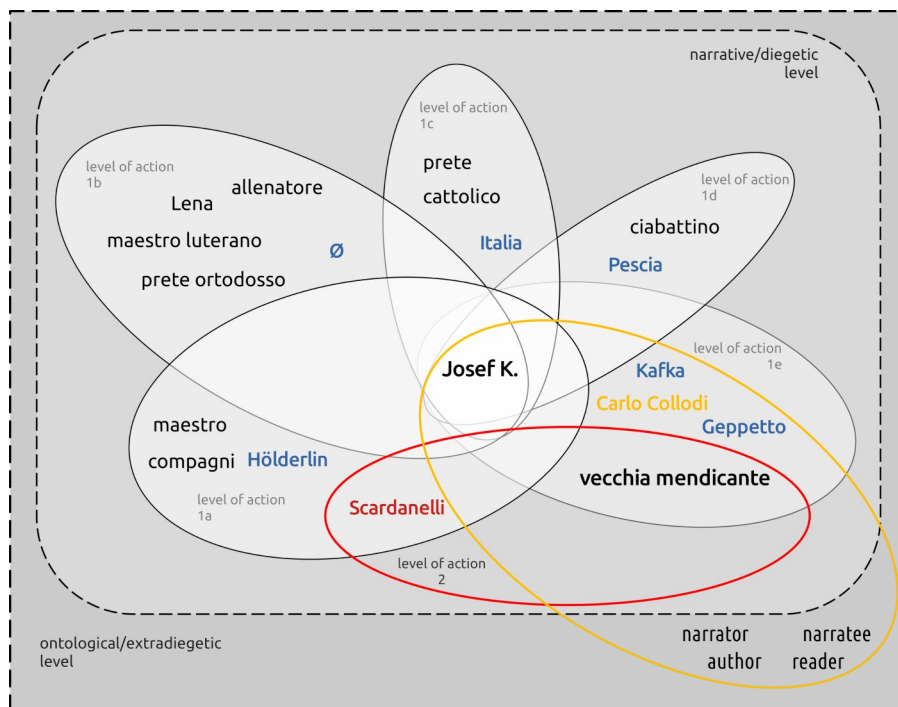


Figure 7 – Vertical and horizontal paralepsis in ‘Josef K.’.

In red the diegetic information "Scardanelli", by which Josef K. was called by his schoolmates, which the old beggar says at the end of the story. In yellow the ontological information "Carlo Collodi", the writer who gave life to Josef K./Pinocchio, who relates the old beggar with the extradiegetic level of the story.

We see how narrative paralepsis as unexpected informational inputs produce narrative alterations with metaleptic effects. The main character, Josef K., shares the same level of action as the other characters, including the teacher and classmates.



Figure 8 – Level of action 1 in ‘Josef K.’.

The level of action shared by the character of the old beggar with the protagonist Josef K. *incorporates* the level of action of the other characters. The information "Scardanelli" transgresses the statute of active focalization at that moment of the story, entailing the displacement of the internal narrative space-time references: a horizontal diegetic metalepsis of the character.



Figure 9 – Horizontal metalepsis in ‘Josef K.’.

The old beggar, however, possesses not only the information "Scardanelli" that belongs to another diegetic level of action, but also information that belongs to a different communicative, non-narrative, real, ontological, paradigmatic level, recognizing Josef K./Pinocchio as a literary creation of Carlo Lorenzini aka Collodi.

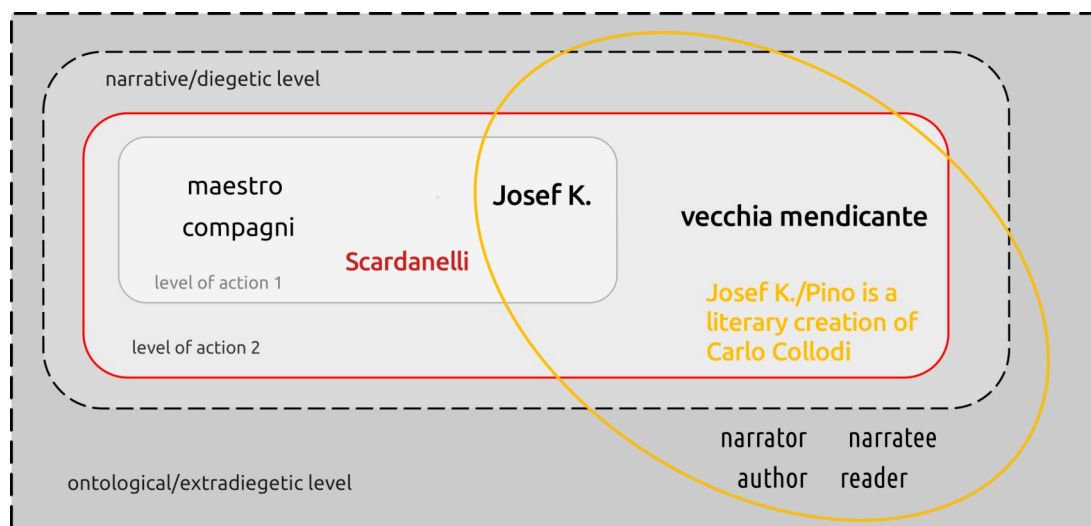


Figure 10 – Vertical and horizontal metalepsis in ‘Josef K.’.

