

JONAS GRETHLEIN and ANTONIOS RENGAKOS (eds.), *Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*. 2009. Pp. vii, 630. Walter De Gruyter. € 99.95 (Hardcover)
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The pioneering work done in the 1980s and 1990s by scholars such as Irene de Jong and Massimo Fusillo established the models of structuralist narratology as an important tool for the interpretation of ancient texts. However, the last twenty years or so have seen approaches such as feminism and cultural history contributing to a critique of the premises and practices of structuralist narratology, and the development of a variety of separate narratologies with their own subject-specific aims. This volume situates itself as a response to these developments, aiming, according to the back cover blurb, to draw out “the subtler possibilities of narratological analysis for the interpretation of ancient texts”. The results are mixed; while some of the articles combine narratological concepts with other frames of interpretative reference to powerful effect, or subject narratological practice to critical examination through its application to texts, others recycle traditional lines of approach with little regard for recent theoretical developments in narratology and elsewhere, resulting in pieces which are neither interpretatively incisive nor narratologically illuminating. Nevertheless, the complexity and interest of the questions the volume tackles make engagement with it a rewarding process.

The introduction gives a brief account of recent narratological developments (pp. 1-3) and a synopsis of the book’s contents (pp. 4-11). The former is only very sparingly sketched and will not be of much use to the uninitiated.¹ More importantly, by spending only three and a half pages introducing the topic, the editors miss the opportunity for a more thoroughgoing conceptual engagement with the premises of narratological method. Seeking a mid-

¹ The volume is generally well presented and user-friendly; the index is useful, although it might have been improved by a greater specificity in general entries such as ‘focalization’. Unfortunately, however, the book contains an unacceptably large number of errors (well over a hundred at a rough count), ranging from simple misspellings (p. 83 ‘flashes’, p. 104 ‘alligning’, p. 454 ‘catter’), to incorrect use of idioms (p. 315 ‘as if of nowhere’, p. 368 ‘accusations on Xerxes’, p. 415 ‘insisting less or at all’, p. 469 ‘has also been clear by the fact that’). The latter are so frequent in several of the pieces as to form a serious impediment to the reader.

dle ground between the structural clarity of classical narratology and the interpretative breadth of newer models, the editors recommend “adhering to narratology in the singular” so as to preserve its conceptual independence, while also “using it as a heuristic tool for interpretation” (p. 3). Thus they articulate a version of narratology which ‘will not deliver fully developed interpretations’, but which “present[s] observations which ... are sufficiently formal to enrich various readings” (p. 3). Frustratingly, they do not articulate in enough detail their reasons for taking this position, and do not engage to any extent with the narratological developments they have flagged up. Not only do they not deal with the numerous challenges mounted from various angles to the objectivity of narratological models,² their conception of narratology as a basically neutral formalist base for other modes of interpretation is problematized by some of the essays in the volume, which show precisely how difficult it is to free one’s taxonomizing from interpretative considerations, and how certain interpretative situations require a more or less radical reconsideration of narrative theory’s foundational motifs.³ We might wonder whether the “clear profile” (p. 3) of the narratological project is not always an illusion, and whether narratology as a set of concepts and methodologies might rather be seen to emerge from, and bear the traces of, implications in other conceptual and heuristic networks. It is worth considering the forces that regulate this emergence, and what is at stake in the violent rupture necessary to create for narratology a ‘pure’ formalized space.

Genette’s move of treating narratives as “the development given to a *verbal* form ... the expansion of a verb” is a useful pointer in this respect.⁴ For Genette, ‘I walk’ is a “minimal form of narrative”. This linking of narrativity to a basic linguistic gesture masks how such an account constructs narrativity, rather than simply finding it inherent in things; conceptualizing the essence of narrativity as the recounting of action requires an erasure of the complexities of the category ‘action’ in order to construct an objectivity

² A classic example is S. Lanser, (1986), ‘Towards a Feminist Narratology’, *Style* 20, 341-63. For an overview see D. Herman ed. (1999), *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus), 1-13.

³ These have been central features of the postclassical narratological critique; see particularly J. Derrida, (1967) [1978], ‘Force and Signification’, in *Writing and Difference* (London), 20-5; S. Lanser, (1986), ‘Towards a Feminist Narratology’, *Style* 20, 341-63. For overviews see D. Herman ed. (1999), *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus), 1-13 and A. Gibson, (1996), *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh).

