Introduction: Undogmatic Reading – from Narratology to Digital Humanities and Back

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Toward Undogmatic Reading

Narratology, Digital Humanities and Beyond

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Impressum

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A Methodological Perspective: Digital Humanities, Narratology and Undogmatic Reading

The title of this anthology features three buzzwords: "Undogmatic Reading", "Digital Humanities" and "Narratology". While one connection between the three arises from the formal occasion for this anthology – the honouring of Jan Christoph Meister's work –, their methodological relations are both interesting and in need of explanation. Let us thus start with the question: Which disciplinary characteristics bridge Digital Humanities and Narratology?

Digital Humanities are a discipline (or a network of disciplines) in which research questions or tasks from humanities disciplines are addressed with the help of digital/computational methods – or where humanities artefacts are examined using such methods.[3] While this also encompasses subfields like digitisation/digital edition, data management (like the organisation of humanities artefacts in digital catalogues) and modelling, a central field is computer-assisted text analysis. In subfields like Computational Literary Studies, different types of computer-aided methods are applied to literary texts or especially developed in order to explore texts or test previous hypotheses about them. While some methods, especially some of those

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[3] This tentative definition highlights the relation between Digital Humanities and traditional humanities disciplines and wants to emphasize the fact that Digital Humanities can, but need not, be concerned with contributing solutions to questions and problems from the traditional humanities. Another option is that humanities artefacts are approached with new tasks and questions arising from the new possibilities of the digital/computational realm. Finding a suitable definition for this heterogeneous field, however, is a notoriously difficult task – a fact taken up by the website "What Is Digital Humanities?" (https://whatisdigital humanities.com/, Access: January 7, 2020) that shows a different answer every time it is reloaded.

that heavily rely on automated procedures, are often borrowed from other disciplines or have been optimised for non-literary texts (cf. Thaller, 2017, p. 14; Piper, 2018, p. 5), other approaches – like manual annotation – show a closer proximity to more "traditional" procedures applied in Literary Studies (cf. Jacke, 2018).

One of the major strengths of computational methods for literary analysis – besides the possibility to obtain an overview of large text corpora in the case of automated ('distant reading') techniques – lies in its emphasis on modelling (cf. Kuhn, 2020) and operationalisation (cf. Moretti, 2013): due to the influence of standards from the field of formal science, computational text analysis requires a very fine-grained and well-organised approach. Complex Literary Studies research questions have to be broken down into subquestions, and every subquestion needs to be examined as to whether and how answers to it can be found by analysing the textual surface. For some text analytic tasks, it is helpful (or even required) to develop categories with preferably exact definitions. The need for (full) formalisation is more pressing in the context of fully automated analysis tasks where every requirement and directive has to be made explicit for an algorithm to be able to execute it – but modelling and operationalisation are equally salient when it comes to manual annotation.

Generally speaking, literary scholars have more freedom in the context of manual annotation. Following more traditional ways of studying texts, annotations do not need to be category-based but can also take the form of simple highlights or free-text comments. Also, the category or comment that is being attached to a text passage does not have to follow undoubtedly from the textual material – literary scholars are basically free to comment or categorise as they please. However, depending on the ultimate purpose of the manual annotation, it can be useful to work towards category-based annotation and the formulation of guidelines for their application – for example when different annotators are involved whose annotations are supposed to be comparable. But even without a collaborative research design, annotation in a digital environment tends to invite a more structured approach: Due to the closely text-oriented and well-documented (i. e. saved and displayed) nature of the approach, literary scholars notice more easily if they treat similar cases differently and will often automatically strive to make their analysis more consistent.

Based on these characteristics and requirements of Digital Humanities (which have been identified here using the example of Computational Literary Studies but also apply to many other subareas of the field), it is easy to see why Narratology (i. e. the "study of the logic, principles, and practices of narrative representation" (Meister, 2014, § 1)) seems to be such a suitable discipline for computer-assisted approaches. First, due to their often greater proximity to everyday language, many nar-

rative or prose texts are more accessible and more easily interpretable on a basic lin-
guistic level than, for example, poetry.[4] Second, compared with other approaches to
research on literary texts, Narratology offers a well-structured and well-defined in-
ventory of text analytic categories that can be more or less straightforwardly applied
in the context of annotation. Third, due to its focus on descriptive text features, Nar-
ratology (at least in its classical variant, which is based on Russian Formalism and
French Structuralism, cf. for example Todorov, 1971; Genette, 1972, 1983 and others)
is also a rewarding field for working on the automation of annotation tasks relevant
to Literary Studies, i. e. the development of new text mining procedures. If the au-
tomation is based on manual annotation data that is produced in a collaborative ap-
proach (which is the most common practice for this type of tasks), then the agree-
ment between annotators is expected to be relatively high as compared to more in-
terpretation-dependent annotation tasks. All this has led to "Computational Narra-
tology" (cf. Mani, 2013) forming as a common field of study of both Digital Humani-
ties and Narratology.[5]

