

Christine Schwanecke

Intermedial Storytelling

Thematisation, Imitation and Incorporation of Photography
in English and American Fiction at the Turn of the 21st Century

Ansgar Nünning und Vera Nünning (Hg.)

ELCH

Studies in English Literary and Cultural History

ELK

Studien zur Englischen Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft

Band 52

Christine Schwanecke

Intermedial Storytelling

Thematisation, Imitation and Incorporation
of Photography in English and American Fiction
at the Turn of the 21st Century

 Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier

Schwanecke, Christine: Intermedial Storytelling.
Thematisation, Imitation and Incorporation of Photography
in English and American Fiction at the Turn of the
21st Century / Christine Schwanecke. -
Trier : WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2012
(ELCH ; Band 52)
Zugl.: Dissertation, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg, 2011
ISBN 978-3-86821-395-9

Cover Design: Brigitta Disseldorf

© WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2012
ISBN 978-3-86821-395-9

No part of this book, covered by the copyright hereon,
may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means
without prior permission of the publisher.

WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier
Bergstraße 27, 54295 Trier
Postfach 4005, 54230 Trier
Tel.: (0651) 41503, Fax: (0651) 41504
Internet: <http://www.wvttrier.de>
E-Mail: wvt@wvttrier.de

*Für Mama, Papa,
Fritz und Alex*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is a slightly revised version of my PhD thesis, which was submitted to the University of Heidelberg in December 2011 and defended there in March 2012. After this date, I started formatting the book for publication; this is why primary and secondary literature published after March 2012 could not be taken into account anymore.

The present study could not have been written without Prof. Dr. Vera Nünning, to whom I am not only grateful for supervising my project but also for spotting my interest in English literary studies as early as in my third semester and for having sustained it since. I thank her for encouraging me to pursue the subject chosen for my thesis, for her broad-mindedness regarding my approach, for supporting my application for a scholarship, for all the effort she put into reading and revising my chapters as well as for her prompt feedbacks, honest, thorough and thoughtful criticism, and her helpful, pragmatic advice; I am also indebted to her for ensuring a swift graduation process (she read and revised my thesis even around Christmas!). In short, if there was an Oscar for the ‘best supervisor imaginable’, it had to go to her.

I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Meinhard Winkgens of the University of Mannheim, who not only supported my project when I was applying for a scholarship but also agreed to write the second expert’s opinion. I thank him for taking the time and trouble to read and constructively comment on my thesis. His take on certain issues, especially media philosophical questions, proved to be both highly inspiring and rewarding. Apart from that, I am obliged to Prof. Dr. Ansgar Nünning of Gießen University, who always thought of me when coming across a book I should read or people I could discuss my project with and who, in addition, invited me to deepen my knowledge in intermediality studies by contributing to one of his edited volumes. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Christoph Schöneich, University of Heidelberg, for his honest interest in my topic and his comments on my theory chapter. Literary studies live from lively argument and his differing opinion helped to reconfirm what was really essential and necessary to me concerning my approach. Last, but not least, a big ‘thank you’ to my fellow PhD students, who were so kind as to accompany me on the ‘road to my degree’, reading, discussing, and criticising my contributions in Professor Vera Nünning’s ‘Oberseminare’.

I wish to express my gratitude to the ‘Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes’ for funding my PhD project and to Prof. Dr. Lutz Gade, University of Heidelberg, who, as my ‘Vertrauensdozent’, together with Professor Vera Nünning ensured smooth evaluation processes in the context of my funding. I also appreciate the lively, stimulating discussions about research, the humanities and the sciences he encouraged in the meetings of his ‘Studienstiftung’ group.

For accepting my book for publication I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Vera Nünning and Prof. Dr. Ansgar Nünning as editors of the *ELCH* series and Dr. Erwin Otto, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier. I am also grateful to his colleague Dr. Petra Vock, who saw me through the publication process.

Especially for their invaluable emotional support, but also for keenly commenting on my ideas, chapters, or on organisational matters, I warmly thank my wonderful colleagues and understanding friends Corinna Assmann, Irina Bauder-Begerow, Nicole Becker, Eva Duppré, Amir Eid, Claudia Falk, Simone Falk, Jenny Götz, Ute Grosskopff, Niklas Haarstick, Natascha Haas, Bernd Hebel, Dr. Ricarda Klüßendorf, Eric Kuchle, Dr. Diana Kupfer, Ellen Redling, Felix Rieckmann, Dr. Stefanie Schäfer, and Jan Wittmann. I thank Alexander Sperl for his patience, optimism, support, and for benevolently and carefully reading my whole thesis. With regard to matters of language, I am indebted to Alexander's uncle, Prof. Dr. Rollin Kearns, who was so kind as to read it, too.

And the rest, surprisingly, is silence: I cannot express the deep gratitude I feel towards my parents, Ilse and Hans Schwanecke, my brother, Fritz, and, again, to Alexander Sperl. This book is for you.