⁴ G. Genette, (1972) [1980], *Narrative Discourse* (Cornell), 30.

for the datum 'I walk'.⁵ This figure seems radically undetermined in its apparent simplicity, but in fact implicates a series of assumptions about concepts such as, for instance, space, time, and the nature of selfhood implicit in 'I'. Construction of basic narratological categories can also be seen as participating in the construction of the objectivity it requires, decontextualizing a signifier or action down to a correlate of an abstracted objectivity, which it simultaneously projects and is grounded in. Genette himself guards against the danger of imputing too fixed an ontological status to narrative terms, cautioning against "convert[ing] into substance what is each time a matter of relationships".⁶ This opens a perspective on the interpretative negotiations interminably at work in underlying the relation between, e.g., story and narrating. This is not to say that narratological models thus constructed are invalid, but it does focus us on the provisionality of their usefulness, and more importantly on texts' potential to reconfigure our understanding of concepts such as space and time, and also on these concepts' cultural sitedness. The way the editors opt for "narratology in the singular" fails to exploit the opportunity of using narratological models as a self-reflexive tool. Narratology is a compelling site for exploring narrative's ideological implications precisely because of its formality; the very abstractedness of its parameters and concepts opens them to a reflexive exploration of the logic and manoeuvres by which they come to be constituted, and in doing so reveals much about critical practices as well as wider cultural investments in ideas of narrative. Chrysanthe Tsitsiou-Chelidoni crystallizes these considerations when she argues that "it is precisely the value of narratology as a method of analyzing ... literary texts which makes us suspicious of its interpretative dynamics" (p. 553). She contends that attention to form leads "almost as a reflex" to a consideration of a text's ideological content.⁷ I would suggest, further, that separation of the text's ideological content from narratological concepts is a false move, given that those concepts are necessarily ideologically informed, and will hence exert a certain influence on one's construal of textual ideology. The flip-side of the process by which narratological analysis opens out into other modes of reading which potentially destabilize its conclusions is the

⁵ Cf. M. Fludernik, (1996), *Towards A 'Natural' Narratology* (London), 30 on the process by which perception of narrative actants is conditioned by real-life understanding of our own, and others', actantiality.

⁶ Ibid. p. 32. Cf. S. Fish, (1980), *Is There A Text In This Class?* (Cambridge Mass.), 13 for a critique of formal units as a function of interpretative activity rather than independently existing parts of texts.

⁷ This is clearly not true of the many narratological studies which confine themselves to formal considerations.

process by which narratological concepts are first elaborated as such, and a certain metanarratological awareness of the dynamics of the latter process is as important for an understanding of narrativity as a critical attention to the former.

In the interests of balancing constraints of space with critical engagement, I shall focus on eight chapters for discussion. The opening section, ‘Ancient Predecessors of Narratology’, while not particularly narratological in its modes of reading, makes numerous important points about the relations between ancient and modern versions of the methodology. The complexities attendant on the creation and use of narratological concepts are made clear in Stephen Halliwell’s article on Platonic narrative theory (pp. 15-41), which argues that Plato does not authorize any of the conceptions of narrative he elaborates, and that making sense of these conceptions requires an attention to their wider textual context. Halliwell makes the point that the famous threefold definition of narrative elaborated by Socrates in *Republic* 392c-8b is notably inadequate as a description of the narrative complexity of Platonic texts themselves, an instance of the interplay Halliwell detects in the Platonic corpus between the theory and the practice of narrative. For Halliwell, Plato’s work “embodies a cumulative recognition that the scope and operations of narrative ... will always exceed ... any attempt to theorise them” (p. 41), a recognition which he locates at the outset within a wider tension, whereby “[t]he fluidity and open-endedness of consciousness, memory, and imagination are entangled with, but also partly resistant to, the organising configurations of narrative” (p. 15).

René Nünlist examines indications of narratological procedure in Greek scholia, noting numerous similarities between ancient and modern narratological concepts, while also stressing that “[t]he scholia do not contain a narratological theory *avant la lettre*” (p. 82). One area in which this difference is manifested is flagged in his account (p. 79) of ancient discussions of the identities of speakers, which stresses their difference from modern uses of focalization. The ancient scholia frequently use speaker identities to prove that an apparent contradiction between two passages is not actually the case, because the speakers were different in each case (he cites *Σα II. 17.588a*); this contrasts with the more interpretative uses to which focalization is usually put in its modern guise.