Harmonic as the fit between Digital Humanities/Computational Literary Studies
and Narratology might seem, both disciplines (in the forms outlined above) are at
times met with criticism on the part of 'traditional' Literary Studies (meaning in this
case: non-digital Literary Studies with a focus on hermeneutic text analysis) – towards
which they often still feel justification pressure.[6] The concern does not only seem to be
that Narratology/Computational Literary Studies with their tendency towards formal-
isation and mere text description resp. 'word counting' do not have any relevant in-
sights to offer on aesthetic artefacts of literature. Even worse, these approaches might
appear as a threat to hermeneutic approaches since their focus is read by some as the
attempt to reduce the meaning of literary works to their descriptive/countable fea-
tures. The fear seems to be that Computational Literary Studies/Narratology are so ea-
ger to formalise that they forget or intentionally neglect the very nature of both litera-
ture and Literary Studies: literary texts are often deliberately ambiguous and can be
read in more than one way; and Literary Studies are characterised by the fact that there
are so many different approaches to and perspectives on literature (cf. Jahraus, 2003)

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[4]   However, narrative elements in genres such as poetry or drama can, of course, also be subject of narratolog-
      ical research. One example for narrative poetry analysis is Hühn's contribution in this volume. More infor-
      mation about narration in poetry or drama can also be found in Hühn & Sommer (2013).

[5]   "Computational narratology" has thus found its way into the living handbook of narratology (cf. Mani, 2013)
      as well as into other narratological handbooks (cf. for example Meister, 2005) – with a workshop series ded-
      icated to "Computational Models of Narrative" and several recent research projects explicitly dedicated to
      the automatic detection of narratological categories in the narrower sense (see. e. g. "heureCLÉA", cf. Bögel
      et al., 2015, and "Redewiedergabe", cf. Brunner, 2015).

[6]   In addition, it is of course also the case that not all narratologists work digitally or endorse these practices,
      e.g. in the context of many 'new' narratological approaches (see below).

that it is hard to imagine how fully formalised and/or automated procedures can do justice to the peculiarities of the discipline and its aesthetic objects.

In the case of Narratology, these concerns have led to the development of several kinds of 'new narratologies' with different, yet almost exclusively more interpretive and context-including foci (cf. Herman, 1999). In Computational Literary Studies, the call for a more 'meaningful' computer-assisted engagement with literature resulted in the development of a subfield that can be called "Digital Hermeneutics". This field is focusing on the question of how digital or computational methods can assist in interpreting literary texts, or in other words: in fostering insights into literary texts that do justice to their complexity and aesthetic quality. One promising path to pursue here is a close inspection of, on the one hand, the theoretical and methodical principles underlying processes of (different kinds of) literary annotation and, on the other hand, the principles underlying (different) methods of digital text analysis. The goal in the first step would be to detect potential interdisciplinary discrepancies (i. e. cases in which principles and assumptions underlying digital methods conflict with hermeneutic theories, methods or practices) as well as omissions (i. e. cases in which computational methods supporting certain aspects of hermeneutic processes are missing). The second step would then consist in investigating possibilities to modify existing methods/tools or developing new ones to meet the detected desiderata. Examples for this approach (or important preparatory steps) would be to analyse in which ways preprocessing and parametrisation influences the analysis results for different text mining procedures[7] or how data visualisation in Computational Literary Studies can reflect the perspective-relatedness of annotation data and enable productive discourse.[8] One central insight in the context of Digital Hermeneutics lies in the fact that the interpretation of a literary text can hardly ever yield definitive and unanimous results – not only because literary texts are often deliberately ambiguous but also because of the theoretical and methodical plurality of Literary Studies, where different theoretical contexts define different aims and quality criteria for interpretations. This means that – while Literary Studies do often operate on vague theoretical and methodical foundations that could benefit from DH-induced explication and systematisation – there will always be 'good' and persistent reasons for literary interpretations to differ. And this is where our third buzzword, "undogmatic reading", comes into play.

