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Narrative across Versions:

Narratology meets Genetic Criticism

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Abstract – What can narrative theory and analysis learn from the study of sketches, notes, and manuscripts? Leading narratologists, such as Franz Stanzel, Dorrit Cohn, and Gérard Genette, have visited the factory of the text, as Genette calls it, in order to corroborate an argument about the nature of narrative in general or the composition of a particular narrative. However, these excursions have not led to a principled dialogue between genetic criticism and narrative theory. By following major narratologists on their path to versions of narratives, this essay investigates the possibilities of combining narrative theory and narratological analysis on the one hand with manuscript studies and genetic criticism on the other hand. To specify our claims about this interdisciplinary combination of approaches, i.e. the study of narrative across versions, we analyse two works that challenge narrative conventions, “Lessness” and *The Unnamable* by Samuel Beckett. This two-part case study focuses respectively on the levels of “narrative” and “narration,” and shows how, on the one hand, genetic criticism can provide us with data to corroborate a narratological analysis, and how, on the other hand, narratology serves as an aid to the genetic examination of the narrative's development across versions.

1. Paintings, Versions, and Narrative: An Introduction

In the study of painting, there is a tradition of looking at a work's genesis to generate new interpretations. Since the 1920s, X-radiography enabled researchers to examine the material composition of a painting (Burroughs 1938) and since the 1960s infrared reflectograms offered an additional way for art historians to bring to light earlier versions of a painting (van Asperen de Boer 1970). These underlying layers are compared to the finished version of the painting, which is also sometimes compared to preparatory sketches. Pablo Picasso is a famous example. From 1894 to 1967 he filled approximately 175 notebooks. No less than eight of these notebooks are devoted to preliminary sketches for the painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*. Moreover, as Howard Gardner explains, “some of the forms that eventuate in *Les demoiselles* have been investigated in even earlier notebooks, as Picasso engaged in countless deformations and caricatures in an effort to depict the human form” (Gardner 1993: 145). And

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in 1991, a preparatory oil sketch was discovered (Gardner 1993: 145; 148). The study of these preparatory stages has led to an understanding of Picasso's aesthetic project as more of a dynamic "work in progress" than of a static oeuvre: "Few of Picasso's paintings give the feeling of having been completely finished; in most cases, one can find earlier versions that might have sufficed, as well as subsequent paintings that could be regarded as later versions of the canvas in question" (Gardner 1993: 146). Consequently, several studies have been devoted to the genesis of Picasso's paintings (Arnheim 1962; Blunt 1969; Gedo 1983; Hilton 1986).

In Picasso's case, the number of preserved notebooks is perhaps exceptional, but even if less preparatory material is preserved the genesis is often considered an integral part of the study of paintings. With reference to Rembrandt, for instance, the study of the successive states of his etchings and his paintings has, as Paul Eggert notes, "revealed the subtleties of his progressive alteration of his works": "The Italian term used is *pentimenti* – literally, the repented (i.e. superseded) aspects of the painting that become visible as the overlaying becomes gradually transparent with the passage of time. It was introduced into English by Roger Fry in the early twentieth century and is now extended to include the evidence of alteration revealed by X-radiographs and infrared photography" (Eggert 2009, 113). The adoption of these techniques by the Rembrandt Research Project (which started in 1968) resulted in a series of exhibitions, the first of which was organized at the National Gallery, London (1988-89), with the title "Art in the Making: Rembrandt." Nor is Rembrandt the only artist whose paintings are regularly exhibited alongside the material traces of their genesis. A visitor of the National Gallery can also see, for example, Georges Seurat's *Bathers at Asnières* (1884) next to several of his preparatory studies and oil sketches of the figures and of the landscape. By comparing sketches and layers of the painting with the final version, art scholars can hypothesize about the way the work was composed and about the aesthetics behind the painting (Leighton and Thompson 1997).

Thierry de Duve's analysis (1998) of Édouard Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882) can serve as another example of such genetic reconstruction, now focussing on aspects relevant to narrative inquiry. Manet's painting depicts a barmaid behind the bar in a famous Parisian variety theatre. Although scholars have variously attempted to define the perspectival structure of Manet's painting, there is a broad consensus that its composition of space and perspective resists "a logical and naturalistic explanation" (Anne Coffin Hanson 1966, qtd. in

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de Duve 1998: 140). In particular, the reflection of the barmaid, the customer with the top hat and the bar in a mirror behind her seems incongruous. The dominant perspective of the painting (the point from which we see the central figure, the barmaid) is not compatible with the perspective suggested by the reflection in the mirror. To understand this apparent inconsistency, de Duve's new reading of the painting aims to explain "the painting's conception (what Manet meant it to do)" (164) and its gradual implementation (especially "the painting's [...] space construction, particularly when it comes to the space inside the mirror" [143]). By studying the creative process, de Duve finds out that the seeming incongruity results "from the condensation of two distinct moments of representation in a painting that otherwise respects the basic rule of Albertian perspective, the single point of view" (166). These two distinct moments of representation are connected to two distinct phases in the creative process preceding the completion of the painting. In order to document his claim that "the resulting image conflates two or more moments in time" (146) and that this makes sense of the painting's perspectival structure, he examines sketches (149-151) and X-rays (156) of Manet's painting. For example, the early "sketch formerly on loan to the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam and now in a private collection in London" (150), which is to be considered as a preliminary study (preceding the "first phase" in de Duve's analysis; see below), shows a barmaid whose face is turned to her left: "From this viewpoint, the barmaid's reflection appears in the right place" (157). This means that we can see part of her face and back reflected in the mirror on her right .

Scrutinizing the painting and its layers, de Duve is able to differentiate between the two moments in the process (mentioned in the quotation above). An X-ray, made by Robert Bruce-Gardner for the Courtauld Institute's department of technology, shows that the painting was at first "very close to the earlier [made] sketch formerly in Amsterdam" (156), but this time Manet painted the barmaid "full-face and not with her head turned" to the left (157). This is what De Duve refers to as the "first phase" of the painting (157). The problem of this first phase is that the barmaid "is seen frontally, while her reflection refers to an oblique point of view" (159), as the reflection appears to her right instead of behind her. De Duve suggests that Manet then (in a second phase) decided, for "pragmatic" reasons, "to turn the mirror around the axis rising behind the barmaid's back, bringing the right side closer to him [i.e., the viewer]" (159) and trying out different locations: "the X-ray shows four different locations of the barmaid's reflection in the mirror" (162).

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What Manet accomplished in this painting is not random perspectivism in spatial terms, according to de Duve, but the evocation of what he calls a “temporal gap” (164). In the top right corner, the painting also shows the face of a man with a top hat, reflected by the mirror behind the bar. What we see, according to de Duve, is two successive “selves” of the barmaid and of the man with the top hat:

It is the same man who addresses the barmaid from an angle and whom the barmaid addresses face-to-face, but it is not the same man at the same time. Only his reflection establishes the equation between the two moments. By masking the movement of the mirror [Manet's turning of the mirror around its axis, see above], Manet obliterates the irreducible interval of time that separates the man in the top hat from himself, in his two successive positions. (164)

By thus examining the stages of the painting's construction in preparatory sketches and consecutive layers on the canvas, de Duve not only tells the story of its gradual construction (concluding that “Manet stumbled on its constructive possibilities more or less accidentally” and that “the painting is conceived as it is constructed” [164]), he also sheds light on the story told by the painting as we know it. By studying the painting across versions (making use of sketches and X-rays), de Duve shows that “*A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* is a composite image,” accomplished by “locking together the two phases of the composition in a single reflection” (164). His examination of the painting combines the synchronic structure of the finished work of art with the diachrony of its gradual construction, implying “interpretive compromises between fixity and mobility, space and time” (166).

What we, as literary critics, are interested in is the way an art scholar such as de Duve employs a reconstruction of the gradual *production* of a painting to try and understand the *product*. We hope to show how a similar approach may also be applicable and useful to narrative studies. Our claim is not that this is a new approach to literary narrative, but that it is a combination of approaches that has been somewhat neglected in the mainstream of literary and narrative theory in the past few decades.

In the description of de Duve's procedure above, we distinguished two relevant strategies in the study of *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* across versions: on the one hand, the result of the scholar's reconstruction of the production process is a narrative, which can be referred to as

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the “genetic story”; on the other hand, by reference to this genetic narrative, the scholar also tells a “poetic or aesthetic story” by suggesting new interpretations of the painting, substantiating existing readings, and referring to its development across versions. To some extent, these strategies are also applicable to the study of literary narratives, but in the past few decades, their application has not been so evident as for instance in the study of paintings. In 1985, Meir Sternberg already drew attention to what in literary studies is often seen as “that taboo called the genesis of the text” (13). In order to study the poetics of Biblical narrative, he suggested a methodological cooperation between what he called “source-oriented” and “discourse-oriented inquiry” (14), and expressed “the need for a community or overlap rather than a division of labor” (15). However, he also predicted that increasing specialization would tend to perpetuate the dichotomous state of affairs, “with source and discourse made foreign if not inimical to each other” (21). More than a quarter of a century after this appeal to join forces, the two orientations still tend to insist on their independence, or even mutual ignorance. For instance, the disciplines of narrative theory and genetic criticism have continued to develop separately, with relatively limited interaction.

Nonetheless, there are some interesting exceptions. In this essay, we discuss the intersections between these two fields of research, and try to show the mutual benefits of their combination, which we will refer to as the study of narrative across versions. As we hope to show, this approach can be productive in at least two ways. On the one hand, if one's aim is to interpret a text's discourse, genetic criticism's reconstruction of the writing process can be an aid to the narratological analysis of texts, not just of narrative texts in printed form, but also of any of their preceding versions, since any textual version can be the object of narratological analysis. On the other hand, if one's aim is to study the development of the writing process, narratological tools and insights can contribute to an understanding of the way in which narratives evolve across notes, sketches, drafts, and other textual versions (such as fair copies or corrected proofs). In short, genetic criticism's recognition of the diachronic dimension of writing is directly relevant to the project of narrative theory.

Working Definitions

Before embarking upon this study, we would like to start with a few working definitions. The notions defined below relate to verbal works of art, and the range of “narrative theory” is also limited accordingly. For narrative theory, an exchange of ideas with genetic criticism may

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also be an opportunity to reflect upon the notions of “work,” “text,” “version,” and “document” and possibly redefine or adjust its notion(s) of “poetics.” The conventional borders of the narrative “text” or the “work” are questioned in the encounter. Whereas narrative theorists often consider the, or a, published version of the work as their research object, genetic critics study multiple versions of this research object. The working definitions we propose are based on Peter Shillingsburg's suggestion to define “text,” “work,” and “version” in relation to “document”: “A document consists of the physical material, paper and ink, bearing the configuration of signs that represent a text” (1996: 51). The text is defined as “the actual order of words and punctuation as contained in any one physical form” (1996: 46). In other words, whereas the “document” is a material object, the “text” is not. All the words and punctuation on the document represent one text. For example, a loose sheet of paper may contain several different short, handwritten poems. All these poems together constitute the text of this document. It is possible, however, that the poems on this loose sheet are different drafts of the same poem. In that case, the “text” (all the letters and words on this document) consists of more than one “version” of a “work.” “A version is one specific form of the work” (Shillingsburg 1996: 47) and a “work” is “the imagined whole implied by all differing forms of a text that we conceive as representing a single literary creation” (Shillingsburg 1996: 43). These “differing forms” are the multiple “versions” of the work. For instance, Samuel Beckett has made several drafts of his play *Fin de partie* (*Endgame*). The earliest of these drafts do not bear any title and feature characters with names that differ from the characters in the published version of this work. Beckett scholars therefore disagree whether one of these drafts (a dialogue between two characters, Ernest and Alice) is to be regarded as a “version” of the “work” *Fin de partie* or not (Cohn 2001: 220). Apart from the terms “work,” “text,” “version,” and “document,” French genetic critics often additionally employ the terms “manuscripts,” “genetic dossier” and “*avant-texte*.” “Manuscripts” are documents containing handwritten texts, often early versions of literary works. The “genetic dossier” is the physical collection of documents (in the sense defined above) pertaining to the work one wishes to study, whereas the “*avant-texte*”² is the result of the critical analysis of these documents (de

² To mark the difference, Pierre-Marc de Biasi calls the genetic dossier an “ensemble matériel des documents” [a material collection of documents] and the *avant-texte* “une production critique: il [l'*avant-texte*] correspond à la tranformation d'un ensemble empirique de documents en un dossier de pièces ordonnées et significatives” [a critical production: the *avant-texte* corresponds with the transformation of an empirical collection of documents into a dossier of ordered and meaningful items] (de Biasi 2000: 30-1).

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Biasi 2000: 30-1), that is, the reconstruction of the writing process – what we have referred to as the “genetic story.”