The problematics of narrative are again on show in Richard Hunter’s examination of Dio Chrysostom’s reading and rewriting of the *Iliad* in the ‘Trojan Oration’ (*Or. 11*). Hunter makes a number of deft points about Dio’s critique of Homer, and is particularly illuminating on his critical use of an-

cient accounts of Homeric narrative practices; ἀναστροφή, for instance, used positively at e.g. Σb *Il.* 1.8-9 of Homer's telling of a short episode but including the whole span of the war by means of analepsis and prolepsis, becomes in *Or.* 11 Homer's deceptive subversion of the real course of events. This leads up to Hunter's final point (p. 61) that Dio implicates narratology in poetic deceptiveness, that it can have "the same bewitching power" to make people believe the opposite of what is true as the literature upon which it comments. The article implies a number of interesting questions about the imbrication of narratives, and opens up numerous interpretative possibilities. One such is an exploration of the consequences of *Or.* 11's turning the *Iliad* into a false narrative of the real story, a situation which creates a narratologically problematic doubling of narratives. How are we to conceptualize the co-presence in *Or.* 11 of the *Iliad* narrative, and the fact of its being transformed by its rewriting in *Or.* 11 simultaneous to its co-presence? These questions presuppose a further question about the nature of the *Iliad* narrative that *Or.* 11 invokes. One way of conceptualizing this question would be to see Dio's text as playing on the distinction between narrative as a concept and narrative as an experiential event, the former understood as the concept of the *Iliad* as a totality, the latter as the subjective realizations of the text by individual readers. *Or.* 11 invokes both aspects, recalling our individual engagements with particular passages of the *Iliad* (and *Iliad* scholarship) by means of microtextual echoes, while also mobilizing a macrotextual notion of the *Iliad* narrative as a whole as the target of its revisionist agenda. The *Iliad* narrative's function, as simultaneously a spectral product of *Or.* 11's rewriting and a powerful source of cultural authority embedded within the very practices of acculturation which make a sophisticated reading of *Or.* 11 possible, attests to narrative's cultural importance and the volatility of its receptions.

The contrast between contextual and formalist approaches is well illustrated by a pair of contributions by Egbert Bakker and Irene de Jong. Bakker explores some of the limitations of narratology as traditionally conceived for the analysis of oral epic, arguing that it needs to be constituted specifically as a narratology of performance, and examining the use of "projected indexicality" (pp. 122-5), a function of deictics and demonstratives which receives particular realization in performance and helps to shape the relations between the performer, the characters, and the audience. Some of his analyses are problematic, for instance his reading of *Od.* 14.196-8, where he sees the character's tale as posing a threat to that of the poet on the grounds that "it could go on forever and crowd out the poet's tale" (p.135), a reading

which omits the fact that Odysseus' potential narrative is construed and contained by the narrator. However, the piece as a whole makes a strong case for the contextualization of narratological techniques. Irene de Jong's treatment of metalepsis, on the other hand, neglects the effects of individual readerly engagement and wider contexts on the production of meaning. On her account, metalepsis, defined as a narrator's entry into or sharing of a character's world or vice versa (p. 89), is used in Homer to create vividness, emotiveness, and to highlight the veracity of the narrative (pp. 93-7), unlike its uses in modern novels which often serve to shatter the realist illusion. One instance of this are Helen's famous words at *Il.* 6.357-8 about being 'subjects of song for men in the future' (ὥς καὶ ὀπίσσω / ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' αἰοίδιμοι ἔσσομένοισι), which on her reading do not "destabilize the realism of the story", but "enhance its status and authority" by having the present performance anticipated by a character from the heroic past.⁸ This oversimplifies the implications of the self-consciousness of the passage by assuming that part of our response does not come from an awareness that Helen is being made to speak thus by the narrator; read thus, the lines participate in a construction of poetic authority which grounds the poem's *effet de réel* precisely in its fictivity. Her reading also ignores the potential of changing contexts of reading to impact on an assessment of the passage; Hellenistic readers, for instance, accustomed to displays of poetic self-consciousness, may have understood the passage very differently from an audience of the archaic period.