But what is undogmatic reading? Looking into the Oxford English Dictionary one finds several definitions and examples for the noun or the adjective "dogmatic". For example, something or someone is dogmatic if it or s/he is "[p]roceeding upon

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[7]   Cf. Uglanova & Gius, 2020 for Topic Modelling.
[8]   Cf. the project 3*DH* (Kleymann & Stange, 2021).

principles accepted *a priori* as true, instead of being founded upon experience or induction". A dogmatic person is "inclined to lay down principles as undeniably true" (OED online, 2019). Philosopher Thomas Hobbes writes in *Humane Nature* (1650, p. xiii, §4): "The fault lieth altogether in the dogmatics, that is to say, those that are imperfectly learned, and with passion press to have their opinions pass every where for truth."

In the context of DH, the term "undogmatic reading" expresses the idea that computational methods and tools that are aimed at supporting interpretation should not enforce a specific perspective on, or reading of, a literary text. Since (fully) automated methods (and tools supporting these methods) are usually not directly aimed at supporting interpretation, the postulate of enabling undogmatic reading is especially relevant for tools for manual annotation. This applies to different aspects, e.g. the general mode of annotation (category-based vs. free/unspecific), the modelling of annotation categories (standardised vs. individual/editable), workflows (fixed/linear vs. flexible/iterative) and annotation choices (binary/exclusive vs. multiple/permissive).

At this point, we are prepared to come full circle (in the first – the methodological and most general – iteration through our three buzzwords): The Digital Humanities (as explicated for the case of Computational Literary Studies) are especially well-suited to encourage the deliberation of Humanities methods and practices, often resulting in a (partial) systematisation and formalisation of Humanities theoretical inventory and workflows. This makes computer-assisted approaches especially accessible to sub-disciplines that already come with a certain 'tidiness' concerning theory, methods and interests (like, for example, Narratology). However, since a certain 'fuzziness' (or, more precisely, ambiguity and multiperspectivity) is characteristic of both Humanities objects of investigation and practices, it is beneficial to the Digital Humanities and to Humanities sub-disciplines with a formalistic focus to open up to more permissive (and thus potentially more fruitful) ways of investigating Humanities artefacts. If successful, this approach is able to combine the best of both worlds: a (partially) reproducible, well-documented and intersubjectively comprehensible research process with new, surprising and/or relevant insights about the meaning of literary texts or other aesthetic objects.

Let us now set off for the second iteration through our three buzzwords: the one focusing on concrete ventures of advancing and connecting the relevant disciplines – with a special spotlight on the relevant activities of our "person of interest": Jan Christoph Meister.

Circling Back: Institution- and Bridge-Building

Following the groundbreaking achievements of classical Narratology, its concepts have been transferred to many other fields and scientific disciplines concerned with narration. As a result, today we usually no longer speak of the one Narratology, but rather of post-classical Narratologies in the plural form (cf. Herman, 1999). This transdisciplinary, international and multilingual "narrative turn" was already indicated in the phase of classical structuralist and formalist Narratology (cf. White, 1980; Kreiswirth, 1995). In order to bring together the growing community of narratologists in an institutional network and to create a platform for exchange, cooperation and discussion, especially in European narrative research, the European Narratology Network (ENN) was founded in Hamburg on January 24, 2009.[9] This step was initiated by members of the Interdisciplinary Center for Narratology (ICN) at Hamburg University,[10] including narratological authorities such as Wolf Schmid, Peter Hühn, Jörg Schönert and Jan Christoph Meister. The ENN's goals are community building and transdisciplinary exchange at workshops and regular conferences.[11] In comparison to the international Narrative conference, a focus on theory and methodology rather than the object domain "narrative" can be observed in the emphases of past ENN conferences. In order to bundle the knowledge generated in the various fields of narrative research, ICN members not only edit the *Narratologia* series published by de Gruyter, but have also created the web-based living handbook of narratology,[12] which – due to its publication form – is more flexible and expandable (i. e. "living") than comparable print publications.

   Not only technical, but even more so methodological innovations go hand in hand with the digitisation of research objects and scholarly practices in the course of the so-called "digital turn". It can be argued that the digital turn runs orthogonally to other turns, focusing in particular on methodological-praxeological issues and thus becoming a transdisciplinary intersection (cf. Baum & Stäcker, 2016). Consequently, DH is "a methodology that cuts across disciplines, systematically as well as conceptually" (Meister, 2012, p. 84). For this reason, it does not contradict or run parallel to e.g. the narrative turn, but can be productively linked to the work of traditional research communities like Narratology. It is therefore not surprising that in most locations in which re-

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[9]   A comparable association of researchers in the field of narrative theory had previously only existed in the form of the International Society for the Study of Narrative (ISSN), founded in 1986, which was initially strongly focused on the North American region.

[10]   Cf. http://www.icn.uni-hamburg.de (Access: November 27, 2020).