Gießen/Heidelberg, May 2012

Christine Schwanecke

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VERBAL INTERRELATIONS IN NARRATIVE LITERATURE AT THE TURN OF THE 21ST CENTURY	1
1. TOWARDS A SYSTEMATISATION OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN LITERATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NARRATIVE FICTION.....	3
1.1 Photography in literature – subject matter and objectives	4
1.2 State of research.....	7
1.3 Corpus and methodological aspects.....	9
1.4 Line of action	10
2. ESTABLISHING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VERBAL INTERRELATIONS IN NARRATIVE FICTION AT THE TURN OF THE 21ST CENTURY	12
2.1 Outlining the general context of this study	12
2.1.1 Defining the concepts ‘medium’ and ‘intermediality’	12
2.1.2 Localisation of this analysis I: The phenomena examined in this study within the broad field of the general interrelations between artefacts.....	18
2.1.3 Localisation of this analysis II: The phenomena examined in this study within the realm of ‘intermediality’	19
2.1.4 Opportunities, problems and possible expansions of this approach.....	23
2.2 Defining the two media which constitute the intermedial novels under observation: ‘Literary text’ and ‘photography’	25
2.2.1 Defining and contextualising photography	26
2.2.2 Defining and contextualising literary texts	34
2.2.3 The possible uses of photographic and narrative universals for the analysis of intermedial novels	44
2.3 Systematising the ways in which literary and photographic features are combined in novels which intermedially relate to photography	46
2.3.1 General categories by means of which intermedial novels can be distinguished.....	46
2.3.2 ‘Thematisation’ and ‘imitation’ of photography: Intermedial references ...	49
2.3.3 ‘Incorporation’ of photographs – Media combination.....	51

PART II: ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VERBAL INTERRELATIONS IN NOVELS AT THE TURN OF THE 21ST CENTURY ON THE BASIS OF INTERMEDIAL THEORY AND COGNITIVE NARRATOLOGY		57
3.	INTERMEDIAL REFERENCES I: THEMATISATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY.....	60
3.1	Uprooted individuals and institutions – the novelist and the photographer in the postmodern age.....	62
3.1.1	Photographs and novels as instruments and commodities – a criticism of postmodern consumerist culture intermedially conveyed in Don DeLillo’s <i>Mao II</i>	63
3.1.2	Postmodern identity and reality between facts and fictions – explicit references to photography and literature in Paul Auster’s <i>Leviathan</i>	70
3.2	Family (hi)stories: Intermedial references to photography as tools for metamnemonic and metahistoriographic reflection.....	78
3.2.1	Explicit intermedial references to photographs at the interface between past and present: The family archive in <i>Behind the Scenes at the Museum</i>	79
3.2.2	A re-‘vision’ of the past: Explicit intermedial references to photographs as triggers of historiographical research and reflection in <i>The Photograph</i>	87
3.3	Photographs thematised.....	94
4.	INTERMEDIAL REFERENCES II: (ICONIC) IMITATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY	97
4.1	‘Who am I?’ – Positioning the self between narration, focalization, and photography by implicit intermedial means	98
4.1.1	‘In-between-nesses’ and ‘double vision’: Sporadic evocation of photography by photographic narration in Salman Rushdie’s <i>The Ground Beneath Her Feet</i>	99
4.1.2	Torn between the ‘album’ and the ‘lexicon’, and what and how do we ‘see’? – Photographic focalization in Rachel Seiffert’s <i>The Dark Room</i>	108
4.2	Quasi-hybridisation and aesthetical experiments in neo-Victorian novels.....	116
4.2.1	Smothering life in darkness and revealing Victorian double standards: Intermedial techniques of glossing over facts in Beryl Bainbridge’s <i>Master Georgie</i>	117
4.2.2	Bringing life to the light and celebrating Victorian photography: Ultimate ‘light writing’ in Gail Jones’ quasi-hybrid novel <i>Sixty Lights</i>	124
4.3	Photography imitated.....	131

5.	INCORPORATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY	134
5.1	The sporadic integration of photographs – a means of meta-reflexively questioning the documentary value of photographic and verbal life-(and death-)writing	138
5.1.1	‘Resurrection’: The rehabilitation of lives by plurimedial means in Aleksandar Hemon’s <i>The Lazarus Project</i>	138
5.1.2	‘Life turned into stone’: Narrative fossilisation processes in Carol Shields’ <i>The Stone Diaries</i>	146
5.2	Narrating with photos: The merging of visual and verbal media as a means of dealing with the unspeakable trauma of loss	155
5.2.1	Lost lives: The plurimedial coming to terms with trauma and repression in Jonathan Safran Foer’s <i>Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close</i>	156
5.2.2	Lost loves: The plurimedial inquiry into the mechanisms and rites of modern relationships in Leanne Shapton’s <i>Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion, and Jewelry</i>	167
5.3	Photographs incorporated	175
6.	CONCLUSION	179
6.1	The formal manifestations of intermedial storytelling	180
6.2	The implications of intermedial storytelling for the interpretation of the novels	184
7.	REFERENCES	189
7.1	Primary literature	189
7.2	Secondary literature	190