The notion of “genetic criticism” can include “all textual prehistories, ancient and modern” (Sternberg 1985: 20). In this essay, we employ the term in a slightly more restricted sense. We apply it more specifically to the study of what in French *critique génétique* is referred to as “modern manuscripts.” These “modern” manuscripts are characterized by a more tentative and private nature than for instance medieval manuscripts. Modern manuscripts generally show numerous cancellations and additions, while medieval manuscripts are often copies, carefully produced by scribes. Whereas modern manuscripts are usually private documents, preparatory to a potential publication in print, medieval manuscripts often function as a publication in and of themselves. Since these modern manuscripts are regarded as the material traces of an author's creative invention, Daniel Ferrer defines genetic criticism as the science of written invention, “la science de l'invention écrite” (Ferrer 2011: 184).

The term “poetics” can be defined as “the systematic working or study of literature as such” (Sternberg 1985: 2). In this essay, the term is used in a specific sense, as related to genetic criticism by Pierre-Marc de Biasi in his essay “Toward a Science of Literature”: “[in] the study of a text's genesis or, if one prefers, the attempt to establish an *avant-texte*, one can only succeed if one applies a selective critical procedure. This procedure will reconstruct the genesis from a chosen point of view, for example, desire (psychoanalysis), inscription of sociality (sociocriticism), or the very conditions of its own poetics (narratology)” (de Biasi 2004: 42). “Poetics” in this sense – the original, Aristotelian sense of the “science or discipline of making” – explicitly includes its etymology, from Gr. “*poiein*,” “to make.” formalist and structuralist narratologists adhered to this definition of poetics more than recent narratological trends do.

Anticipating the next section of this essay, we can give the example of Boris Eikhenbaum. In a narratological approach *avant la lettre* to one of Gogol's stories, he asks the question “How Gogol's ‘Overcoat’ is made” (also the title of the essay). By showing the fundamental formal tensions in the narrative, Eikhenbaum hopes to show the logic behind the style (e.g., the use of *skaz*-devices) and the composition. In other words, his goal is to explain the surface structure of the story by uncovering the deep structure that generates it. His analysis includes Gogol's choices during the writing process, such as the alteration of the protagonist's name from Tishkevich into Bashmakevich and finally into Bashmachkin (Eikhenbaum 1974: 276).

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To some extent this example of a formalist taking the writing process into account qualifies Pierre-Marc de Biasi's claim that the theory of structural analysis was "once dominated by a synchronic obsession with form" (41), for there were critics who did take a text's diachrony into account. Yet, French genetic critics do have the merit of having systematically drawn attention to the literary text as (also) an "object structured by time" (de Biasi 2004: 42),³ taking into account that a text's *poesis* may cover the tracks of its *genesis* (Sternberg 1985: 16).

The Structure of This Essay

In the next section of our essay, we discuss a representative selection of instances in classical and "postclassical"⁴ narratology where the versions of a narrative (the material traces of its composition in notebooks and manuscripts) play a role. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time the narratological interest in versions and the uses of a genetic dossier in narrative theory are documented, let alone analyzed. Leading narratologists have turned to literary manuscripts, not for the sake of genetic inquiry or reconstruction per se, but to substantiate claims about the structure of narratives or to develop new ideas on the form of narrative in general. We think of Philippe Hamon's (1983; 1997b) examination of Zola's manuscripts with regard to the novelist's development of space and characters, or Tamar Yacobi's (1981; 2005) discussion of the genetic principle of integration, in which the analysis of versions is seen as one way to reconcile incongruities in a narrative. Starting from such examples from the history of narratology, we will first show how genetic criticism has already fertilized narratology in the past, albeit sometimes in an intuitive rather than systematic way. Classical narratologists such as Dorrit Cohn, Franz K. Stanzel, Gérard Genette, and Philippe Hamon have demonstrated in their respective theories the added value of following narratives across versions. In spite of these encounters in the past, the narratological recourse to the genetic dossier is almost always secondary nowadays, and its theoretical consequences are seldom drawn and considered. A critical and explicit approach to manuscripts, including their narratological implications, is missing in the context of narratology. Today, narratology develops in many different directions (for one recent overview, see Alber & Fludernik 2010)

³ Hereafter, this "diachronic" structure and study will be contrasted with the "synchronic" structure and study of the published text.

⁴ For the distinction between classical and postclassical narratology, see Nünning and Nünning 2002; Alber and Fludernik 2010.

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and several borders are explicitly crossed, or recrossed, in postclassical narratology (such as those of genre and medium), but the research into *versions of* narratives remains a marginal phenomenon.

In our title, "Narrative across Versions," one may hear an echo of another border-crossing project in narratology: "narrative across media" (cf. Ryan 2004). As Marie-Laure Ryan intimates, intermedial and transmedial approaches to narrative can be traced back to the structuralist belief that stories can travel from one medium to another (Ryan 2004: 1). In evoking the analogy between media and versions, we suggest that narratives are also refashioned in meaningful ways from one version to another, from early conceptual notes, in which the initial idea for a narrative is documented, to the manuscripts and from the manuscripts to the published text (or published *texts* if there are variants between different editions, each of which constitutes another version of the work). Indeed, the two fields of study (narrative across versions and narrative across media) are more than merely analogous. Since medial transpositions lead to new versions of narratives, genetic transpositions can be studied along similar lines. Manuscript versions of narratives can be treated as semiotic performances in their own right and can be compared to the semiotic performance of the published narrative.

The goal of our essay is to sketch the contours of the study of narrative across versions. The nature of our argument is mainly theoretical and methodological, but we also wish to illustrate our claims by providing a case study. Our case study focuses on the question as to how a combined genetic and narrative analysis can serve as an aid to analyzing "experimental" fiction, i.e. fiction that emphatically resists or challenges literary conventions. In particular, we focus on the understanding of its writing process, which in experimental literature is often put in the foreground (Bray et al. 2012: 13-14). With this in view, we will look at the genesis of two experimental works challenging narrative conventions in their composition. The two texts, "Lessness" and *The Unnamable* by Samuel Beckett, are written by an author who is known for his radical narrative and anti-narrative⁵ innovations. Moreover, Beckett often thematizes the physical act of writing. In some cases, for example *Malone Dies* or *Comment dire*, the progression of his narratives even revolves around this act. We will

⁵ "Anti-narrative" in Seymour Chatman's terms. According to him anti-narratives "call into question [...] narrative logic, that one thing leads to one and only one other, the second to a third and so on to the finale" (1978: 57). In Brian Richardson's definition anti-narrative "denotes a narrative that depicts crucial events or relations that are impossible in the real world" (2005: 24).

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examine what the versions of anti-narratives can reveal about the text and how the study of narrative across versions (combining narratology with genetic criticism) can be complementary to existing methods of narrative analysis.

2. The Study of Versions in the History of Narratology

Within genetic criticism, narratology is recognized as a special field of interest. The Flaubert scholar Raymonde Debray Genette is regarded as the chief proponent of what Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden (in their introductory note to Debray Genette's essay in *Genetic Criticism*) call "narratological genetics" (Deppmann, Ferrer and Groden 2004: 69). They do not explain this term, but circumscribe Debray Genette's essay as an attempt to examine complex narratological questions by "sift[ing] through a dozen avant-textual strata" (69). Her analysis of the ending of the story "Un Coeur simple" ("A Simple Heart") makes use of the numerous versions of Flaubert's story to conclude that the end of the finished narrative has a double function, which is achieved by means of a long process, delineated by Debray Genette as follows:

in the original outline, Flaubert starts from two elements that coexist both in his general thought on religion and in the initial scenario: the sensual impulses that animate all religiosity [...] and the threadbare asceticism that permits him to achieve a gentle form of mysticism in this text. The passage from one to the other rests on the expression of the confusion between the corporal and the spiritual register. Passing through a series of saturations and social pre-constructions, extraliterary models, models from the visual arts, and stylistic effects, he goes from expansion [by means of additions] to blockages and from blockages to displacements. Finally, it is by playing on the word "heart," by reinscribing, so to speak, his title (discovered very early) in his ending that he invents a third term that includes both the realist and the spiritual reading.⁶ It is thus impossible for the reader to decide for one or the other. The reader is led to make *both* readings. Thus questions about Flaubert's irony, or about his dedication to [the protagonist] Félicité, are no longer to be asked. Every trace of such judgements as "in saintly fashion" or "either she

⁶ The third term is what Debray Genette (further on in the quotation) calls "an exact incertitude," a form of deliberate indeterminacy, which includes both the "realist reading" (which sees the protagonist's stuffed parrot simply as a stuffed parrot), and the "spiritual reading" (which is willing to accept that, for the protagonist, the parrot represents the Holy Spirit).

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prayed mentally or it was convulsive” is erased to the benefit of what one would like to call “an exact incertitude.” In this, the *excipit* of “Un Coeur simple” is perhaps exemplary and marked by the double function of a novel's end: to close the plot and to open reflection” (Debray Genette 2004: 93).

Debray Genette argues that in the first part of the story, Félicité is an “effective, invariable, [...] finished object,” a servant who is deliberately presented in a dehumanizing way as “a wooden woman functioning automatically” (72). But the last chapter and its *excipit*, by contrast to this “finished object,” evokes an “individualized subject” (72) who takes control of her own death. As a consequence, there is something in the published narrative “that resists ordinary systems of closure,” and according to Debray Genette “this is even truer if we consider the *avant-texte*” (72). The “*excipit*” (93) of a story is a place that is typically overdetermined by the narrative genre, so in order to be original and effective, the ending needs to find the right balance between the conventions of the genre and the specificity of the narrative. This balance allows readers to predict the ending and counteract this predictability, that is, to mix the two roles. In the particular case of “Un Coeur simple,” Debray Genette examines the preparatory versions, where the mix of the two roles is often not quite balanced, which enables her to fully appreciate the effect of the balance achieved in the *excipit* of the final version. The story's ending thus appears to be a dynamic balancing act; it does not simply *have* the right balance, it is both the result of the author's long attempt to *find* it and an invitation to every one of its readers throughout its reception history to *recover* it.

Apart from the *excipit*, the “*incipit*” (72) is a strategic place that lends itself equally well to narratological genetics, the specific brand of genetic criticism Debray Genette engages in. Bernhild Boie and Daniel Ferrer have shown this strategic importance by devoting an entire collection of essays to the relationship between the *incipit* in contemporary novels (the opening of the narrative in the published text) and the beginning of their writing processes (which does not necessarily start with the opening lines of the book; Boie and Ferrer 1993). The novels discussed in the volume include works by Martin Walser, Christa Wolf, Claude Simon, Samuel Beckett, Robert Pinget, Lucette Finas and Paul Nizon. Also in theoretical essays, such as Pierre-Marc de Biasi's “Toward a Science of Literature,” narratology is explicitly introduced as one of the critical perspectives that make up the “criticism” part in “genetic criticism” (de Biasi 2004: 42): whereas the “genetic” part consists in gathering all the

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documents of the genetic dossier and making them accessible (for instance by means of transcriptions), the “criticism” part is the attempt to establish an *avant-texte* by applying an analytic procedure to reconstruct the genesis from a chosen point of view (see also de Biasi's description of this procedure in the section *Working Definitions* above).

In narrative theory, a genetic approach has not been thematized in the same explicit way, but the history of the discipline does reveal a few interesting cases of implicit interaction between narratological and genetic analysis. In the discussion that follows, we will describe and analyse the ways in which narratologists have drawn on genetic dossiers and uncover the functions attributed to these genetic dossiers in narratological studies. In most cases, the use of the *avant-texte* is secondary. Genetic dossiers are sometimes taken into consideration by narratologists, either to find out how particular narratives are composed in a poetic sense, or to lend support to theoretical claims.

2.1. Cohn and Stanzel: the Study of Versions at the Service of Narrative Theory

Dorrit Cohn's analysis of Kafka's *The Castle* (*Das Schloss*, Cohn 1968a) is a case in point of the way earlier versions of a narrative, in the form of notes and manuscripts, are employed in narratology.⁷ On several occasions, she compares the manuscript of *The Castle* with the published version, either to broaden her analysis of Kafka's narrative techniques or to tackle theoretical questions such as “what is the effect of a free indirect style?” and “what distinguishes a first-person from a third-person free indirect style?” Still, since Cohn's use of the manuscripts is instrumental and unreflecting, we consider the interaction between narratology and genetic criticism as implicit in this case. Two articles published in 1968, one on grammatical person and another on narrative tense, exemplify the practice. In the former essay, “K. enters *The Castle*” (1968a), Cohn focuses upon a shift of person from the manuscript to the published version of the novel. Significantly, she considers the change from first person to third person as “an unusual, perhaps a unique, literary record which may throw light on Kafka's narrative style, and beyond, on a disputed problem of fictional technique” (28-29). In other words, according to Cohn, the *avant-texte* directly contributes to the two ends – the textual and the narratological – that we have generalized above.