[11]   Cf. https://www.narratology.net/node/4 (Access: January 7, 2020).

[12]   Cf. https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de (Access: November 27, 2020).

searchers with a focus on Digital Humanities work, this focus is embedded within traditional departmental and institutional structures. The birth of an institutionalised community of specifically German-speaking Digital Humanities can be dated back to July 17, 2012.[13] On this day, the *Association of Digital Humanities in the German-speaking area* ("Verband Digital Humanities im deutschsprachigen Raum", DHd) was formally founded in connection with the international *DH Conference* organised by Jan Christoph Meister at Hamburg University. Besides Meister himself, authorities such as Elisabeth Burr, Fotis Jannidis, Manfred Thaller, Claudine Moulin and others were involved.

The fact that Jan Christoph Meister was a founding member of both ENN and the DHd association is not surprising in the light of his research activities. As early as the 1990s, he published articles that promoted a computer-based variant of Narratology, and his most recent research project *forTEXT*[14] still has the aim to disseminate digital methods into the traditional Humanities. In the 90s, what is now called Digital Humanities was still named "Humanities Computing" or "Computational Philology". In 2003, Meister's habilitation thesis *Computing Action. A Narratological Approach* was published as the second volume of the aforementioned *Narratologia* series, in which he describes Humanities Computing as "a new methodology which has its own distinctive theoretical and technological features but is nonetheless firmly anchored inside the humanities" and stresses that his "primary concern is a philological one in the traditional sense of the word" (Meister, 2003a, p. xviii). The field of Computational Narratology forms the backbone of several research projects by Meister himself and others.

In the discussion about the status of Digital Humanities, Meister (2012, p. 77) emphasises the "obligation to engage in a critical self reflexion of their own methods – and open the dialogue with the established humanistic disciplines". With regard to the objects of investigation, the Digital Humanities are unlimited; what unites them is the methodological axis. Integrating new digital methods, especially for the analysis of texts, into the traditional Humanities is an important – albeit laborious – task, since the Humanities, with their primary focus on non-digital artefacts, are often considered the torch-bearers of the analogue (cf. Meister, 2012, p. 80). However, in this respect an intellectually extremely fruitful tension can be identified between "two highly productive methodological principles: analytic exactness vs. hermeneutic contingency" (Meister, 2012, p. 79). The exchange between DH and tradi-

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[13]   Previous alliances on an international level were, for example, the European Association for Digital Humanities (EADH, founded in 1973 as the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing), and the Humanist, founded in 1987,

[14]   Cf. https://fortext.net (Access: January 7, 2020).

tional disciplines is indeed beneficial for both areas: "While we are good at the quantitative, we still lack the experience to translate many of the traditional mainly qualitative research questions of our colleagues into the language that is spoken by digital humanists, and *vice versa*" (Meister, 2012, p. 83).

The fact that Meister does not make a clear decision in favour of one paradigm (the formalistic or the hermeneutic) is also shown by the fact that he does not support a development towards new "hyphenated" approaches in the field of Narratology. Instead, he makes a "case for conceptual fundamentalism" (Meister, 2003b): In order to be used in a hermeneutically fruitful manner, Narratology does not have to detach itself from its "formal and context-free" roots (Meister 2003b, pp. 69). It is precisely these characteristics that make Narratology connectable to different interpretative projects and, if necessary, may also ensure that interpretations do not slide off into arbitrariness.

The methodologically oriented dialogue between DH and traditional disciplines is best initiated with a method that is already familiar to every researcher involved in text analysis from non-digital work: manual annotation as the addition of supplementary information to a text in close reading mode (cf. Meister, forthcoming). Transferring this method to a digital working environment makes the advantages of computer-supported processes evident: the discussion of textual artefacts – for example in Literary Studies – is linked to the actual text data in the form of metadata, making it both sustainable and comprehensible. "The possibility of supplementing the object text with descriptive or interpretive metatexts (so-called 'markup') may seem trivial from a technical point of view; conceptually, however, for Computational Philology it represents a quantum leap towards complexity and hermeneutical relevance" (Meister, 2013, p. 280; our translation). The entire philological workflow becomes the focus of interest: in software-supported work, the individual steps of analysis, declaration and interpretation can be integrated and related to each other using appropriate tools.