De Jong's account of Bacch. 17.125-32 (pp. 106-7) similarly suffers from an absence of contextualizing detail. While she rightly points out that the description at 129-30 of the young Athenians on board the ship singing a paean to celebrate Theseus' safe return (ἡίθεοι δ' ἐγγύθεν / νέοι παιάνιξαν ἐρατῶ ὀπι) blends together the characters and the chorus performing the song, her statement that "[t]he worlds of narrated and narrator merge, the metalepsis serving to bring together past and present to show the continuity between myth and actuality" (p. 107) neglects the complexity of the interaction. The two sets of performers are differentiated by their performance situations, aboard a ship and on Delos (n.b. ἔκλαγεν / δὲ πόντος, 127-8), and by their different scenarios, the one being a spontaneous celebration, the

⁸ Her analysis is similar to Σ *Il.* 6.358 πελώμεθ' αἰοίδιμοι: λεληθότως αὔξει τὴν ποιήσιν. This critical intervention opens a difference between the phrase as genuinely λεληθότως, its workings hidden from the reader, and the phrase as read with an awareness of this 'imperceptibility' in mind, and in doing so complicates what λεληθότως will have meant. As such it neatly illustrates the transformational aspect of such (re)contextualizing readings.

other a highly elaborate and rehearsed set piece. Their focalizational positions also differ, the characters' situation defined by their unawareness of Theseus' actions and their surprise at his re-emergence (cf. εὐ- / θυμῖα νεοκτίω, 125-6). This reaction could easily be read as scripting the response of the performing chorus (and the audience), but the difference in focalizational positions necessarily interposes a certain difference between the two.

Perhaps the most interesting piece in the section devoted to narratological interpretations of tragedy is Ruth Scodel's examination of narratives whose narrators are in various ways unreliable, whether because of defective knowledge of the events they comment on, or because of wider deductive or inferential shortcomings. Her analysis, picking up on works such as de Jong's narratological reading of Euripidean messenger speeches, combines concepts such as focalization with cognitive studies, and in particular Theory of Mind, which attempts to account for "how people form inferences about what other people are thinking and feeling" (p. 421). As Scodel points out, tragedy "makes rich demands on the spectator's Theory of Mind. Having no direct access to characters' intentions, the audience must constantly attempt to judge what they think by what they say. It also frequently represents the difficulties its characters have in figuring out what other characters mean and intend" (pp. 421-2). She elaborates on these problems by means of a detailed examination of several passages, such as the messenger speech at Soph. *OT* 1237-85 (pp. 435-47). She follows Dawe in inferring from Oedipus' demand for a sword at 1255 (φοιτᾷ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἔγχος ἐξαιτῶν πορεῖν) that Oedipus here intends to kill Jocasta (p. 442), describing the paralipsis as articulating a sense of horror, "as if the potential matricide is the point at which we reach the genuinely unspeakable" (ibid.). This reading of Oedipus' intentions has important consequences for the scene, where "two people who combine the closest of all relationships want to destroy each other", and for our understanding of Oedipus' character more generally, underscoring his earlier angry outbursts. It also casts in a new light Oedipus' defence and explanation of his self-blinding at 1369-90. Scodel argues that this speech "exaggerates the rationality of his choice" (p. 443), and glosses over the contingency of his actions; it would be impossible for Oedipus "to acknowledge that he blinded himself because Jocasta's broaches were there in front of him at the moment his earlier intention [to kill her] had to be redirected" (ibid.).

Whether or not this contingency-based explanation of Oedipus' actions is 'correct' is necessarily unanswerable, and one might prefer to stress that 1260-7, which Scodel does not comment on, confront us with precisely the absence of a calculable motivation. The depiction of Oedipus at 1265 (ὁ δ'

ὡς ὄρῳ νιν, δεινὰ βρυχηθεὶς τάλαις) stresses his semi-bestial status; βρυχάομαι is usually used of animals, and while the psychological state it implies certainly conflicts with the rationality Oedipus attributes to himself at 1369-90, it also foregrounds the inaccessibility of the character's mental processes. We seem here to be faced with a level of emotionality that exceeds the capacities of representation, or at least stretches the idea of what an adequate representation would consist of. Equally, the double use of δεινά, adverbially at 1265 to describe Oedipus' cries, and adjectivally at 1267 to describe the whole scene (δεινά γ' ἦν τάνθενδ' ὄρῳν), implies a continuity between Oedipus' behaviour and its wider context which problematizes our reading of both. Does his reaction simply mirror the scene, as the second δεινὰ replicates the first, or is there a difference to be felt between the two uses? These questions are further complicated by how the words may reflect the narrator's understanding. Scodel's conclusions stress that "in this play, it is thematically essential that all the accounts the audience hears are overtly biased, filtered, and limited". Her mode of analysis raises interesting questions about the function of tragic narratives, the situatedness of their narrators, and how we as audiences come to terms with them. She does not shy away from articulating the problems of characterizing readings given by the fact of the character's fictionality, since no one actually exists to whom we can go for verification of our readings. Thus the shortcomings of the messenger's account can be explained by his being either "traumatized" or "self-interested", the interpretative indeterminacy opened by the different ways in which his narrative can be explained, and maintained by the impossibility of verification. Her analysis points up the paradox that tragedy involves us in an imaginative engagement with characters without providing, or indeed being able to provide, any ultimately decisive grounds for our readings in the characters towards whom we are oriented. Not the least illuminating aspect of this article is its highlighting of the implication of narrative in such inferential practices and the provisionality and insecurities of human understanding dramatized thereby.