⁷ Some of the passages in the work of Cohn, Stanzel and Genette were succinctly explored in Bernaerts, Martens, and Van Hulle 2011. We wish to thank Gunther Martens for the collaboration in the context of that essay. The current essay benefits from the results of the research presented in the former.

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By studying the manuscript of *The Castle*, Cohn shows how, without any other substantial changes, Kafka replaces the narrator's reference to his experiencing self (K.) through first-person pronouns with reference to him through third-person pronouns or by the proper name "K." For example, in the sentence "The castle [...], which I had hoped to reach *today*, receded again"⁸ (Ms./26, qtd. in Cohn 1968a: 31), "I" is replaced by "K." in the published version. In this way, Kafka changes, in Genette's terms, a homodiegetic narrative into a heterodiegetic narrative while maintaining the fixed internal focalization. This is a significant shift from a narratological viewpoint (both in application to a particular narrative, and in terms of its implications for narrative theory more generally). In Cohn's view, it links up with the fact that the manuscript already stages what she calls an effaced narrator and that it foregrounds the experiencing self (1978: 170).

When she develops her model of consciousness representation in fiction in *Transparent Minds*, Cohn reiterates the point that both versions of *The Castle* emphasize the character's experience. She describes the shift of person across the versions of *The Castle* as a shift from self-narrated to narrated monologue (Cohn 1978: 169-170).⁹ The evocation of consciousness in the passage "Where were we? Didn't it go any further? Would Barnabas take leave of me?"¹⁰ (Ms., qtd. in Cohn 1978: 170), is identified by Cohn as self-narrated monologue, because of its first-person context and the combination of a narrating self's voice and an experiencing self's mental style. In the published version, this becomes "Where were they? Didn't it go any further? Would Barnabas take leave of K.?"¹¹ (qtd. in Cohn 1978: 102). Since the first-person context becomes a third-person context, self-narrated monologue becomes narrated monologue. A narrator who is not K. conveys the thoughts of the character in the so-called free indirect style.

What is the rationale behind the shift in the versions of *The Castle*? As Cohn explains in her essay on narrative tense, past-tense third-person narratives can create the illusion of immediacy, whereas past-tense first-person narratives "cannot eliminate the temporal distance between the moment of narration and the narrated moment" (1968a: 144). This partly explains the alteration in Cohn's view. Also, the enigmatic nature of the narrative is more effective and acceptable when the narrator is not the character. According to Cohn, "the logic of self-

⁸ "Das Schloß [...], das ich heute noch zu erreichen gehofft hatte, entfernte sich wieder".

⁹ Cohn coins the term and develops her ideas on narrated monologue in the essay "Narrated Monologue: Definition of a Fictional Style" (1966).

¹⁰ "Wo waren wir? Ging es nicht mehr weiter? Würde Barnabas mich verabschieden?"

¹¹ "Wo waren sie? Ging es nicht mehr weiter? Würde Barnabas K. verabschieden?"

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narration demands self-justification – if not self-explication” (1968b: 36), whereas the third-person context can reinforce the programmatic vagueness and ambiguity. Moreover, the shift of person from manuscript to novel is a relevant genetic discovery in a way that exceeds the particular case of Kafka, as Cohn is able to put her finger on a “missing link” in Stanzel’s typological circle (1968a: 42). Kafka’s intervention draws attention to the borderline between two narrative situations distinguished by Stanzel, namely the first-person narrative and the figural narrative situation. The example of *The Castle*, Cohn argues, shows that this border “is a point of instability, and perhaps even of discontinuity on Stanzel’s circle” (42). Whereas Stanzel explicitly constructs a continuity between both forms, the example of *The Castle* demonstrates, Cohn avers, that these forms are not equal in effect and efficiency. At a certain point (precisely the point of the missing link), the first-person option simply becomes “unviable” (42).

Ever since Cohn’s 1968 excursion into the genetic realm, her analysis has been taken up in narrative theory. Stanzel and Genette, whose genetic interest we will discuss in more detail below, have responded to Cohn’s analysis. In *A Theory of Narrative*, Stanzel accepts the suggestion by Cohn that the transposition from the first to the third person shifts the attention away from a narrator who would be expected to clarify enigmatic elements (1984: 219-20; see also Stanzel 1981: 8). Gérard Genette comments upon Cohn’s analysis in his *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1988: 109-11) and discusses it in the context of other examples of “transvocalization,” shifts from one version to another in which the category of voice is affected. On a grammatical level, transvocalization involves an alteration of the grammatical person and the pronouns, for example from “I” to “he.” Both Cohn and Genette form hypotheses as to why the author changes the narrative person. For Genette it is evident that such a “narrative conversion,” as he also calls it, is a “motivated decision” for authors (he mentions Dostoevski, James, Kafka, and Proust). However, it is not easy to pin-point the specific “advantage gained” (110). In that respect, Genette is more explicit about the uncertainties of a genetic narrative analysis: “Readings among the variants and the sundry early drafts can induce skepticism toward the prevailing (and somewhat too sanguine) idea that the final state is generally superior” (110). In addition, Genette remains sceptical about the possibility of reconstructing the reasons why an author would alter the narrative voice

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between versions¹² and he seems to downplay Cohn's broader theoretical claims regarding the "missing link" in Stanzel's typological circle, although he doesn't go into this suggestion.

To demonstrate that the Kafka example remains relevant in current narratological debates, we can refer to a recent essay by Silke Horstkotte. Her chapter in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research* (2009) deals with focalization in fiction and film. In the first part of the chapter, Horstkotte revitalizes the discussion by comparing Kafka's novel *The Castle* to Michael Haneke's film version (1997). After discussing the transvocalization between Kafka's versions of *The Castle* she moves on to examine the narrative changes across media. In particular, she focuses on narration and focalization in Kafka's *The Castle* and Haneke's adaptation. Whereas internal focalization is prevalent in the novel, the movie does not fully exploit the cinematic means available to suggest an internal perspective (180-181).

As in the analyses of Cohn and Genette, the alterations made by Kafka are the point of departure for a discussion of theoretical issues (namely the nature of narration and focalization). Taking her cue from Oliver Jahraus, Horstkotte interprets Kafka's choices teleologically. She writes: "It is significant for the later development of the narrative that Kafka wrote two unfinished drafts of the novel's beginning, employing different narratorial positions, before finally coming up with a narrative situation which enabled him to continue beyond the novel's initial scenes" (2009: 173). Assuming that in the end Kafka discovered the right path for his narrative text, Horstkotte hints at a teleological process. As in Cohn's, Stanzel's and Genette's books, the *avant-texte* of *The Castle* is only briefly mentioned, but it serves the purpose of supporting claims about Kafka's narrative technique in particular and about the nature of focalization and narrative voice in general. In our case study, we will come back to this example from Kafka and explore the significance of transvocalization in different versions of Beckett's *L'Innommable*.

In the German tradition, Franz K. Stanzel is one of the major classical narratologists with an occasional interest in narrative across versions. Within his *Theory of Narrative*, the section on the "zero grade of mediacy in *The Notebooks of Henry James*" (1984: 30-37) is particularly relevant, since he explains that the mediacy used in an author's conceptual notes for a novel is not fixed yet: "An author's first outline of the plot of a narrative usually shows

¹² Still, he develops his own hypothesis with regard to Proust's motivation for transvocalization. He discerns a "need to assign the ideological investment of the *Recherche* to the narrator's discourse" (1988: 112).

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the story in a form still lacking narrative mediacy" (30). Focussing on Henry James's notebooks, Stanzel first discusses the author's initial ideas for narratives, which he calls "suggestive germs." He suggests that these Jamesian notes already present some of the basic components of a narrative (plot, character, setting, focalization, voice) in a planned configuration.¹³ However, in their own formal presentation, they lack mediacy. Stanzel then compares the notes, for example on *The Ambassadors*, to the published versions of the text. In that way, he examines how these components (plot, character, setting, focalization, voice) are reshaped in the published versions and developed in a mediated context.

Stanzel is also interested in the narrative features of the notes themselves (not unlike Philippe Hamon, as we will discuss) and in their relation to the published version:

It seems to be characteristic of the zero grade of the notes that the author is still preoccupied with the "materials" of the content, the characters, scenes and locations of the future novel: "It touches me – I can see him – I can hear him," James is talking of the main character, Lambert Strether, "I seem to see his history, his temperament, his circumstances, his figures, his life" (Stanzel 1984: 31-32)

In his analysis of James's notes, Stanzel is presenting his own suggestive theoretical germ, we would argue, as he implicitly outlines the potential of a genetic narratology. From Stanzel's brief discussion, we can derive a narratological approach to the genetic material, i.e. definite ideas on the form and functioning of the notes as narratives and as narrative versions. Even though his description of the materials is evidently more limited than Pierre-Marc de Biasi's typology of drafts (1996), Stanzel does differentiate between genetic stages of narratives. For James's *The Ambassadors*, he distinguishes three stages: "first notation,¹⁴ detailed synopsis (scenario)¹⁵ and final text" (31).

¹³ This is also noted by Genette, who summarizes James's genetic process as "a slow process of amplification starting from the initial anecdote, of psychological motivation, of well-considered technical choices ('point of view', person, division of dramatic scenes and narrative summaries)" ["un lent travail d'amplification à partir de l'anecdote initiale, de motivation psychologique, de choix techniques très médités ('point de vue', personne, répartition des scènes dramatiques et des sommaires narratifs)"] (Genette 1987: 401).

¹⁴ By "first notation," Stanzel means what Pierre-Marc de Biasi calls "fragments of exploratory writing" in his typology of genetic documentation (de Biasi 1996: 34).

¹⁵ What Stanzel calls "detailed synopsis (scenario)" corresponds with what de Biasi's refers to as "developed workplans and scenarios" (de Biasi 1996: 34).

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A striking and meaningful transformation is that of the perspective of "The Liar" (1889). While James's notes on the story suggests that the liar's wife was to become the narrator, the story's appearance in print introduces a heterodiegetic narrator. Stanzel concludes that this example "is an extraordinarily illuminating piece of evidence that the meaning of a suggestive germ recorded in the *Notebooks* can undergo such a substantial change in the course of the development of a specific narrative medium" (31). Leaving aside whether Stanzel is exaggerating or not, his rhetoric ("extraordinarily illuminating," "evidence," "substantial") implies that he considers this alteration as instructive and significant not just for the understanding of an oeuvre which he values so much, but also for the development of a theory on mediacy. In two other James examples ("The Friends of the Friends" [1896] and *The Ambassadors* [1903]), he shows how different aspects of narrative mediacy, such as voice, perspective, and consciousness representation, develop across versions. His comparative analyses of the notes and the published versions of the same narratives lead him to conclude that literary writers often dwell upon these aspects for quite some time instead of fixing them right from the start (37).

In a chapter of the volume *Theorie und Praxis im Erzählen* (1986) Stanzel expands his narratological and genetic approach to "The Liar," starting from the following note or "suggestive germ" James wrote in his notebook:

One might write a tale (very short) about a woman married to a man of the most amiable character who is a tremendous, though harmless, liar. [...] What she suffers – what she goes through – generally she tries to rectify, to remove any bad effect by toning down a little, etc. But there comes a day when he tells a very big lie which she has – for reasons to be related – to adopt, to reinforce. (James June 19th, 1884, qtd. in Stanzel 1986: 284)

Comparing the note to the published version, he notices "a tendency to make the authorial narrator's judgement on Oliver Lyon [the 'man' in the story] more explicit"¹⁶ (1986: 287), which alters the way character and perspective are constructed by the reader. In other words, it affects the characterization and the focalization. Oliver Lyon becomes the main focalizer and the thoughts of the liar's wife are consequently more or less inaccessible, which leads to an "important structural reorientation of the interpretation, since the reader's sympathy for a

¹⁶ "Tendenz zur Verdeutlichung des auktorialen Urteils über Oliver Lyon."

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character can be influenced when the access to the character's inner self is denied"¹⁷ (287). The reader's construction of the story thus changes: "in the second version,¹⁸ the signals [regarding Lyon's attitude toward other characters] have been enhanced to such a degree that an attentive and unprejudiced reader can hardly miss them"¹⁹ (290). In these respects, the story's transformation across versions has direct implications for the experience and for the interpretation. Stanzel argues that his approach to the narrative structure allows for what he regards as a better reading. He uses the *avant-texte* to reject Wayne Booth's interpretation of "The Liar" (288) and to reveal the "the *actual causes* of the difficulties of this narration"²⁰ (284, our emphasis). His approach demonstrates that the combination of manuscript analysis and narratology can provide a plausible explanation, since the "actual cause" is not the impersonal narration as Booth suggests, but the "interference of an (older) conceptual layer, the 'Ur-Liar'"²¹ (288). Similar to de Duve, clarifying the visual structure of Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, Stanzel explains the peculiarities of the composition of "The Liar" by uncovering the simultaneous presence of different genetic stages in the work.