With CATMA[15] (Computer Assisted Text Markup and Analysis), team Meister began to create such a tool in 2008. Since then, it has been continuously developed further and brought closer to the needs of the text research community – especially Literary Studies. CATMA supports non-deterministic and explorative practices of text annotation and analysis. The underlying conceptual model is a discursive, debate-oriented approach to text annotation based on research practices of hermeneutic disciplines. In hermeneutic methodology, text understanding is frequently described as a circular movement between understanding parts of the text and the

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[15]   Cf. https://catma.de (Access: January 7, 2020).

whole (the so-called 'hermeneutic circle', cf. eg. Ast, 1808). CATMA's modular architecture allows one to zoom in and out of a text in a circular fashion: close reading can be done in one module, whereas the other allows for quantitative analyses of text data and annotations and thus enables users to perform distant reading processes. Such a close integration of annotation, analysis and visualisation in a contingent and iterative workflow meets the Humanities in their disciplinary home. The offered functionalities for collaborative work additionally emphasise the discursive nature of literary artefacts. The work in CATMA can further be mapped on theories of mixed-methods and scalable reading, understood as a combination of distant and close reading (cf. Mueller, 2012; Weitin & Werber, 2017). Taken together, the modules of the tool allow for a scalable workflow (cf. Horstmann, 2020).

Collaborative work is another key advantage of digital work when compared to traditional non-digital annotation. The negotiation of different interpretations can be done locally and holistically close to the text. Agreements and differing interpretations can be discussed, justified and also quantitatively analysed and visualised. Collaborative research "no longer merely exchanges finished results, but becomes transparent as work-in-progress and practices not an authoritative-synthetic, but a collective-modular mode of knowledge production" (Meister, 2013, p. 295; our translation). Where community building takes place at the infrastructural level with the ENN and the DHd association, collaborative work is reflected methodically and conceptually in the development of collaboratively usable tools such as CATMA.[16] By managing and storing the linked primary texts and annotations, it is possible to develop automatic procedures by means of machine learning, which can lead to a considerable increase in efficiency for further research projects (e.g. with the same annotation taxonomy but with different texts). A benchmark-setting pilot project in this area was *heureCLÉA*, which was carried out from 2013–2016 at Hamburg University under Meister's leadership in cooperation with computer scientists from the University of Heidelberg (Bögel et al., 2015). As an important conceptual insight, the *heureCLÉA* project has pointed out – besides the need to allow for contradictory annotations – that digital work often reveals blind spots in traditional theories:

> Ambiguous markup may not just be a matter of interpretation – that is: of the inconsistent or idiosyncratic application of a descriptive taxonomy by annotators – but rather a logical consequence of the theoretical under-determination of foundational humanistic (and in this particular instance: narratological) categories which has hitherto gone unno-

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16   The sixth version of the tool, launched in October 2019 and developed as part of the *forTEXT* project, is project-centred and additionally offers an elaborate project member management system with defined roles and rights to organise collaborative work.

ticed, or which the original discipline normally ignores if not resolves by way of conceptual workarounds. In a humanist perspective, a digital humanities project like heureCLÉA provides an empirical testbed that can bring fundamental problems of theories to light – provided that the digital humanities methods employed remain sensitive to the fundamentally hermeneutic orientation of the client domain. (Bögel et al., 2015)

This, once again, brings us back to the idea of undogmatic reading: How, exactly, can computer-aided approaches to literature support us in exercising our hermeneutic freedom – while still making use of the computational rigour to impose reasonable limits to an "anything goes" in interpretation? Is the dualism between true and false still tenable and productive? The digital logic of computer algorithms is often such a binary one. However:

A Computational Philology that wants to advance to 'Digital Text Studies' cannot be concerned with driving out a person's natural-language intelligence and their desire for ambiguity and obliging literary scholars to communicate in a restricted way with ones and zeros. Rather, its aim must be to make fruitful a fundamental tension: that between the human conceptualisation of 'text' as a synthetic, meaningful communication phenomenon on the one hand, and the digital conceptualisation of text as an information phenomenon on the other (Meister, 2013, p. 295; our translation).

It is therefore necessary to develop digital tools for textual research that enable humanists to deal 'undogmatically' with analytical categories, concept ontologies and interpretations. This very principle forms the backbone of CATMA, which is un-dogmatic not only because of the "cat" in its name: the system does neither prescribe defined annotation schemata or rules, nor does it force the user to apply rigid yes/no, right/wrong taxonomies to texts (even though it allows for more prescriptive schemata as well). One of CATMA's newest features in this context is the commentary function, allowing for a less structured (first) approach to annotation (cf. Horstmann & Jacke, 2020). In other words, CATMA's logic invites users to explore the richness and multifacetedness of textual phenomena according to their needs: users can create, expand and continuously modify their own individual tagsets, as well as iteratively add, delete or refine their annotations. By using standoff instead of inline markup, nothing in the system prevents assigning multiple, overlapping, or even contradictory annotations if a text passage invites more than one interpretation.