Historiography has proved a happy hunting ground for narratology, and Christopher's Pelling's account of the role of focalization in Velleius', Plutarch's, Appian's and Cassius Dio's narratives about Julius Caesar is a stimulating contribution to the field. Much of the discussion pivots around the focalizational distinctions between biography and history; the former tends to be ordered around the focalizing perspective of the central character and the latter subsumes a greater number of characters and focalizational fields, and the various ways in which these distinctions are blurred in par-

ticular narratives. Pelling begins with a recapitulation of some of his previous arguments in this area, summarizing the movement in Plutarch's *Caesar* towards a more historical mode, and the movement in Appian's narrative of Caesar towards a biographical mode of narration as a Caesar-regulated perspective comes to dominate, highlighting how focalizational strategies trace characters' physical and intellectual control, or lack of control, over events, and shape the reader's historical interpretations. He then expands on this opposition by means of various close readings, drawing out for instance the contrast between relatively small number of motive-statements in Plutarch's *Caesar* and their greater frequency in Dio's narrative of the same events. In particular, the role of popular perception exerts a greater force in the latter; whereas in Plutarch we hear little of Caesar's motives, and focalization 'raises as many questions as it answers', in Dio it is "the interplay of ... Caesar's and the people's ... mindsets and capacities for perception" that explain the forces that brought about Caesar's murder. Pelling makes the case for a broad application of focalization, subsuming cognition, motivational and emotional elements (pp. 512-13), and his discussion of the theoretical difficulties involved (p. 512 n. 11) highlights the difficulties of freeing formal models from wider interpretative questions. These problems are on show in his analysis of secondary and tertiary focalization in Plut. *Cat. min.* 43.9-10 (pp. 523-4), where Cato sees the situation from Pompey's point of view, addressing Pompey's perspective in a way that replicates it, but also engaging in what Pelling terms "*potential* focalization", giving the kind of viewpoint Pompey could or should have adopted. The point here is not narratorial game-playing on Plutarch's part but rather an "exploit[ation of] the variety of perspectives to encourage interpretative reflection on historical responsibility and causation" (p. 523 n. 22). What informs the perspectives is (almost) as important as the perspectives themselves. The focus on interactions between focalizational strategies and other aspects of characterization continues in his analysis of Plutarch's *Pompey*, where "[i]t is the disjunction of focalization and physical control over reality, with lots of Pompey focalization and minimal Pompey control, that ... makes the interpretative point" (p. 524). Pelling's analysis captures the subtleties of such interactions and foregrounds their interpretative importance.

Philip Hardie's piece on *fama* takes historiographical considerations in a different direction. He begins with a consideration of the word's semantic polyvalence, and the implications of the different ways in which its different meanings (fame, story, rumour, report, tradition, glory, renown) interact. He also highlights *fama*'s status as both subject and object, that which tells sto-