The passage from the statute of focalization to the metanarrative structure of the story, the vertical paralepsis, involves in this case the displacement of the ontological space-time references: a vertical metalepsis of the character.

## Conclusions

Through an analysis of the cognitive and hermeneutic processes and relations that underlie every narrative experience and that emerge from studies in cognitive narratology (schemata, frames, scripts, world schema, text schema, language schema), we have identified the ontological and narrative areas and the communicative dynamics active in potential cases of paradoxical transgression of narration.

Expanding and modifying the category of *paralepsis* with respect to previous scholars, from Genette onwards, we consider proven the existence of two types of vertical *paralepsis* (top-down and bottom-up) and two types of horizontal *paralepsis* (internal and external), categories that has so far not been taken into account by critical studies and that involves not only an alteration of the focalization statute on which at a given moment the story is constructed, but also the spatio-temporal references of the narration.

On the basis of these new definitions, *paralepsis* becomes an instrument at the service of the *metaleptic transgression* essential to accommodate the emergence of the fantastic linkage, as we have highlighted in the chosen short story, 'Josef K.' by Michele Mari, where precisely the *metaleptic alterations* of the story brought to the surface by the internal horizontal and bottom-up vertical *paralepsis* entail an anomaly in the relations between cognitive and hermeneutic processes, between frames of the same level, between frames and schemata, between diegetic and extradiegetic levels, between the area of the discourse and the area of the story, between syntactic/narrative level and semantic/paradigmatic level.

- 1 “The cognitivist turn in narrative study concerns two basic levels. On the one hand, it focuses on humans’ perceptions of actions and events from a cognitive viewpoint; on the other hand, it analyzes narrative structures (as transmitted in texts) and how these obey fundamental cognitive parameters or frames” (Fludernik 2005: 48).
- 2 “[...] research in AI began to focus on the cognitive basis for creating and understanding stories. [...] the concepts of script and frame, or types of knowledge representations that allow an expected sequence of events or an activity setting to be stored in the memory, suggested how people are able to build up complex interpretations of stories on the basis of very few textual or discourse cues” (Herman 2013).
- 3 “The concepts of “frame”, “schema” and “script” provide a link between the ‘real-life’ and ‘fictional’ experience” (Grishakova 2009: 188).
- 4 “As schemata are situational and socioculturally dependent, some readers may supply more information from their schemata than others” (Emmott and Alexander 2019).
- 5 “So it is well to make a distinction between perception, which is the inner state of the monad representing external things, and *apperception*, which is consciousness or the reflective knowledge of this inner state itself and which is not given to all souls or to any soul all the time” (Leibniz 1989: 637).
- 6 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “apperception,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apperception> (accessed January 14, 2022).
- 7 We tried to develop this hypothesis, showing how paratext affects reading expectations and apperceptions in the article “Il racconto innominato. Analisi del paratesto di Centuria. Cento piccoli romanzi fiume di Giorgio Manganelli” (Remorini 2022).
- 8 “[...] mi propia teoría de lo fantástico, que concibe dicha categoría como un discurso en relación intertextual constante con ese otro discurso que es la realidad, entendida siempre como una construcción cultural” (Roas 2011: 9).
- 9 “Se puede postular que lo fantástico presupone invariablemente un acto de transgresión” (Gil Guerrero 2006: 183).
- 10 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “metalepsis,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metalepsis> (accessed January 21, 2022).
- 11 “The concept of *metalepsis* (μετάληψις / *transumptio*) derives originally from the classical rhetorical doctrine of figures of speech” (v. Möllendorff 2018).
- 12 To be precise, Genette calls this transgression narrative *metalepsis*: “Le passage d’un niveau narratif à l’autre ne peut en principe être assuré que par la narration, acte qui consiste précisément à introduire dans une situation, par le moyen d’un discours, la connaissance d’une autre situation. Toute autre forme de transit est, sinon toujours impossible, du moins toujours transgressive.[...] toute intrusion du narrateur ou du narrataire extradiégétique dans l’univers diégétique (ou de personnages diégétiques dans un univers métadiégétique, etc.), ou inversement, comme chez Cortazar, produit un effet de bizarrerie soit bouffonne (quand on la présente, comme Sterne ou Diderot, sur le ton de la plaisanterie) soit fantastique. Nous étendrons à toutes ces transgressions le terme de *métalepse narrative*” (Genette 1972: 292-293).
- 13 “Various characterizations indicate that these can involve transgressions of the border between different levels (representing/represented, diegetic/metadiegetic, and so forth) but also transgressions of the border between distinct frames, orders, or worlds situated on the same level (think of horizontal *metalepsis*—which might be called *perilepsis*—)” (Prince 2006: 628).
- 14 “[...] la paradoja se realiza por el intercambio de diferentes elementos y, a veces, por la colisión o superposición de las constelaciones. Con respecto a la estructura de la obra narrativa, se pueden observar los procedimientos de ambas categorías tanto en el plano del *discurso* (*discours*) como en el plano de la *historia* (*histoire*). Dentro de cada uno de los planos y en cuanto a su interrelación, los procedimientos operan en dirección horizontal y vertical. Tanto la clase de los procedimientos de anulación como la clase de los procedimientos de transgresión o de ruptura comprenden cada una además dos categorías, de modo que se pueden distinguir en total cuatro tipos de procedimientos de *narración paradójica*. Respecto de los modos de la anulación se trata en nuestra terminología de las técnicas narrativas de la *silepsis* y de la *epanalepsis*, y con respecto a los modos de la transgresión o de ruptura distinguimos la *melalepsis* y la *hiperlepsis*” (Lang 2006: 30).