Meister theoretically anticipated this approach as early as 1995 in his essay *Consensus ex machina? Consensus* qua *machina!*. Here, too, he takes a decidedly methodological perspective and discusses "whether the reaching of a consensus is at all desirable" (Meister, 1995, p. 263) in the hermeneutic-discursive work of the Humanities. His

point of view is that machine support should rather serve to gain clarity about the method used and thus to work towards self-reflection of one's own discipline, because "[l]ogic programming enforces strict discipline in the conceptualization of interpretive acts that are performed intuitively by human beings" (Meister, 1995, p. 266). He concludes

> that an intelligent and well-balanced application of literary computing tools allows us to reconcile the two paradigms [i. e. the numeric and the semantic] by measuring and mapping différence in literary structures, and then forwarding them to the ultimate hermeneutic machine, the human mind. (Meister, 1995, p. 269)

As anticipated by Meister and colleagues (cf. Bögel et al., 2015), collaborative annotation indeed proved a promising path towards mediating between humanities diversity and computational rigour: In the case of the *heureCLÉA* project, the collaborative annotation approach (with the aim of automation where possible) initiated intense discussions between annotators wherever conflicting annotation decisions were made. This revealed different reasons for disagreement: misunderstandings, unclear category definitions, different basic assumptions (concerning previous analysis steps or theoretical background) and textual ambiguity (cf. Gius & Jacke, 2017). While conflicting annotations based on misunderstandings should be avoided or revised, conflicts resulting from unclear definitions should result in conceptual work (and, optimally, the resolving of those conflicts). Both different theoretical assumptions and textual ambiguity, however, can be seen as characteristics of humanities disciplines resp. their artefacts. Hence, conflicting annotations may be regarded as legitimate and should be allowed. While this is by no means the last word on the question of mediating between interpretative freedom and methodological rigour, this example shows us how a digital setting can contribute specifically to solving fundamental problems in the Humanities or Hermeneutics.

Bringing together the two paradigms, which Meister later called "quantitative" and "hermeneutic" (Meister, 2003a, p. xix), is and remains the central challenge of Digital Humanities. Language – and with it: meaning – are to be considered within the dynamic and multidimensional textual representation in which they are embedded (cf. also the article by Manfred Thaller in the present volume). If the bridge building succeeds, two blind spots in traditional approaches can be addressed:

> first, the inability to base individual interpretations of a text on properly consistent empirical descriptions of the phenomena in that text; second, the failure to analyse suffi-

> ciently large corpora in the methodologically consistent way that is necessary if general-
> izations about works, epochs, or genres are to be based on inductive inferences rather
> than impressionistic observations and normative declarations. (Meister, 2003a, p. xx)

But supporting undogmatic reading is not only relevant in annotation contexts: the visualisation of humanities data is also affected by the tension between numerical/quantitative and semantic/hermeneutical areas of knowledge generation. This is especially true when data visualisation is used for the purpose of interpreting (intermediate) research "results" in hermeneutic contexts:

> In addition to the empirical analysis of data, synthetic modelling of output, especially in
> the form of visualisations, has recently become increasingly important. What digital
> analysis provides us with is thus no longer understood as an objective result, but rather
> as a heuristically usable, transitory reformulation of the original philological object.
> (Meister, 2013, p. 294; our translation)

Johanna Drucker (2011) distinguishes "data" and "capta" in comparing scientific and humanities approaches, by which she wants to address the fact that data in the Humanities is not given but captured, i. e. taken from the aesthetic artefacts, created in an 'undogmatic' hermeneutic process as described above. Together with visualisation experts Geoffrey Rockwell and Marian Dörk, Drucker was a cooperation partner for the *3DH* research project led by Meister.[17] In addition to a fundamental theoretical reflection of visualisations in Digital Humanities work, the project established postulates that formulate conditions which visualisation tools should meet in the Digital Humanities (cf. Kleymann & Stange, 2021). It is emphasised that visualisations are not only important for the presentation of results, but can also productively support the hermeneutic-discursive (and in principle unfinishable) analytical process. The visualisations offered in CATMA adhere to the *3DH* postulates. Likewise, the developed prototype Stereoscope[18] can be used to visually explore and refine annotations created in CATMA.

Having now finished the second iteration through our three buzzwords "Narratology", "Digital Humanities" and "Undogmatic Reading", the third and final cycle presents the most specific one, settled in the here and now of this volume.

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[17] Cf. http://threedh.net (Access: January 7, 2020).

[18] Cf. http://www.stereoscope.threedh.net/ (Access: January 7, 2020).