In sum, Stanzel offers a genetic explanation (cf. Yacobi 2005: 111) for a narrative phenomenon with interpretive repercussions. Without referring to genetic criticism as a field of research in its own right, Stanzel does briefly integrate a genetic and a narratological approach, because it is useful to him at a certain point. Like Cohn, he shows that this approach is relevant for narrative theory and for the understanding of a particular author's narrative technique.

2.2. Genette, Hamon and the French Tradition

In the French tradition, genetic criticism is a respected area of research (Bergez et al. 1999; Deppmann et al. 2004; Tadié 1987),²² a discipline with a well-defined field of expertise, namely the examination of modern manuscripts, which may include narrative analysis (see de

¹⁷ "wichtige strukturelle Weichenstellung für die Interpretation, da die Verweigerung der Innenweltdarstellung bei einem Charakter die Sympathie lenkung beeinflussen kann."

¹⁸ Stanzel refers to the *New York Edition* here.

¹⁹ "In der zweiten Fassung sind die Signale, die die Einstellung Lyons zu Colonel Capadose und die daraus gefolgerten Schlüsse im Bezug auf Everina als Vorurteile aus gekränktem Stolz und Eifersucht ausweisen, so verstärkt worden, daß ein aufmerksamer und unvoreingenommener Leser kaum an ihnen vorbeigehen kann."

²⁰ "*eigentlichen Ursachen* der Schwierigkeiten dieser Erzählung." As Stanzel demonstrates, these "difficulties" are not just challenges to the reader, but also to the author, in his attempt to create an effective narrative.

²¹ "Überlagerung einer (älteren) Konzeptionsschicht, dem 'Ur-Liar'."

²² 'La critique génétique' is the first critical method presented in *Introduction aux méthodes critiques pour l'analyse littéraire* (Bergez et. 1999: 5-40); it is also discussed in Jean-Yves Tadié's survey *La critique littéraire au XX^e siècle* (1987: 290-2).

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Biasi 2004: 42). It has been developed since the mid-1960s by genetic critics such as Louis Hay, Almuth Grésillon, Jean-Louis Lebrave, Pierre-Marc de Biasi and Daniel Ferrer (Grésillon 1994; de Biasi 2000; Ferrer 2011). Against this background, it is not surprising that French scholars such as Gérard Genette and Philippe Hamon display more affinity with the genetic background of texts in their narrative theories. Genette's excursions to the *avant-texte* are frequent and organically integrated in his work. In *Seuils* (1987), his study of paratexts, he places the *avant-texte* in the group of "private epitexts,"²³ which can affect the understanding of a narrative. Manuscripts, drafts, and plans can inform interpretations,²⁴ and may illustrate the distinctive geneses of different authors' works (1987: 398-404). For Genette, the *avant-texte* is the factory ("*fabrique*") of a text, which we can visit to learn more about the machinery and the production process (404).

Of particular importance to Genette's affinity with genetic criticism is the way he reconstructs Proust's *Recherche* as a narrative developing across versions. In "Proust Palimpseste," a chapter of *Figures I* (1966), he starts from the idea of *Jean Santeuil* and *Contre Sainte-Beuve* as drafts ("*brouillons*") en route to *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Various narrative constituents of Proust's masterpiece are already present in the earlier works: "In these 'works', which are obviously drafts for the *Recherche du temps perdu* like the texts previously brought together in *Mélanges* or *Chroniques*, what appears is a whole series of first stages of particular settings, themes or characters of the 'definitive' work"²⁵ (1966: 63). For example, Marie Kossichef and Bertrand de Réveillon in *Jean Santeuil* are preliminary studies for the characters of Gilberte Swann and Robert de Saint-Loup in the *Recherche*. In Genette's view, these "transformations, substitutions, these splits and these unpredictable fusions" (64) give depth to the work of Proust, which is to be considered as a palimpsest. Genette's argument is conceptually similar to Stanzel's remarks about James's notes as narrative germs,²⁶ but their theoretical claims about the genesis and its use are not identical. Genette does not employ the organic term "germ," which may imply the misleading idea that the

²³ The "epitext" denotes elements "outside" the limits of the given volume, which can be public (for instance interviews, reviews) or private (for instance correspondence, diaries, manuscripts).

²⁴ For an example, see Genette's interpretation of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* in the next paragraph.

²⁵ "Dans ces 'œuvres', qui ne sont, comme les textes précédemment recueillis dans *Mélanges* ou *Chroniques*, rien d'autre que des brouillons de la *Recherche du Temps perdu*, nous voyons apparaître toute une série d'états premiers de certains décors, thèmes ou personnages de l'œuvre 'définitive'".

²⁶ Genette criticizes Stanzel's theory of narrative and his classification of narrative situations in particular (see Genette 1988), but does not address the issue of narrative across versions in his commentary. Conversely, Stanzel (1984) reacts to Genette's theory of narrative discourse, but not, as far as we know, to Genette's interest in manuscripts.

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entire work is already contained in the germ and that it merely takes time for it to “grow” into the work it is “predestined” to become (in his brief analysis of the James examples, Stanzel also seems to adopt and implement the idea implied by this organic metaphor). A constructional metaphor, on the other hand, such as Genette's *fabrique*, is not necessarily more accurate, but it does not imply the same degree of determinism. Genette underscores the unstable nature of Proust's *Recherche*: the text should not be considered as static and finished (1966: 64).

In *Narrative Discourse* (“Discours du récit”), which was originally part of *Figures III* (1972), Genette gives a prominent place to Proust's work. In fact, Genette's new and fruitful model for narrative analysis that arises here is colored by the prominence of Proust as an example and of his interest in the earlier versions of the *Recherche*. As Genette explains in the introduction of *Narrative Discourse* (1972: 67-69; 1980: 21-23), he develops his model in contact with Proust's work and the attention paid to certain narrative features (e.g., iterative narration and anachronies) follows from his case study. With regard to Proust's drafts, Genette builds on the ideas we found in *Figures I*. Systematic as Genette may be in other respects, genetic criticism pops up in his narrative theory functionally and locally. An example is Genette's discussion of the transvocalization from *Jean Santeuil* (third person, heterodiegetic) to the *Recherche* (first person, homodiegetic) in the context of the category of voice (1972: 254-55).

Although Proust's novel is clearly an autodiegetic narrative, it is equally clear to him that this form is the result of a remarkable genetic transformation. The transformation in the *Recherche* may have implications for the perception of its generic features and its relation to the author's life. In view of the conversion from C. as a narrator in *Jean Santeuil* to Marcel as a character and narrator in the *Recherche* and, also in view of the shift in focus from a third-person protagonist to a first-person character-narrator, Genette namely rejects straightforward autobiographical readings of the novel in favor of a reading that does justice to the rhetorical and narrative composition. It is the critic's responsibility, Genette indicates, to consider “in its full significance, the double conversion constituted by the transition of the narrative system of *Jean Santeuil* to that of the *Recherche*”²⁷ (Genette 1972: 255). In that way, the briefly integrated genetic and narrative analyses contribute to the interpretation of the *Recherche*.

²⁷ To consider “dans sa pleine signification la double conversion que constitue le passage du système narratif de *Jean Santeuil* à celui de la *Recherche*.”

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The ways in which Kafka functions in Cohn's narrative theory, James in Stanzel's, and Proust in Genette's, are comparable in interesting respects. The least we can say is that the insights into genetic transformations inspire the theories of Cohn, Stanzel, and Genette. Moreover, the references to the genetic dossier allow them to consider the manifold relations between narrative choices and their potential meanings and effects. We can think of Stanzel, for example, who discusses procedures of characterization across versions which direct the reader's sympathy. Also, narratologists tend to visit the factory of the text only with reference to the oeuvre of a particular author (Kafka, James, Proust) rather than offering a general theory of narrative across versions. Moving on to the next important voice in narratology, we can say that the general trend is confirmed. For Philippe Hamon, throughout his theoretical works (Hamon 1983, 1997a, 1997b, 2004, 2007, 2010), this literary author is Émile Zola. But there is a difference. Whereas for Cohn, Stanzel and Genette the study of manuscripts was not systematically incorporated in their narrative analyses, the connection between the particular case (Zola) and the general theory of narrative is stronger in Hamon's case. His work comes close to what we envisage as a study of narrative across versions. He is a narrative theorist who has done ground-breaking research on description (Hamon 1993), character (Hamon 1983), and irony (Hamon 1996). At the same time, he is a member of the Zola team of the French institute for genetic criticism (Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes, ITEM) and he published widely on the *avant-texte* of Zola's novels (see e.g. Hamon 1997a, 1997b, 2007, 2010).

In his narratological studies, Hamon's alertness to the genetic process is often visible. In his classic essay "What is a Description?" Zola's notes and drafts provide evidence through which some of the claims pertaining to the author's deployment of descriptions are verified. Hamon explains that Zola's descriptions have to be objective and impersonal in keeping with his ideas about literature, in particular his conviction that literature could and should apply experimental, scientific methods in the creation of storyworlds. "Objectivity" here implies that the narrator remains in the background instead of overtly commenting upon characters and events. Therefore, descriptions are embedded in the gaze, the words, or the actions of characters (Hamon 2004: 311-313). According to Hamon, Zola's notes corroborate these narratological implications of objectivity: "Zola says this quite straightforwardly in the notes and first drafts for his novels: certain characters serve only to 'give' the description of some object, landscape or setting" (333). In *Le Personnel du roman* (1983), a study on characters

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and characterization in Zola's *Rougon-Macquart*, the sketches, notes, and plans are likewise aids to the narrative analysis. The *avant-texte* provides Hamon with evidence for his own observations or guides him into a certain direction. For example, he points out that Zola inserts intertextual references (e.g., the remark "Le Lamartine (Georges Sand) playing a role"²⁸ inserted in the dossier of *Pot-Bouille*) to existing literary characters in his notes and drafts, which often remain implicit in the published version. In other words, the genetic dossier can reveal that Zola's characters are not just based on meticulous observations of the real world, but also on earlier fiction. According to Hamon, this is remarkable since the integration of allusions to fictional worlds seems incompatible with the author's strict adherence to his realist project (Hamon 1983: 39). Referring to Zola's preparatory notes, for example, Hamon argues that the character development of Angélique in *Le Rêve* is strongly influenced by *La Légende dorée* (42). What we notice in Hamon's work is that he offers his readers a glimpse of the way Zola's characters evolve across versions, and insights into the narrative and semiotic make-up of characters.

Hamon integrates narratology and genetic criticism in his approach: the analysis of *Les Rougon-Macquart* goes hand in hand with an analysis of Zola's "poetics," in the strict sense of "discipline of making." Or rather, Hamon's study of Zola's characters combines two different aspects of "poetics" in our view: the diachronic genetic process on the one hand and the text's synchronic narrative composition on the other. Since Hamon's general objective is to provide insight into all the constraints relevant to the construction of characters (Hamon 1983: 27), he examines the published work as well as the genetic dossiers of Zola's novels. Hamon operates "at the same time *beyond* the work (the more or less conscious constraints of presuppositions, of a broad project [...]) and *within* (the concrete and specific practice of a writer who is correcting, working on, crossing out his drafts and first sketches)"²⁹ (27).

Also, in the essays in which Hamon foregrounds research questions concerning the *avant-texte*, he sometimes documents and analyses the way narrative components develop across versions, and sometimes explicitly assumes a narratological perspective. In the latter case, the *avant-texte* is approached with questions directly concerning the composition of the narrative. For instance, in "Echoes and Reflections. The Draft of Zola's *La Bête humaine*" ("Échos et

²⁸ "Le Lamartine (George Sand) jouant un rôle" (qtd. in Hamon 1983: 39).

²⁹ "à la fois *au-delà* de l'oeuvre (les contraintes, plus ou moins conscientes, de présupposés, d'un projet global [...]) et *en deçà* (la pratique concrète et spécifique d'un écrivain corrigeant, travaillant, raturant ses brouillons et ébauches [...])."