- 15 Original in Spanish, my translation: “elementos del plano del discurso y/o del plano de la historia de un relato y/o el discurso y/o la historia en su totalidad aparecen en el plano del discurso y/o en el plano de la historia de otro(s) relato(s) situado(s) a un nivel diegético y/u ontológico inferior o superior a su propio nivel. También se trata de una ruptura de límites espaciales y/o temporales” (Lang 2006: 40).
- 16 Original in Spanish, my translation: “elementos del plano del discurso y/o del plano de la historia de un relato y/o el discurso y/o la historia en su totalidad aparecen en el plano del discurso y/o en el plano de la historia del mismo relato y/o de otro(s) relato(s) (paralelo[s]) situado(s) al mismo nivel diegético y/u ontológico. Se trata de una ruptura de límites espaciales y/o temporales” (Lang 2006: 40).
- 17 “The two conceivable types of alteration consist either of giving less information than is necessary in principle, or of giving more than is authorized in principle in the code of focalization governing the whole. The first type bears a name in rhetoric, and we have already met it apropos of completing anachronies: we are dealing with lateral omission or *paralipsis*. The second does not yet bear a name; we will christen it *paralepsis*, since here we are no longer dealing with leaving aside (-lipsis, from *leipo*) information that should be taken up (and given), but on the contrary with taking up (-lepsis, from *lambano*) and giving information that should be left aside” (Genette 1980: 195).
- 18 “*Metalepsis* here forms a system with *prolepsis*, *analepsis*, *syllepsis* and *paralepsis*, with this specific sense: “taking hold of (telling) by changing level” (Genette 1980: 235).
- 19 “can consist of an inroad into the consciousness of a character in the course of a narrative generally conducted in external focalization” (Genette 1980: 197).
- 20 “Paralepsis can likewise consist, in internal focalization, of incidental information about the thoughts of a character other than the focal character, or about a scene that the latter is not able to see” (Genette 1980: 197).
- 21 “[...] the norms that are violated by these transgressions cannot be defined in advance (e.g. by commonsensical inferences as to what a particular narrator may have learnt about the story he or she tells). Instead, the norms are established by each particular text” (Niederhoff 2013).
- 22 Michele Mari (born 26 December 1955 in Milan) is one of Italy's most renowned and successful contemporary writers. Author of novels, short stories and poems, he is also an academic scholar, is famous for its sophisticated linguistic elaboration and the refinement of his literary style.

## Works cited

Bal, Mieke. 1985. *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Carnevale, Daniele. 2019. "La 'parola fantastica': Logopoiesi, retoriche dell'indicibile e mostri verbali." In *Parola. una nozione unica per una ricerca multidisciplinare*, edited by Benedetta Aldinucci, Valentina Carbonara, Giuseppe Caruso, Matteo La Grassa, Cèlia Nadal Pasqual and Eugenio Salvatore, 65-73. Siena: Università per Stranieri di Siena.

Cohn, Dorrit. 2012. "Metalepsis and Mise en Abyme." *Narrative* 20 no. 1: 105-14.

Emmott, Catherine, and Marc Alexander. 2019. "Schemata". *the living handbook of narratology*. <https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/33.html>.