Third Time's the Charm: About this Book

The present book combines genuine narratological contributions (Schmid, Gunia and Hühn) with those that reflect on the role of Digital Humanities (McCarty, Gius) or illuminate specific challenges of Digital Humanities work in the context of comprehensive discussions (Thaller, Bradley). Finally, the aspect of (undogmatic) reading is discussed historically (Moulin & Schöch) and empirically (Weitin & Möschner) in project presentations. The volume is based on the contributions that were held and discussed in a bilingual workshop of the same name at Hamburg University on January 23, 2020. The workshop itself was organised in view of Jan Christoph Meister's retirement. Thematic focuses and contributors were selected in view of his ongoing efforts to establish a dialogue and build bridges between Digital Humanities and traditional disciplines.[19]

In his contribution *Narrative Motivierung*, WOLF SCHMID approaches the phenomenon of motivated narrative literature with reference to formalist theories and thus – like so many formalist/structuralist approaches – also promotes digital operationalisation. Both historiographical writings and fictional narratives are perceived as motivated if their individual components fit together and establish a relationship to the whole of the story. Schmid distinguishes "Motivierung" (which refers to the instance of the author) from "Motivation" (which refers to the level of characters), whereby narrative events and actions of characters can be motivated both artistically as well as causally. Theoretically, *Motivierung* is given in a work when "coherence, coordination of all parts [and] plausibility" are given – components that, in each individual case, require an interpretative reading. *Motivierung* can also take place "from behind", i. e. retrospectively in the holistic view of the whole work.

INKE GUNIA's contribution *Erzählen vom Selbst als Bewusstsein, ein Versuch zur Weltbewältigung: La débil mental (2014) von Ariana Harwicz* is dedicated to an allegedly unmotivated narration. The autodiegetic main character of the novel speaks to herself in the form of an autonomous inner monologue through an incoherent sequence of images and presumably suffers from a dissociative depersonalisation disorder. Gunia demonstrates how individual elements of the narrative can be analysed as eventful and thus used to construct a diegetic space and time. The events, which can be linked into a chain of action, therefore not only offer the main character the possibility of self-assurance through the act of narration, but also enable readers to orient themselves in the flow of speech.

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[19] In the spirit of the title of our book, we have also adopted an undogmatic approach to gendering in the individual contributions, i.e. we have not given the contributors explicit instructions concerning this issue. As this is not done elsewhere in the book, we would like to point out that even in cases where the generic masculine is used, representatives of other gender identities may also feel addressed.

In his contribution *An "Undogmatic" Reading of Lyric Poetry: Defending the Narratological Approach to Poetry Analysis* PETER HÜHN defends the narratological analysis of lyric poetry against accusations that such an endeavour fails to recognise the actual function and form of poems (like e.g. the prosodical overstructuring). In a close reading of Robert Frost's *Spring Pools*, he shows that applying the operational toolkit of Narratology for the analysis of poems is not only legitimate but in fact also fruitful with regards to understanding the text's meaning. Defining narrative as a change of state, he states that the fundamental anthropological condition of change can be found in poems that make use of narrative devices in various ways. Narrativity in poems can be found on the level of *enunciation* (that can and has been called "psycho-narration" too) as well as on the level of the *enounced* (that can be described as "micro-stories" too).

In his contribution *With the Hedgehog or the Fox?*, WILLARD McCARTY maps the classical Greek saying "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing" (Archilochus) on trends in the digital age. It has never been easier to know many things (with the help of the web), but – so McCarty emphasises – it is important to keep in mind the "one big thing", although it might not always be clear what this big thing is. In an overview of machine development, modelling approaches and Artificial Intelligence evolution over the last centuries, he points out that no computing system, however sophisticated and dogmatic it might be, can ever be absolutely correct, and that we should in fact let go of this idea. A machine, on the contrary, should be considered fully realised once it becomes a device of the imagination that simulates the possible and estranges the known. McCarty thus suggests what he calls a "hedgehogian corrective to the fox's undirected curiosity" as a way to be able to compare the many things one sees and to navigate through the multifacetedness.

MANFRED THALLER describes the difficulties of a humanist conceptualisation as well as an information-technology-based modelling of metaphors in *Über Metaphern (und die Voraussetzungen für ihre Verwendung in der Informationstechnologie)*. Originating in the neolithic revolution to be able to find similarities in dissimilarities, metaphorical speech is a dynamic construct that has always been bound to space and time, often creating connections that were not there before. Thaller attributes the difficulties of information-technological modelling of metaphors to the spatio-temporal dependence of the relation between objects. All human (and thus also linguistic) information is bound to space and time. If a spatio-temporal allocation refers to the relation between two objects (and not to the objects themselves), graphs are useless for the implementation of information (and concepts derived from it such as knowledge). Furthermore, objects and relationships between them may also be related to other conceptual scales. To address this problem, Thaller states that the graphs would also have to be embedded in an n-dimensional space in which topological proximity represents conceptual proximity too.