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reflets. L'ébauche de *La Bête humaine* de Zola," 1997a), Hamon analyses the plans and sketches as (meta)narratives and as versions. Like James's notes, parts of Zola's preparatory file for *La Bête humaine* can be read as metanarratives in the sense of narratives about a narrative text that is not yet written. Planning *La Bête humaine*, Zola envisages "a very dramatic beginning and an ending that matches it, with a very logical development from one point to the other"³⁰ (qtd. in Hamon 1997a: 4). In Hamon's analysis, the discourse of the notes is a narrative discourse in itself, which is virtual and attuned to the realization of a program (5). It is also a metanarrative comment, as it conveys a distinct narrative progression. In this case, the narrative feature highlighted by Zola is that of plot. In his comments on the draft, Hamon examines the way plot and other narrative building blocks, for example the plot, characters and settings of *La Bête humaine*, are diachronically introduced and expanded in the writing process (Hamon 1997a: 10-11). In the preparatory files, Hamon can see the rough lines ("les grandes lignes" [3]) along which characters and plot can develop in Zola's view. This is not the only sense in which the *avant-texte* offers useful material for the narratologist, in Hamon's view. As he states elsewhere, Zola's files are an aid for the writer to remember "the distribution of the characters, [...] their potential movements, resulting in the construction of antagonisms or affinities of milieus"³¹ (Hamon 2007: 232). In other words, they help the author to maintain an overall view of the narrative options: at what point can characters be introduced, in which scenes should they turn up again, how do they move through physical and social space? Therefore, the files can be studied as mnemonic narratives, supporting the genesis of the text by stimulating the writer's memory. In fact, for a writer such as Zola who devises an elaborate and complex storyworld, the files are indispensable because of their mnemonic function.

In the previous paragraphs, we have seen examples of the development of "perspective" (Stanzel/James), "voice" (Cohn/Kafka, Genette/Proust), and "character" (Hamon/Zola) across versions. In "The Genetics of Novelistic Space" ("Génétique du lieu romanesque"), Hamon provides an analysis of narrative space, the spatial frames³² of Zola's fictional worlds, at different stages of the writing process. In particular, Zola's own sketches such as floor plans and rudimentary maps are scrutinized. Hamon thus focuses, as he says, on iconic elements,

³⁰ "un début très dramatique, et une fin qui fait pendant, avec une marche très logique d'un bout à l'autre."

³¹ "la distribution des personnages, [...] suggérant leurs déplacements possibles, construisant des antagonismes ou des affinités de milieux."

³² Ruth Ronen uses the term to designate a "fictional space, the actual or potential surrounding of fictional characters, objects and places" (Ronen 1986: 421).

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namely the drawings (Hamon 1997b: 28). In other words, he studies Zolaesque space across versions as well as media. For each of the novels of *Les Rougon-Macquart*, the preparatory file contains a series of sketches which allow the writer to prepare local descriptive passages in the published version as well as to keep track of the global narrative space (34). A lot of the spatial frames are redrawn several times. The general tendency Hamon observes across these versions is one of specification. The maps earliest drawn in the genesis are almost abstract, “a volume-less, two-dimensional world” (34),³³ and they consistently become more detailed (35). From the abstract as well as the more detailed sketches, Hamon can extract the prevalent basic “spatial figures” (42) in Zola's sketches for *Les Rougon-Macquart*, such as the circle, the square, and the crossroads. He also notices that Zola adjusts the scenario of his stories along the way: in the files of *Le Rêve*, for example, Zola first organizes the novel's topography around a castle, but in a following sketch he centers it around a church (35). In the process of specification and adjustment, narrative space becomes more entwined with its characterizing function: “Zola's characters are territorialized beings, confined to their space”³⁴ (36). The depiction of space then becomes subversive to the more general aim of naturalism to show how characters are shaped by their environments.

In Hamon's work, we can discern several paths for genetic narratology, which are compatible with the ones already discerned in the work of Cohn, Stanzel, and Genette. For Hamon, the genetic dossier can be used as a source for the narrative analysis of published versions, and as a research object in itself. Moreover, the dossier can allow the researcher to hypothesize about the development of certain narrative features, such as space and character, across versions. Even though these methodological assumptions are not made explicit, narratology and genetic criticism interrelate very well here. Hamon's work is strongly rooted in both disciplines and combines them when his research questions require the combination.

2.3. Chatman and Recent Narratologies

The recurring pattern in the previous discussion is notable: a number of leading narratologists have had recourse to the *avant-texte* of one particular (often a modernist) author to improve narratological analyses. According to these narratologists, the author's work including the *avant-texte* allows them to acquire a deeper insight into the form and functioning of

³³ “un monde sans volumétrie à deux dimensions.”

³⁴ “Le personnage zolien est un être territorialisé, confiné à son espace.”

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narratives. Cohn reflects upon the implications of “transvocalization” for our understanding of narrative situations. Hamon unravels the complex composition of Zola's characters. After Cohn and Kafka, Stanzel and James, Genette and Proust, Hamon and Zola, we can add one final pair to the list in yet another context: Seymour Chatman and Virginia Woolf. In the Anglo-American tradition of narrative theory, references to manuscripts are relatively rare; Chatman, however, does tap into the *avant-texte*, for example, in a comparative exploration of *Mrs. Dalloway* and Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, a novel that can be read as a reworking of Woolf's novel (Chatman 2005).

In his essay, Chatman briefly refers to the *avant-texte* of Woolf's novel to elucidate aspects of its narrative composition. He draws on Woolf's notebook, her diary, and her manuscript to describe the narrative device of limiting the narrator's external perspective. The narrator focuses on the inner thoughts of Clarissa instead of her position in the outer world. According to Chatman, the manuscripts show Woolf avoiding external perspectives: “We see Woolf erasing such expressions from her manuscript. [...] Assigning the narrator the task of tracking Clarissa's stroll (Woolf would say) interferes with our immersion in her mind” (Chatman 2005: 276). Interestingly, we can observe that this visit to the factory of the text is used by Chatman to corroborate his view of the “modernist rhythm” of *Mrs. Dalloway*, which he expounds in *Story and Discourse* (Chatman 1978: 78; 216-8). Chatman explains that the rhythm of Woolf's prose results from the way scenes are presented alternately through the perspective of different characters who may be related to each other but may as well be unrelated (78). Also, the *avant-texte* offers him a route into the comparison between *The Hours* and *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf's working title for the novel was “The Hours”). Studying narrative across versions becomes a springboard for the comparative analysis, in which a certain narrative component of a text and its adaptation are examined to learn more about the mechanisms of signification in different media.

In recent narratologies, the genetic process of narratives is definitely less visible than in the work of Genette or Hamon,³⁵ although there are some exceptions (e.g., Yacobi 2005). Inversely, genetic criticism has now developed into an independent field of study and its branches seldom cross those of narratology. Occasionally, though, the *avant-texte* is still incorporated in narrative analyses if it can corroborate a claim or illustrate an argument. Luc

³⁵ This trend confirms Sternberg's prediction that increasing specialization would tend to perpetuate the dichotomy between source-oriented and discourse-oriented research (see above; Sternberg 1985; 21).

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Herman and Bart Vervaeck exemplify their plea for a dynamic author image with an example from genetic criticism. After a thorough criticism of the implied author, they introduce a concept of the author as an image resulting from the negotiation “between reader, author, text, and context” (2011: 19). They illustrate their approach to the author by comparing the genetic author construct and the postmodern author construct of Thomas Pynchon, the former being the image of the author as it can be reconstructed from his manuscripts (2011: 22-23). Another example can be found in an essay on unnatural narratology by Alber et al., who contrast different versions of Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* to elucidate the unnatural evocation of a fictional mind (2010: 120-3). The authors argue that, contrary to the traditional view on the narration of *Hunger*, the distinction between an experiencing and a narrating self is problematic here. Whereas one of the earlier versions of the text still affords this distinction, the “final” version undermines it. Temporal shifts in the text “disrupt the reader's attempts to combine the two instances of the ‘I’ as parts of the same (continued) consciousness” (123). In order to make these shifts visible, Alber et al. began by comparing two versions of the text. Also, Jan Alber refers to the writing process of Beckett's “Lessness” in an essay on “natural” narratology (2002: 63), which we will discuss in more detail in our case study.

in the preceding survey we tried to show that, in the history of narratology, the genetic dimension is part of the research object and not so much of the method, but the possibility of such a method is definitely hinted at. Narratologists have shown that the integration of narratology and the study of versions can take many shapes. (i) It can comprise the diachronic analysis of a narrative component in an entire text across versions. As we have seen, narratologists have – often in the margins of their work – traced such shifts in several domains of the narrative composition: voice (Cohn, Genette), fictional minds (Chatman), character (Hamon, Stanzel), and space (Hamon). These diachronic studies of components offer new insights into narrative theory, and the understanding of a particular author's narrative technique can be furthered by them. (ii) The *avant-texte* itself can be the object of synchronic narrative analyses. The conceptual notes by Henry James or Émile Zola form (meta)narratives of a peculiar nature, as they prophesy about a narrative that does not (yet) exist. (iii) The writing process itself is often narrativized by authors and scholars, as we will see below. A narratological approach can also help to reveal the assumptions and parameters of this narrativization. In short, the study of narrative across versions is geared towards describing the diachronic composition of a narrative and it can provide clues to complement or question

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existing theories and interpretations. In our case study, we wish to combine insights from narrative theory with ideas from genetic criticism.

3. Case Study: Beckett across Versions

Our case study consists of two parts. The first part focuses on the level of “narrative” (“*récit*” in Genette’s division “*histoire*” – “*récit*” – “*narration*”), which is “concerned with the story as it plays out in the text” (Herman and Vervaeck 2001: 45); the second part is concerned with the level of “narration,” referring to “the concrete and directly visible way in which a story is told” (Herman and Vervaeck 2001: 45). For the first part of the case study, we will work with Beckett’s short piece of prose fiction, called “Lessness” (1969), making use of an analysis by a narratologist who refers to the genesis of this work. For the second part of the case study, we will discuss Beckett’s novel *L’Innommable* (1953, translated by Beckett himself as *The Unnamable*), this time starting from our own study of this work’s genesis to try and combine this genetic approach with narratology.

3.1. “Plot”³⁶: “Lessness”

In “The ‘Moreness’ or ‘Lessness’ of ‘Natural’ Narratology,” Jan Alber shows both the utility of Monika Fludernik’s paradigm of “natural” narratology, and also tries to show some of its shortcomings, by analyzing Samuel Beckett’s text “Lessness” (Beckett’s translation of his own work “Sans,” originally written in French). In this short work, published in 1969, Beckett created a “camera-eye” effect by means of a dispassionate depiction of a rudimentary world, four walls that have turned into “scattered ruins” (Beckett 1995: 197), with a “little body heart beating only upright” (197) among the ruins. The time is undefined. If any “action” can be said to be taking place, it seems to be set between night and day, or day and night. But that is possibly already too much of a naturalization. The “changelessness” characterizing the depicted storyworld indicates that it is “timeless” (199). “Lessness” is marked by a lack of closure, which Alber discusses in the section under the subheading “The ‘Plot’” (62-64). The section opens as follows: “The body in ‘Lessness’ is incapable of action, and the ‘setting’

³⁶ The inverted commas around the word “plot” as it is employed by Alber in the article discussed in the following paragraphs indicates Alber’s awareness of this term’s problematic nature, not just in the particular case of Beckett’s “Lessness,” but also in narratology in general. H. Porter Abbott concisely summarizes one of the problems: “Unfortunately, for English speakers ‘plot’ is pretty well disabled, since we so commonly use it not to refer to the order of events in the narrative but to its opposite, story” (Abbott 2002: 16). In the following paragraphs, the term is used to designate the narrative in the given order of events.

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undergoes no noticeable transformation. The narrative voice presents us with repeated descriptions of the rudimentary features of the strange world of this piece. Indeed, the voice postulates an imaginative realm of dreams and future possibilities. 'Lessness' consists of 120 sentences, and is divided into twenty-four paragraphs. Upon closer inspection, we realize that the text consists of sixty sentences, each of which occurs exactly twice" (62-63).

Alber's analysis is an example of how an ambiguous narrative situation can be dealt with from the perspective of a text's reception, notably by means of notions such as narrativization and natural narratology. For instance, in part 3 of his article (called "'Natural' Narratology and Beckett's 'Lessness'"), Alber refers to Philip H. Solomon, who suggested that the text's action takes place around 6 am or 6 pm – "the grey of dawn or the grey of dusk" (Solomon, qtd. in Alber 61), to show how readers tend to "naturalize" (see Culler 2002: 161, 186; Fludernik 1996: 31-35; Alber 2002: 55) the "timeless" setting. Alber also provides a naturalizing interpretation of the language of "Lessness" with its disrupted syntax, "reminiscent of a person in a state of shock, or a madman" (Alber 2002: 64). In the last part of his article, he tries to illustrate the shortcomings of such a "naturalizing" reading: "By narrativizing 'Lessness,' [...] we impose a normalizing strategy on the text rather than deal with its fundamental otherness" (69).