ries and that which stories are told about and that which stories generate, a concept which “flits between the inside and the outside of the text” (p. 556). One example of this is *Aen.* 3.121-3, where *Fama* functions as an internal narrator and as an “Alexandrian footnote”, self-consciously signalling that the poet is relating himself to the tradition within which he works. After a brief look at the interrelations of *fama* and *facta* in the *Aeneid* (pp. 558-9), Hardie moves on to consider the role of *fama* in Tacitus, beginning with a contrast between two starting points, the *duplex fama* of Livy 1.1 about the meeting of Aeneas and Latinus and the two assessments of Augustus’ career at *Ann.* 1.9-10. Hardie makes the point that, whereas Livy’s *duplex fama* refers to a dispute over “dates and places”, the Tacitean speakers differ in their points of view and in their selection of events from Augustus’ career. This leads into a consideration of *Ann.* 4.38 (pp. 561-4), where “[t]he Tacitean text immediately exemplifies the vulnerability of Tiberius’ attempt to control *fama* to its reception, as we leave the senatorial stage of public oratory for the shadow world of rumour, points of view which escape the control of the emperor” (p. 563). The last-mentioned critics, attacking Tiberius’ lack of desire for fame as indicative of a disdain for merit (*nam contemptu famae contemni uirtutes*, 4.38.5), perform a complete inversion of Tiberius’ desire for his *fama* to be based on his recognized achievements. This chapter forms the climax to what Hardie calls a “*fama* episode”, where “*fama* and related words and concepts are densely and locally thematized”, prompting an examination by the reader of the relative values of each instance. Such ‘*fama* episodes’ often fall at the end of books, as with the last example Hardie examines, Livy 8.40, where the narrator dwells on the impediments to the historian who wishes to write a true account of events caused by the accounts given by noble families in *laudes funebres* and inscriptions: *uitiatam memoriam funebribus laudibus reor falsisque imaginum titulis, dum familiae ad se quaeque famam rerum gestarum honorumque fallente mendacio trahunt* (Liv. 8.40.4). We are confronted with a situation where the very attempts to establish *fama* “lead only to a perpetually opened account of the past, of which there can never be a final and fixed *fama*” (p. 571).

It requires only a little metacritical push to make this concluding reading emblematic of the challenges of, and facing, narratology, which—like Livy’s narrator—might be called on to give an account of an unaccountably proliferating range of narratives, and whose subject matter might seem to pose an interminable challenge to its modes of analysis, and is thus a fitting finale for a volume that demonstrates both the continued excitement of the field, and

how many paths remain to be explored in linking narratology to other interpretative strategies. Among the various narratological problems touched on by Hardie's analysis is the consideration of the concept of narrative itself, and the various ways in which this concept interacts with its realizations in particular narratives. In Livy's account at 8.40 *fama* is conceptualized as both an objective extratextual property of events which particular texts draw on (*famam rerum gestarum ... trahunt*), and something constituted by its openness to such accounts. This doubleness is also apparent in the example from the *Aeneid* cited earlier, where *fama* reports the departure of Idomeneus from Crete (3.121-3): *fama uolat pulsum regnis cecis paternis / Idomenea ducem, desertaque litora Cretae, / hoste uacare domum sedesque astare relictas*. The phrase *fama uolat* is equivalent to a verb of speaking taking an indirect statement, but the nature of the action is such as to occlude the details of how this 'speaking' takes place. The use of *uolat* connotes both *fama*'s progress, but also a certain unlocalizable force. There is also a tension between the precise conveyance of the information in 121-3 and the vagueness or ineffability of *fama*'s activity, which in turn raises the question of the identity or non-identity of 121-3 with the 'narrative' they report. The metaphoricity of *uolat* introduces a distinction between the event and the meaning of narrative, which in part enforces the non-identity of these two accounts; *fama*'s flying around operates differently from Virgil's text. Moreover, the materiality of the text is also an important factor in the passage; *fama* is printed with a lower case *f* in modern texts, thus indicating the non-personified version of the concept, but in the classical period capitalized texts would have created an ambivalence between personified and non-personified forms. Thus textual inscription, while seeming to fix *fama*'s wandering in material form, and giving the illusion of a fixed structure of meaning, actually gives rise to a deformational excess by marking *fama* as simultaneously and both concrete and personified, irreducible to one or the other. Taken together, these aspects of *fama* come together to challenge its conceptualization as 'narrative', equated as it is with an unthematizable force, arising from an unnarrated non-place, irreducible to the boundedness of narratological procedures. The passage figures *fama*'s constitutive openness, the paradox of narrative arising from that which it cannot circumscribe, and which in turn remains beyond the grasp of traditional narratological categories. Thinking about the originarity of narrative, understood both as a determinative aspect of textuality irreducible to the systematics of an empirical origin, and as the almost infinitely complex situatedness of narrative

practices in lived experience,⁹ poses both conceptual challenges to the adequacy of various models to the variety of narrative experience, and opens up various ideological problems attendant on the relations between narrative(s) and their social functions. The conceptual and thematic multiplicity of this and other similar problems demands a narratological theory and method of concomitant flexibility.

⁹ Cf. M. Fludernik (n.5) *passim*.