Fludernik, Monika. 2003. "Scene Shift, Metalepsis, and the Metaleptic Mode." *Style* 37. 4: 382-400.

Fludernik, Monika. 2005. "Histories of Narrative Theory (II): From Structuralism to the Present." In *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd: 36-59.

Fludernik, Monika. 2009. *An Introduction to Narratology*. London: Routledge.

Genette, Gérard. 1972. *Figures III*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Genette, Gérard. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gil Guerrero, Herminia. 2006. "Lo fantástico como transgresión. postulación fantástica en los relatos borgianos." In *La narración paradójica. normas narrativas y el principio de la transgresión*, edited by Nina Grabe, Sabine Lang and Klaus Meyer-Minnermann, 183-92. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag.

Gobyn, Saartje. 2014. "Textual Effects of Metalepsis." *Amsterdam International Journal for Cultural Narratology (AJCN)* 7-8: 120-37.

Grishakova, Marina. 2009. "Beyond the Frame: Cognitive Science, Common Sense and Fiction." *Narrative* 17, no. 2: 188-99.

Grishakova, Marina. 2019. "Necessary Fictions: Supernormal Cues, Complex Cognition, and the Nature of Fictional Narrative." In *Narrative Complexity. Cognition, Embodiment, Evolution*, edited by Marina Grishakova and Maria Poulaki, 391-413. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Hanebeck, Julian. 2017. *Understanding Metalepsis: The Hermeneutics of Narrative Transgression*. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH.

Herman, David. 2013. "Cognitive Narratology." *the living handbook of narratology*.  
<http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/38.html>.

Jahn, Manfred. 1999. "'Speak, friend, and enter: ' Garden Paths, Artificial Intelligence, and Cognitive Narratology." In *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*, edited by David Herman, 167-194. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.

Jahn, Manfred. 2021. *Narratology 2.3: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*.

[www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.pdf](http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.pdf)

Lang, Sabine. 2006. "Prolegómenos para una teoría de la narración paradójica." In *La narración paradójica. normas narrativas y el principio de la transgresión*, edited by Nina Grabe, Sabine Lang and Klaus Meyer-Minnermann, 21-47. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. 1989. *Philosophical papers and letters*. Translated by Leroy E. Loemker. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Leleń, Halszka. 2014. "The Fantastic as a Technique of Redynamizing Mimetic Fiction." In *Basic Categories of Fantastic Literature Revisited*, edited by Joanna Matyjaszczyk, Piotr Spyra and Andrzej Wicher, 8-24. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Malina, Debra. 2002. *Breaking the Frame. Metalepsis and the Construction of the Subject*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Mari, Michele. 2012. *Fantasmagonia*. Torino: Einaudi.

Martínez, José M. 2008. "Subversion Or Oxymoron Fantastic Literature and the Metaphysics of the Object." *Neophilologus* 92: 367–384.

Meyer-Minnermann, Klaus. 2006. "Narración paradójica y ficción." In *La narración paradójica. normas narrativas y el principio de la transgresión*, edited by Nina Grabe, Sabine Lang and Klaus Meyer-Minnermann, 49-71. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag.

Nelles, William. 1992. "Stories within Stories Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 25: 79-96.

Niederhoff, Burkhard. 2013. "Focalization." *the living handbook of narratology*.

<https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/18.html>.

Prince, Gerald. 2006. "Disturbing Frames." *Poetics Today* 27 no. 3: 625-30.

Remorini, Paolo. 2022. "Il racconto innominato. Analisi del paratesto di Centuria. Cento piccoli romanzi fiume di Giorgio Manganelli." *Forum Italicum*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00145858221079216>.

Roas, David. 2011. *Una realidad (aparentemente) estable y objetiva. tras los límites de lo real. una definición de lo fantástico*. Madrid: Páginas de Espuma.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. 2004. "Metaleptic Machines." *Semiotica* 150: 439-69.

Sandner, David. 2011. *Critical Discourses of the Fantastic, 1712–1831*. Padstow: Taylor & Francis Group.

Schneider, Ralf. 2001. "Toward a Cognitive Theory of Literary Character: The Dynamics of Mental-Model Construction." *Style* 35 no. 4: 607-39.

Shen, Dan. 2005. "What Narratology and Stylistics Can Do for Each Other." In *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, edited by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, 136-149. Hoboken: Blackwell

Publishing.

Stockwell, Peter. 2002. *Cognitive Poetics: an Introduction*. London: Routledge.

v. Möllendorff, Peter. 2018. *Metalepsis*. Oxford University Press.

Wicher, Andrzej. 2014. "Introduction." In *Basic Categories of Fantastic Literature Revisited*, edited by Joanna Matyjaszczyk, Piotr Spyra and Andrzej Wicher, 1-7. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.