One of the features that mark this otherness according to Alber is the text's lack of closure, which is due to a deliberately randomized sentence order and which is also recognized by Beckett scholars (see for instance R. Cohn 2001: 306). This feature contributes to the "otherness" in this particular case according to Alber. He discusses this feature in the relevant subsection (3.3: 'The Plot'). The reason why we choose to focus on this subsection is that it contains references to Beckett scholars who have studied the writing process of "Lessness."

In the subsection on "The 'Plot'," Alber states that "'Lessness' lacks teleology and closure" (Alber 2002: 63). In the context of this statement, Alber discusses the text's genesis, which suggests that he considers the genesis relevant to an understanding of the text's lack of closure, although this relevance is not stated explicitly. The inclusion of this discussion of the genesis needs to be seen in the article's attempt to show the possibilities of natural narratology.

In order to discuss the "plot," Alber analyzes the structure of the published text, consisting of 120 sentences, or more precisely 60 sentences, each of which occurs twice in

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different locations and orders (see Alber's summary above). Alber refers to Ruby Cohn's thematical division of the sentences into "six groups or families": "(1) the ruins as 'true refuge'; (2) the endless grey of earth and sky; (3) the little body; (4) the space 'all gone from mind'; (5) past tenses combined with 'never'; (6) future tenses of active verbs and the 'figment' sentence 'Figment dawn dispeller of figments and the other called dusk'" (Cohn 1973, qtd. in Alber 2002: 63). This discussion of the six thematic groups is followed by a statement on the writing process, referring to Cohn:

Beckett's method of composition in *Sans* (1969), the original French version of "Lessness," is extremely creative. Cohn reports that "Beckett wrote each of the sixty sentences on a separate piece of paper, mixed them all in a container, and then drew them out in random order twice. This became the order of the hundred twenty sentences in *Sans*. Beckett then wrote the number 3 on four separate pieces of paper, the number 4 on six pieces of paper, the number 5 on four pieces, the number 6 on six pieces, and the number 7 on four pieces of paper.³⁷ Again drawing randomly, he ordered the sentences into paragraphs according to the number drawn, finally totalling one hundred twenty" (Alber 2002: 63).

Alber is quoting here from Cohn's 1973 book *Back to Beckett*, not from her more recent *A Beckett Canon* (2001), which had only very recently been published when Alber's article (2002) came out. Cohn's *A Beckett Canon* contains a footnote with information about the manuscripts and about what Beckett called a "Key" to "Lessness."³⁸ This "Key" shows that Cohn's division into six thematic groups (discussed above) was suggested to Cohn by Beckett himself. In his "Key" he writes that "Lessness" is "composed of 6 statement groups each containing 10 sentences [...] Each statement group is formally differentiated and the 10 sentences composing it 'signed' by certain elements common to them all.

³⁷ Beckett actually proceeded in a slightly different way. Instead of writing the numbers 3, 5 and 7 on *four* pieces of paper each and the numbers 4 and 6 on *six* pieces of paper each (24 pieces of paper in all), he wrote the numbers 3, 5 and 7 on *two* pieces of paper each and the numbers 4 and 6 on *three* pieces of paper each (12 pieces of paper in all). By drawing these 12 pieces of paper at random, he allowed chance to determine the length of the paragraphs of the text's first 60 sentences. He then repeated the process, drawing the 12 pieces of paper randomly to determine the length of the paragraphs of the last 60 sentence.

³⁸ Yale University's Beinecke Library holds this "Key," a document consisting of three parts: in the first part, Beckett writes out each sentence, labelling it with a letter and number, from A1 to F10; the second part is a separate sheet showing these sentences twice arranged in paragraph order; the third part is an explanation, headed "Key" (for a more detailed description and discussion of this document, see Pountney 1988: 15-26).

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Group A – Collapse of refuge – Sign: 'True refuge'.

Group B – Outer world – Sign: 'earth ... sky' juxtaposed or apart.

Group C – Body exposed – Sign: 'little body'.

Group D – Refuge forgotten – Sign: 'all gone from mind'.

Group E – Past and future denied – Sign: 'never' – except in the one sentence 'figment dawn ... etc.'.

Group F – Past and future affirmed – Sign: future tense." (Beckett, qtd. in Pountney 1988: 154-5)

The adoption of the "Key" offered by Beckett to critics such as Ruby Cohn, Martin Esslin and Rosemary Pountney indicates a willingness on the part of critical readers to employ both the composition method (as part of the work's genesis) and the author's account of the composing elements ("6 statement groups each containing 10 sentences" and "2 x 60 = 120 sentences arranged and rearranged in 2 x 12 = 24 paragraphs")³⁹ as a tool to analyze the "plot" – or rather the lack thereof, for Alber notes that "there is a complete absence of memorable events in 'Lessness'"; that "Nothing happens at all in it"; that "there is a complete elimination of 'plot'"; and that – as stated above – "'Lessness' lacks teleology and closure" (Alber 2002: 63). Nonetheless, Alber seems reluctant to just call the work "plotless" and concludes the section on "The 'Plot'" as follows: "Whereas Mood simply argues that 'Lessness' is 'plotless' (78),⁴⁰ 'natural' narratology concerns itself with whether there is not a different story buried under the (admittedly quite) uneventful cloak" (Alber 2002: 64). Although this is where the section stops, with only a hint rather than a demonstration that a genetic approach can contribute to this attempt to find "a different story," Alber does come back to Ruby Cohn's analysis. This analysis starts with a poetic, discourse-oriented examination of the published text, noting that it compels calculation. Cohn combines this examination with her knowledge of the genesis, noting that the numbers (12, 24, 60, ...) draw attention to the way human beings structure time: "The number of sentences per paragraph stops at seven, the number of days in a week. The number of paragraphs reaches twenty-four, the number of hours in a day. The number of different sentences is sixty, the number of seconds in a minute, of minutes in

³⁹ Beckett's "Key" as quoted in Pountney 1988: 154.

⁴⁰ The reference is to Mood 1973.

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an hour" (Cohn 1973: 263). Without her knowledge of the genesis it would have been hard to discern the patterns of numbers in the published text. Based on the patterns of numbers she has thus discerned, Cohn interprets the text, focusing especially on its second part: "the repetition of the sixty sentences in a different order suggests the capricious arrangement of passing time" (263). So even if the capricious arrangement seems chaotic, the text provides a shape to accommodate this chaos. This may not add up to a traditional "plot," but discerning the patterns and interpreting them in terms of the capricious arrangement of passing time can count as "a different story buried under" the "cloak."

Alber therefore refers to Cohn's interpretation (66) in his discussion of the utility of natural narratology. But the final section of his article aims to "discuss some of the shortcomings [...] of 'natural' narratology" (56). Alber's main worry is that "we impose a normalizing strategy on the text rather than deal with its fundamental otherness" (Alber 2002: 69). His criticism implicitly also concerns the genetic readings he included in his preceding discussion of "natural" narratology. Our aim is not to establish whether the most suitable narratological approach is "natural" or "unnatural." Instead, our suggestion, in reply to this implicit criticism, is that by including the genesis in their analysis of "Lessness," Cohn and Pountney may have "narrativized"⁴¹ or "naturalized" the text, but their integrative approach not only *applies* "narrativization," it simultaneously *exposes* it. On the one hand, they narrativize the text in that they show how the elements that make up the text suggest frames and formulaic numbers, which human beings have imposed upon time (60 minutes in an hour, 2 x 12 hours in a day; 7 days in a week). On the other hand, they expose the narrativization by interpreting the text as a thematization of the way human beings "narrativize" time every day in order to give meaning to the otherwise random occurrence of events.

We would therefore like to qualify Alber's criticism. We agree that "narrativizing" strategies on the part of the reader entail a danger of "explaining away" certain oddities in the text in order that they do not bother the reader anymore, which we presume is what Alber means by normalizing the "fundamental otherness," but we also recognize the possibility that

⁴¹ In Fludernik's view (1996: 31-35), narrativization amounts to the projection of human experientiality. Readers tend to naturalize a text by regarding it as the expression or reflection of familiar experiences. "Naturalizing" is making "the text intelligible by relating it to various models of coherence" (Culler 2002: 186) Drawing on Sternberg's essay "Ordering the Unordered: Time, Space, and Descriptive Coherence," in which he discusses what kinds of coherence are constructed and reconstructed in descriptive discourse, we can specify that Cohn and Pountney mainly impose a temporal order and only implicitly an actional structure (i.e., a causal chain of actions).

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these strategies can both “apply” and “expose” the act of narrativization at the same time, the way for instance parody generally works. In this way, the “normalizing strategy” (about which Alber expressed his worry) is counterbalanced by a self-conscious exposing strategy that respects the recalcitrant nature of this text.

To study this recalcitrance – a form of what Brian Richardson would call “extreme” or “unnatural narration” (Richardson 2006) – other strategies have been devised to integrate the oddities in this type of experimental fiction. One of these strategies is called the “genetic principle” by Yacobi (1981: 114; 2005: 111). This principle can be seen as a form of explaining certain difficulties by referring to the process or the context of writing. The reader can, for example, solve incongruities by postulating the writer must have made a mistake. With reference to “Lessness,” Beckett critics such as Ruby Cohn and Rosemary Pountney have referred to the process or the context of writing in their interpretations, but Cohn did not call her approach “genetic.” Pountney *did* call her approach “genetic,”⁴² but she did not apply the genetic principle to solve incongruities by assuming the writer must have made a mistake. In the following paragraphs we would like to show how she applies the genetic approach (in her book *Theatre of Shadows*) and for what purpose.

To this end, we see the genetic aspect of her approach as a way of responding to a temporal dimension of the work, that is, to the fact that, apart from having an internal structure at the level of the published text, the work is also what de Biasi calls an “object structured by time” (see above “Working Definitions”; de Biasi 2004: 42). This temporal structure is especially relevant to a work like “Lessness,” which is an example of a more general tendency in Beckett’s (and other twentieth-century authors’) work to regard their writings in terms of processes rather than products. In this respect, his literary project resembles Picasso’s project, discussed in the opening paragraphs of our essay, to such an extent that Gardner’s analysis of Picasso’s aesthetic project as more of a dynamic “work in progress” than of a static oeuvre largely applies to Beckett’s writings as well, notably to “Lessness”: “Few of Picasso’s paintings [and similarly few of Beckett’s writings] give the feeling of having been completely finished” (Gardner 1993: 146). In the case of “Lessness,” the feeling of incompleteness has prompted Rosemary Pountney (1988) to try and repeat the

⁴² In a recent interview with Matthew Feldman about her research in the 1980s (and her book *Theatre of Shadows*), Rosemary Pountney stated: “The term ‘genetic’ seemed to me to best describe my investigation of the drafts from their earliest beginnings to the published texts – and of course the most exciting part of the research for me was the insight it gave me into Beckett’s creative process” (Pountney and Feldman 2010: 404).

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composition process, and thus create another text of "Lessness": the same sentences are arranged differently, according to the same principle of controlled randomness. Pountney's exercise draws attention to this notion of process characterizing Beckett's project. Rather than settling anomalies, this reading accepts the incongruous random-looking order and explores a temporal dimension of the text by repeating or carrying on the process of composition.

Pountney's "heterogenesis" (a term coined by Sternberg) is a reading born of another genesis, not a genetic reading in and of itself, but it is part of her genetic reading, in which her knowledge of the genesis plays a role as an aid to the analysis of the published text, notably of the "structure" of this text.⁴³ At first sight it might seem counterproductive to use "heterogenesis" as part of a genetic reading because it could suggest that different genetic variables (in this case another process of mixing the sentences in a container and drawing randomly) amount to the "same" result (a text with the same sentences), but Pountney shows that the reordered text does not produce the same result as Beckett's original: "Each reordered text develops its own strength from a new juxtaposition of sentences" (Pountney 1988: 155). What Pountney crystallizes by means of combining the genesis with the heterogenesis is an insight in a structural characteristic of the text at the level of the sentences. Whereas Beckett's "Key" has helped Beckett scholars to analyze the structure at the macrolevel of the text's two parts (2 x 60 sentences) and at the level of the paragraphs, Pountney's analysis combines source-oriented and discourse-oriented research to draw attention to a peculiarity of the smaller unit of the sentence, "each sentence giving just enough information to add its particular colour to the pattern, but never enough to throw the work out of balance when shuffled" (155). As a result, Pountney argues, "the final text has become a balancing of possibilities in the scales of ambiguity" (155). This attention to the smaller unit of the sentence leads us to the level of "narration," which is the focus of the next section.

3.2. Person: *L'Innommable/The Unnamable*

The opening paragraph of *L'Innommable* draws attention to the question of person and to the relationship between narrator and narrated by asking the question how it is possible for a first-person narrator to say "I": "Où maintenant ? Quand maintenant ? Qui maintenant ? Sans me le demander. Dire je. Sans le penser. Appeler ça des questions, des hypothèses. Aller de l'avant,

⁴³ Alber's article refers to Pountney's essay "The Structuring of Lessness" (1987). In her book-length study *Theatre of Shadows* (1988), she also employs the genesis of "Lessness" to analyze the published text's discourse.