JOHN BRADLEY discusses narrative and digital aspects of historical identity creation in his article *Creating Historical Identity with Data: a Digital Prosopography Perspective*. Whereas computer scientists use words like "identifier" in a strongly formal way, for example to reference entities, attributes and relationships in relational databases, "identity" for persons in history has been frequently perceived and created through narrative and is thus more aligned with the richer humanist sense of the word "identity". Bradley confronts this apparent disconnection between classical (narrative-oriented) and digital (data-oriented) prosopographies by pointing out that – even though the data-oriented prosopography may not be narrative – a digital database is still interpretive and creates identities for the historical people it represents. The data derived from the textual sources in such digital prosopographies (which in the prosopographical projects in which he has been involved use a representative approach called "factoids") is expressed through a highly formal and disciplined relational representation as a consequence of the formal modelling process required for a database creation. The factoid approach links historical sources to an historical interpretation of the "real" past by in fact avoiding telling a story, while at the same time presenting some attractive advantages in terms of multiple ways of access. With this example, Bradley shows the mediating role Digital Humanities can play in bringing together and relating traditional and digital approaches and definitions.

In her article *Algorithmen zwischen Strukturalismus und* Postcolonial Studies. *Zur Kritik und Entwicklung der computationellen Literaturwissenschaft*, EVELYN GIUS highlights the various reservations that Digital Humanities have to face from the side of traditional Literary Studies. She differentiates between the critique of non-innovation (i. e. the confirmation of known knowledge by new methods) and the critique of innovation achieved through computational methods still lacking established evaluation methods. While the Humanities and Natural Sciences only seem to be antagonist approaches, current Computational Literary Studies (and these include both literary scholars and computer scientists) must also aim to balance formalisation and interpretation in their methods. In order for the integration of digital methods into Literary Studies to be successful, literary scholars must be enabled to understand the functional principles of algorithms and data to such an extent that they can assess them with respect to their potential for literary knowledge.

CLAUDINE MOULIN and CHRISTOF SCHÖCH add an historical perspective to the phenomenon of undogmatic reading in their contribution *Cesare Beccaria's* Dei Delitti e delle pene *(1764). Approaching the Multilingual Textual and Paratextual Tradition from an (Undogmatic) Digital Point of View*. Beccaria's legal treatise exists in a multitude of translations and variants, which is why the text has become a fundamental contribution to modern criminal law. The translations and variants often modify and supplement the original text significantly and can therefore be seen as an example of

undogmatic reading themselves. This complex network of translations and editions can be reconstructed in part through close attention to the rich paratexts. Moulin and Schöch describe a transdisciplinary and multilingual project for the digitally supported investigation of this corpus, most of which is now available in computer-readable form. The digital corpus offers four types of annotations: (1) alignment information that can link each sentence to its realisations in other editions and translations, (2) linguistic annotation like part-of-speech or lemmatisation, (3) spelling normalisation and (4) meta-lexical annotations that concern key legal concepts. Especially the fourth type can be classified as interpretive and hermeneutic. The historical multilingual approach makes clear that words and meanings do not simply correspond, but must always be contextualised.

THOMAS WEITIN and A. VANESSA MÖSCHNER report on a scientific experiment in the field of reading research in the closing contribution *Lässt sich die Grenze zwischen Realismus und Früher Moderne empirisch bestimmen? Ergebnisse und Fragen eines Eye-Tracking-Experiments mit zwei Brunnengedichten von C.F. Meyer und R.M. Rilke*. The aim of the experiment was to make the epochal difference between realism and early modernism statistically significantly measurable with regards to two poems about the same fountain by tracking and evaluating the eye movements of 48 test persons while they read the poems. For this purpose, the authors empirically operationalised categories from Wolfgang Iser's aesthetics of reception by virtually eye-tracking protentions and retentions based on reading speed, stopping and reassurance with technical support. Weitin and Möschner also measured whether a priming by a previously shown video of a fountain to half of the test persons influenced the results. In line with stylistic epoch ideals, it turned out that the realistic poem is easier to read, while the modern poem narrates less vividly and turns the irritation into a programme. The contribution thus exemplifies the operationalisation of supposedly elusive 'soft' Humanities categories by means of measurability.

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