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appeler ça aller, appeler ça de l'avant. Se peut-il qu'un jour, premier pas va, j'y sois simplement resté, où, au lieu de sortir" (Beckett 1953: 7) – in Beckett's own English translation: "Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving. Questions, hypotheses, call them that. Keep going, going on, call that going, call that on. Can it be that one day, off it goes on, that one day I simply stayed in, in where, instead of going out" (Beckett 2010b: 1). The nameless narrator already indicates on the opening page that the use of the first person will be problematic in this narrative: "I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me" (Beckett 2010b: 1). Before embarking on a "source-oriented" study of this first person in *L'Innommable*, we start from an interpretive hypothesis suggested by Eric P. Levy in order to show how source-oriented research may be of help in corroborating this hypothesis.

In 1973, Ruby Cohn wrote: "The Unnamable seeks himself, and by extension the essence of all selfhood" (1973: 108). In the meantime, Cohn has nuanced this interpretation in her 2001 book *A Beckett Canon* (184-94). By contrast, Eric P. Levy suggests that "the Unnamable's project is not to achieve or express selfhood, but to repudiate it" (2007: 101). This problem of "selfhood" is first introduced by means of the "Who" in the three opening questions of the novel ("Where now? Who now? When now?"). These three questions indicate what Rónán McDonald refers to as the narrator's "predicament" and "condition":

The speaker talks incessantly about his predicament, but is always thwarted in his attempts to articulate it. Or, no sooner has he made an assertion about where he is or what surrounds him than he pulls it down and dismisses it as 'lies'. Moreover, each time he summons a character or a story, his own identity quickly blurs into that of his creation, so that [the character] Mahood is at first a 'delegate' but then a part of himself. When he tells a story of Mahood's successor, stuck in a jar below a restaurant menu, he is both a character in a story and another description of the narrator's condition, told in the present-tense first person. (McDonald 2006: 103)

The "first person," mentioned by McDonald, is also central in Ruby Cohn's succinct summary of the novel's main theme: "The fifth sentence, 'Dire je,' states the book's main theme: how is it possible to say 'I?' What can be understood by that pronoun?" (Cohn 2001: 185). Let's

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imagine that the questions posed above by the Beckett scholar Ruby Cohn are put to the narratologist Dorrit Cohn.

In her article on Kafka's *The Castle*, discussed above (section 1.1), Dorrit Cohn explains that "The logic of a first-person narrative determines [...] that the period of time lying between experience and recounting be known to the narrator" (Cohn 1968a: 32). But this logic is less self-evident if the narrating self is effaced. In the manuscript version of Kafka's *The Castle*, with its first-person narrator, "the narrating self remains effaced," since "by shifting the focus entirely onto the experiencing self, the past situation loses its pastness and becomes a virtual present within the text" (Cohn 1968a: 31). According to Cohn, "all" the marks of the past-present polarity implied in a first-person narrative have been effaced⁴⁴ by employing *erlebte Rede* [free indirect discourse, narrated monologue]⁴⁵ (33). Cohn illustrates this situation by drawing attention to Kafka's frequent use of temporal adverbs such as "heute" ["today"] or "jetzt" ["now"] in conjunction with the past tense. These temporal adverbs within the *erlebte Rede* are, according to Cohn, signals of what she calls "the complete surrender of the narrator to his own earlier self" (33): "The result is an *Icherzählung* without an *Icherzähler*, a first-person narrative in grammatical form only, not in structure" (33), which for Cohn "explains why there was no obstacle whatever to the substitution of *K.* for *ich* in the manuscript" (33). After all, the effacement of the narrator is "far from uncommon" (33). It is "the structural hallmark of a standard narrative situation" (33) in third-person narration. In other words, by changing the first-person narrator into a third-person narrator, Kafka made his narrative more conventional, or at least less uncommon than it originally was in the manuscript of *The Castle*. This change from "I" to "K." serves as a contrastive background to discuss the opposite development (from third-person to first-person narration) in Beckett's novels from *Murphy* to *L'Innommable*.

Beckett's early novels, such as *Murphy* (1938) and *Watt* (1953; written during the Second World War), are characterized by third-person narration. After the Second World

⁴⁴ In his criticism of Cohn in his contribution to *A Companion to Narrative Theory* (edited by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz), Meir Sternberg qualifies this effacement: "Thus, the monologist vs. first-person narrator divide is reworked with variables beyond communicativeness, especially present vs. past tense and anachrony vs. chronology. On the monologic flank, in turn, such overlinkage apparently rationalizes Cohn's (likewise standard, here titular) bias for unvoiced self-discourse, as against written journal and spoken thought. Besides their alleged past-reference, these inferiors willy-nilly gather further narration-like markers, or forfeit their 'properly' monologic opposites: randomness, emotivity, ellipsis, pronominal opacity" (Sternberg 2008: 249).

⁴⁵ Cohn defines *erlebte Rede* as "the rendering of a character's thought in his own idiom, while maintaining the past tense and the third-person form" (Cohn 1968a: 32, note12).

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War, Beckett started using a first-person narrator, in novels such as *Molloy* (opening with the line "I am in my mother's room"; Beckett 2009: 3) and *Malone meurt* (opening with "I shall soon be quite dead"; Beckett 2010a: 3). This opposite development from the one observed in Kafka's manuscript of *The Castle* also contrasts with the Kafkaesque self-effacing effect described by Cohn. As discussed above, Cohn illustrates Kafka's use of *erlebte Rede* in the first person by means of the passage from the manuscript of *The Castle*, in which the narrator intends to enter the castle with the messenger Barnabas, who suddenly halts: "There, Barnabas halted. Where were we? Didn't it [the walk] go any further? Would Barnabas take leave of me?"⁴⁶ (Kafka qtd. in Cohn 1968a: 32). All these questions sound a bit strange in a first-person narrative, because according to the logic of a first-person narrative, the span of time between experience and recounting is known to the narrator, which implies that he already knows the answers to his questions. As Cohn notes, the first-person narrator may of course be hiding his knowledge to tell his story in a suspenseful way, but the manuscript of *The Castle* "carries this possibility to unprecedented extremes" (32).

A likewise extreme situation can be found in the published text of *L'Innommable*. Each of the three opening questions ("Where now? Who now? When now?") contains the temporal adverb "now," suggesting a moment in the narrator's present. But in the third question, this "now" is presented in conjunction with the interrogative "when." While the temporal adverbs in Kafka's manuscript of *The Castle* were signals of "the complete surrender of the narrator to his own earlier self," resulting in "an *Icherzählung* without an *Icherzähler*," Beckett uses the temporal adverbs to draw attention to the first-person narrator, who talks about an "I," but in an "Unbelieving" way: "Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving." (Beckett 2010b, 1). While Kafka made the situation less "extreme" by changing the person from "I" to "K.," thus making the effacement of the narrating self less unusual, the development of Beckett's novels (from *Murphy* to *The Unnamable*, from third-person narrator to first-person narrator) seems to be a development towards a *more* extreme narrative situation. Instead of "effacing" of the narrator, the change from third-person to first-person narrator draws more attention to the narrating self. And instead of a "complete surrender" to the narrated I, the narrated status of this narrated I is constantly being questioned. No sooner has the narrator made an assertion about his past self than he denies it. No sooner is the narrated I narrated than he is "denarrated," in Brian

⁴⁶ "Da blieb Barnabas stehen. Wo waren wir? Ging es nicht mehr weiter? Würde Barnabas mich verabschieden?"

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Richardson's term (2001: 168).⁴⁷ If any "effacement" takes place in Beckett's text, it is not the effacement of the narrator, but the attempt to efface the narrated I. The attempt is ineffective, to be sure. If anything, the denarration draws more attention to the narrated I. Nonetheless, denarrating his narrated self (or selves) seems to be the narrator's objective, which Eric P. Levy called "the Unnamable's project" (Levy 2007: 101).

To test Levy's hypothesis that the Unnamable's project is not to achieve, but to repudiate selfhood (Levy 2007: 101), we would like to combine his discourse-oriented approach with source-oriented research, studying the narrative across versions. Levy argues that especially in Beckett studies of the 1970s and 1980s, in several analyses of *The Unnamable*, critics often felt the need to pinpoint what the novel is about, which eventually came down to an attempt to name (i.e., to specify) the unnamable and thereby belie or deny Beckett's title. For instance, Livio Dobrez saw the Unnamable as "the eternal fretting of consciousness" (1973: 221). David Hesla attributed the problem of selfhood to the nominative and objective cases, "I" and "me." According to Hesla, "It is impossible [...] that I should speak of 'I', for I can speak only of 'me'" (Hesla 1971: 118), suggesting that the problem is limited to the nominative case. But if the narrative is considered across versions, the speaking Unnamable seems to have just as much trouble with "I" as with "me," both of which are being denarrated, as the genesis of the line "enough of this cursed first person" (Beckett 2010b: 56) shows.

The changes from the first, French written version to the English translation may look small, but they do indicate that "this cursed first person" applies to both "I" and "me," and that the trouble the nameless narrator has with both "I" and "me" carries over to the published texts:

(a)

*French manuscript, first version (1949; HRC-MS-SB-3-10, f. 61v)*⁴⁸:

Puis assez de ~~je et de me~~ [But enough of I and of me]

French manuscript, second version (1949; HRC-MS-SB-3-10, f. 61v):

Puis assez de cette putain de 1^{ère} personne [But enough of this cursed 1st person]

⁴⁷ Brian Richardson defines "denarration" as "a kind of narrative negation in which a narrator denies significant aspects of her narrative that had earlier been presented as given" (Richardson 2001: 168)

⁴⁸ Manuscript kept at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Austin, Texas, Collection Samuel Beckett, Box 3, Folder 10.

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First French edition (Beckett 1998 [1953]: 93-4):

Puis assez de cette putain de première personne

Beckett's own English translation (Beckett 2010b: 56):

But enough of this cursed first person

In the first version of the manuscript the passage read “assez de je et de me.” Both “je” and “me” were then crossed out and replaced by “cette putain de première personne” (61v). In the French versions, the subsequent passage (the second part of the sentence) explicitly denies that the narrator's narrative is about this cursed first person (“~~comme s'il s'agissait de moi,~~ [...] il ne s'agit pas de moi”). The entire sentence reads:

(a1)

French manuscript (HRC-MS-SB-3-10, f. 61v):

Puis assez de ~~je et de me,~~ ^{cette putain de lère personne,} ~~comme s'il s'agissait de moi,~~
~~ça n'a que trop duré~~ ^{e'est c'en est trop à la fin,} il ne s'agit pas de moi, je vais m'attirer des
ennuis.⁴⁹

English manuscript (HRC-MS-SB-5-9-2, f. 14r):

But enough of this cursed first person, it ~~has~~ ^{is} really ~~too been going on too~~ too much
of a good thing, ~~and such a red herring~~ so red a herring. I'll get ~~into trouble~~ if I'm not
~~careful~~ out of my depth if I'm not careful.

Whereas the French versions state more directly that the narrative is not about this first person (“il ne s'agit pas de moi” [“it's not about me”]), the English version presents the first person as “too much of a good thing” and – using the idiomatic expression “so red a herring” – as what the Oxford English Dictionary defines as “a clue or piece of information which is or is intended to be misleading, or is a distraction from the real question.”⁵⁰ The red herring is more ambivalent than the French versions. On the one hand, one could argue that the clue may be misleading, but it is still a clue, implying that it may play a role in a quest for something (however vague that “something” is), and that if there are misleading clues, there

⁴⁹ Transcription convention: deletions are crossed out; additions are rendered in superscript.

⁵⁰ “Red herring” according to Oxford English Dictionary 2013, <http://www.oed.com/>.

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may be helpful clues as well. From this perspective, it is understandable that for instance Ruby Cohn interpreted *The Unnamable* as a quest for “the essence of all selfhood” (1973: 108). On the other hand, one could argue that a misleading clue does not necessarily imply the possibility of helpful clues. The latter interpretation of the red herring, in combination with the French versions (especially the phrases “assez de ~~je et de me~~, ^{cette putain de 1ère personne,} ~~comme~~ ^{s’il s’agissait de moi,} [...] il ne s’agit pas de moi”), comes closer to Levy’s hypothesis that the Unnamable’s project is not to achieve or express selfhood, but to repudiate it (2007: 101). This repudiation does have the effect that the problem of “selfhood” is simultaneously highlighted. In this sense, the repudiation of selfhood resembles what Molloy, in the first novel of Beckett’s trilogy, describes as the repudiation of motherhood by means of abolishing the syllable “Ma”: “And I called her Mag because for me, without my knowing why, the letter g abolished the syllable Ma, and as it were spat on it, better than any other letter would have done. And at the same time I satisfied a deep and doubtless unacknowledged need, the need to have a Ma, that is a mother, and to proclaim it, audibly. For before you say mag you say ma, inevitably” (Beckett 2009: 14). In *The Unnamable*, the first-person narrator’s repudiation of selfhood may at the same time express a need to have a self. But a “repudiation of” seems more accurate than a “quest for” selfhood to describe the narrator’s project and his method *per negativum*.

Before writing and revising passage (a1), which is written in a notebook preserved at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, TX, Beckett wrote a note at the back of the notebook, on the inside of the cover:

(b)

Et puis assez de moi aussi, assez de moi, de je, de me. [...] Un jour, ah oui, un jour, un jour etc. (très long sur jour, puis à la troisième personne pendant longtemps)

[“But enough of me also, enough of me, of I, of me. [...] One day, ah yes, one day, one day etc. (very long on day, then in third person for a long period of time)”]

(HRC-MS-SB-3-10, inside back cover).

Beckett’s parenthesis is a note to himself. The words “very long on day” (“très long sur jour”) intimate that he planned to devote a long passage to the insistent use of the word “day.” The second part of the parenthesis (“[...], puis à la troisième personne pendant longtemps”)

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suggests that Beckett originally planned a change from first person to third person within the text. This narrative decision would have had a similar effect as the change from "I" to "K." in the manuscript of Kafka's *The Castle*. The change of the first-person narrator into a third-person narrator could have had an "effacing" effect on the narrator and the narrative situation would have become less uncommon.

But eventually Beckett did not execute his plan, as is evident from the passage immediately following after (a1):

(c)

French manuscript (HRC-MS-SB-3-10, f. 61v; cf. Beckett 1998 [1953]: 94):

Mais il ne s'agit pas de Mahood non plus, pas encore. Encore moins de Worm. ~~Bah,~~
Bah, peu importe ~~la~~ le pronom, ~~du~~ qu'on emploie, du moment qu'on n'en est pas
dupe. Puis le pris est pli. Plus tard nous verrons. Où en suis-je?

[But it is not about Mahood either, not yet. About Worm even less. ~~Bah,~~ Bah, the
pronoun one employs does not matter much, provided one is not the dupe of it. Then it
is becomes matter of habit. We'll see later on. Where am I?]

English manuscript (HRC-MS-SB-5-9-2, f. 14r; cf. Beckett 2010b: 56-7):

But what then is the subject? Mahood? No, not yet. Worm? Even less. Bah, any old
pronoun will do, provided one sees through it. Matter of habit. To be adjusted later.
Where was I?

After having said in the English version that the cursed first person is a red herring, the narrator adds that the work is not about his characters (Mahood, Worm) either. This relates to the question of person because the stories about Mahood and Worm can be regarded as the nameless narrator's attempt to talk about himself in the third person. Mahood and Worm, however, can be and have been interpreted as "a part of himself," as McDonald argued (see above). They are comparable in this respect to all the protagonists of Beckett's previous novels, to whom the nameless narrator refers explicitly in the seventeenth paragraph of *L'Innommable*:

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Ces Murphy, Molloy et autres Malone, je n'en suis pas dupe. Ils m'ont fait perdre mon temps, rater ma peine, en me permettant de parler d'eux, quand il fallait parler seulement de moi, afin de pouvoir me taire. (Beckett 1953: 32-33)

All these Murphys, Molloy's and Malones do not fool me. They have made me waste my time, suffer for nothing, speak of them when, in order to stop speaking, I should have spoken of me and of me alone. (Beckett 2010b: 14)

Whenever the nameless narrator tries to talk about himself, he is driven to create a new character. He thus creates Mahood and Worm. Whenever the nameless narrator tells a story about Mahood or Worm, "he is both a character in a story and another description of the narrator's condition, told in the present-tense first person" (McDonald 2006: 103). In other words, the nameless narrator is both narrator and narrated, and yet in neither of these capacities can he be regarded as "the subject" in answer to the question "But what then is the subject" (Beckett 2010b: 56-57), because he merely substitutes for the narrator's self-reference: "il ne s'agit pas de moi [...] il ne s'agit pas de Mahood [...] Encore moins de Worm" ["it's not about me [...] it's not about Mahood [...] Even less about Worm."] In other words, a third-person narrative would have made little difference in terms of the subject, so Beckett apparently decided against a transvocalization, even though he had originally planned it in the parenthesis "([...] then in third person for a long period of time)" of note (b) at the back of his notebook. The execution of the plan could have resulted in "the effacement of the narrator in a third-person novel," as Cohn describes it with regard to Kafka's *The Castle* (33). In the case of *L'Innommable*, this kind of effacement by means of a transvocalization would have been a way of evading the main theme as summarized by Ruby Cohn ("how is it possible to say 'I'"), for it would have resulted in another story about Mahood or Worm, or yet another transvocalization from first to third person. Instead, the narrator returns to this main theme, drawing attention to (rather than effacing) himself in his capacity as narrator, by asking himself: "Where was I?" (Beckett 2010b: 57) – echoing the novel's opening question "Where now?"

As it happens, this question ("Where was I?") corresponds closely to the question "Wo waren wir?" ("Where were we?") in the passage Dorrit Cohn excerpted from the manuscript of Kafka's *The Castle* to illustrate her point about *erlebte Rede* being habitual in third-person

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narratives, but slightly unusual in the first person (see above): “There, Barnabas halted. Where were we? Didn't it [the walk] go any further? Would Barnabas take leave of me?”⁵¹ (Kafka, qtd. in Cohn 1968a: 32). As Cohn points out, these questions are not questions “in the narrator's mind as he recounts his story,” they are “questions only in a moment of his past” (33). To show what this text would look like if the *Icherzähler* was not effaced, Cohn tries to renarrate these silent questions by reporting them as direct quotations – “When he halted, I wondered: ‘Where are we? Doesn't it go any further?’”⁵² (Cohn 1968a: 33) –, which would “mark the text with the past-present polarity implied in a first-person narrative” (33) because the first-person narrator is not effaced.

The fact that the French version of Beckett's “Where was I?” is in the present tense (“Où en suis-je?” [literally translated: “Where am I?”]) suggests a correspondence with Kafka's line (“Wo waren wir?” [“Where were we?”]) and its present-tense form in Cohn's renarrated version (“Where are we?”). The seeming correspondence may create the impression that the “je” [“I”] in Beckett's text is a narrated I, comparable to the “wir” in Kafka's and Cohn's passages.

But there is an important difference between the question “Wo waren wir?” (“Where were we?”) in the manuscript of *The Castle* and the question “Where was I?” in *The Unnamable*: “Bah, any old pronoun will do, provided one sees through it. Matter of habit. To be adjusted later. Where was I? Ah yes, the bliss of what is clear and simple” (Beckett 2010b: 57). In Kafka's manuscript, “Wo waren wir?” is part of the free indirect discourse (*erlebte Rede*, narrated monologue), whereas in Beckett's *The Unnamable*, “Where was I?” is part of the narrator's own discourse. Moreover, Kafka eventually changed the first-person into third-person narration and the question became “Wo waren sie?”: “Da blieb Barnabas stehn. Wo waren sie? Ging es nicht mehr weiter? Würde Barnabas K. verabschieden?” (“There, Barnabas halted. Where were we? Didn't it [the walk] go any further? Would Barnabas take leave of me?”) (Kafka 1982: 50). If Beckett would have executed his plan according to the parenthesis in note (b), that is, if he had changed the first person into a third-person narrative (“à la troisième personne”), this would have had a similar “effacing” effect as in Kafka's *The Castle* and the narrator would have become what he calls the “dupe,” not only of the

⁵¹ “Da blieb Barnabas stehen. Wo waren wir? Ging es nicht mehr weiter? Würde Barnabas mich verabschieden?”

⁵² Cohn rephrases the sentences in German: “Als er stehen blieb, fragte ich mich: ‘Wo sind wir? Geht es nicht weiter?’”

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Murphys, Molloyes and Malones,⁵³ but also of Mahood and Worm. Whereas Dorrit Cohn interpreted “the complete surrender of the narrator to his own earlier self” (33) in Kafka’s manuscript of *The Castle* in terms of a “surrender” (Cohn 1968a: 33), Beckett’s execution of his plan would have implied the umpteenth surrender of the nameless narrator to yet another delegate or character – for that seems to be the way the narrator sees his switches to a third-person narrative: a surrender in the sense that time and again he has to cede his place at the centre of attention to Mahood or Worm, in spite of his attempts to avoid becoming the dupe of his creations. Apart from Murphy, Molloy, Malone, Mahood and Worm, the narrator mentions several others in a list that is much longer in the manuscript than in the published text: “Je ne suis ni Belacqua, ni Murphy, ni Watt, ni Mercier, ni Camier, ni Victor, ni Lucky, ni Vladimir, ni Estragon, ni Molloy, ni ~~Malone~~ ni Moran, ni Malone, ni Mahood, ni aucun des autres dont j’oublie les noms, qui m’ont dit que j’étais eux, qui j’ai essayé d’être” (manuscript of *L’Innommable*, MS HRC SB 3-10, 40v). In the published text, the list is interrupted: “I am neither, I needn’t say, Murphy, nor Watt, nor Mercier, nor — no, I can’t even bring myself to name them, nor any of the others whose very names I forget, who told me I was they, who I must have tried to be” (Beckett 2010b: 38) After so many stories about delegates, the nameless narrator now tries to avoid narrating yet another “self.” Instead of narrating a self, he resolves to denarrate the selves he has narrated in the past (Murphy, Mercier, Malone, etc.). Since the attempts to achieve selfhood have been attempts to narrate selves (Murphy, Mercier, Malone, Mahood, Worm), the narrator prefers to denarrate these selves, rather than create new ones. In that sense, an analysis of the genesis (focused in this case on the person switching and the decision against it), or in Sternberg’s terms a source-oriented inquiry (Sternberg 1985: 14), provides us with data that corroborate Levy’s discourse-oriented suggestion that the nameless narrator’s project is not to achieve, but rather to call into question, or even repudiate, selfhood. And at the same time, narratological insights (such as Dorrit Cohn’s views on the effects of *erlebte Rede* in first-person and third-person narratives) serve as an aid to the genetic inquiry into the narrative’s development across versions.

Conclusion

⁵³ “Ces Murphy, Molloy, et autres Malone, je n’en suis pas dupe” / “All these Murphys, Molloyes and Malones do not fool me” (Beckett 1953: 32; 2010: 14).

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In recent surveys of various forms of narratology, such as Ansgar and Vera Nunning's (2002), interaction between narratology and genetic inquiry is not mentioned. Nor is it mentioned in the survey by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, who have recently mapped the methodological and thematic expansion of narrative theory as well as its general development in the last decades. They distinguish two phases of postclassical narratology, the first one characterized by ramification, the second one by "consolidation and continued diversification" (Alber and Fludernik 2010: 5). This diversification includes interaction with other disciplines. Even though the study of narrative across versions is not mentioned in the list of partners of narratology from other disciplines, the survey leaves room for this combination of approaches. Not unlike other currents in narratology, such as transmedial narratology, it has been present right from the start of the discipline, as we have shown.

With such an interdisciplinary combination of narratology and genetic criticism we do not imply that genetic criticism would be a part of narratology. Instead of a hierarchical or part/whole relationship, we advocate an intensive interaction between the two disciplines, which promises to be mutually beneficial.

From the perspective of *genetic criticism*, Pierre-Marc de Biasi (as a representative of the French institute for genetic criticism, ITEM) suggested – among other possibilities – a narratological vantage point to study manuscripts: "the theoretical presuppositions of genetic study are the same as those that govern analyses of texts. Depending on the case, a genetic study of a work's dossier will therefore be either exclusively or jointly constructed on the criteria of narratological, sociocritical, semiotic, psychoanalytic, linguistic, or other kinds of observation" (de Biasi 2004: 42). Our suggestion is that, instead of treating narratology merely as a form of observation, the interaction between narratology and genetic criticism can be more integrative.

From the perspective of *narratology*, a genetic approach may complement one of the developments in the first phase of postclassical narratology that is consolidated in the second phase, namely the "discovery of narrative's evolution over time" (Alber and Fludernik 2010: 13). Alber and Fludernik point out that this interest in the diachronic "comes in two forms, as a study of how narrative changes through the centuries and, in conjunction with this descriptive focus, a revision of narratological categories as a response to the different aspects and textual features that one finds in earlier texts" (13). Genetic narratology can be considered as a third kind of diachronic approach. It broadens the discipline's research object by

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including the *avant-texte* and it leads to an operational as well as methodological extension because of the input of genetic criticism.⁵⁴

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