



From ticks to tricks of time: narrative and temporal configuration of experience

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Abstract

The paper examines narrative operations involved in the temporal configuration of experience within a general framework of the phenomenological treatment of temporality. Taking as its point of departure a most basic instantiation of temporal experience, namely that of a ticking clock, it argues that the narrative dynamics which give form and charge the interval between tick and tock with significant duration are directly derived from the time-constituting operations of the embodied mind and, as such, are independent of their linguistic articulations. Thus, it critically invokes Husserl's account of time-consciousness, more specifically his model of retention-primary impression-protection, first in the context of Francisco J. Varela's account of the neurodynamics of lived time, and then with reference to David Carr's argument for continuity between narrative and the world of our experiences and actions. Building on these critical trajectories, the paper outlines how proto-narrative elements of lived time form a basis for the properly narrative operation of emplotment and, in its final section, discusses some of the complex relations between lived time and narrative time by contrasting Carr's account of narrative with Paul Ricoeur's model of triple mimesis.

Keywords Narrative · Experience · Temporality · Neurodynamics of time-consciousness · Narrative time

1 Introduction

This paper seeks to discuss the narrative dynamics involved in the temporal configuration of experience by delineating a critical trajectory that links proto-narrative elements of lived time with the poetics of emplotment. In order to study the connection between lived time and narrative time, the discussion will begin by examining

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experience and will then place this connection within the theoretical models of narrative developed by David Carr and Paul Ricoeur. Accordingly as a point of departure, the ticking clock will be taken as a most basic and paradigmatic instantiation of temporal experience.¹ How are our narrative faculties engaged in handling this crude form of lived temporality? What kind of structure do they supply when processing what appears to be a simple succession of sounds? Can we take these narrative dynamics as a basis for the more complex and nuanced articulations of time that we encounter in historiography or cultural and literary narratives? If so, how does this contribute to the properly narrative operation of emplotment? These are the main questions that animate my inquiry. I will attempt to answer them in the nine sections of this paper, which taken together provide a rough outline of the narrative faculties which assist us in understanding and engaging with the multiple temporalities and timescapes of our lives.

2 Beyond linguistic isomorphism

In our everyday experience a ticking clock is a simple temporal object, which nevertheless can engage our attention. Exposed to what appears to be a series of identical sounds at regular intervals, we do not experience the successive ticks as separate, unrelated elements. On the contrary, we discover within ourselves a deep propensity to impose an order and rhythm that converts tick-tick into tick-tock.

For Thomas Storer (1952) our response to a ticking clock illustrates the Wittgensteinian thesis that language pictures what it is about. Language as a system of creatable facts is correlated with certain areas of experience and can describe them “by creating a structure isomorphic with the structure of that experience” (p. 77). While most linguistic expressions and their semantic correspondences describe only implicitly the something they are about, there are also rare cases of so-called “primitive” expressions “whose explicit structure is identical with the structure of the fact expressed” (p. 80):

It is necessary, in such cases, for the structure stating words to be statements of coincidence or contiguity and for the spatial or temporal order of the fact involved to be of the same linear type as the order used in writing and speaking. Thus, for example, in spoken English, the description of a ticking clock as consisting of ‘a

¹ Horological dimension of the ticking clock as well as its importance for the idea of clock-time are beyond the scope of this paper. I am, nonetheless, aware that the clock as one of the über-technologies of the West has not merely affected various ways of conceptualizing and representing time, but also laid hold of the praxical and the experiential embedded in both the physical world and its cultural-social dimensions. As Jimena Canales (2016) has argued, the specific temporal awareness based on the ascendancy of clock-time can be traced back to the nineteenth century, when “time as ascertained by clocks became more important than time as determined by daily routines. A new temporal awareness based on the ascendancy of clock time affected modern life and modern science (evolutionary biology, geology, astronomy, and thermodynamics)” (p. 114). The humanities and philosophy were also affected: responding to the overwhelming ascendancy of clock-time, Heidegger (1992) complained “that once time has been defined as clock time there is no hope of ever arriving at its original meaning” (p. 55). Heidegger’s comment was obviously made with reference to his own project of analyzing the temporality of Dasein that cannot be articulated in terms of the binary opposition between clock-time and lived time. But in more general sense, his complaint reveals also the dominance of the horological paradigm and its power to conceal not only alternative conceptions of temporality but also the very experience of time itself.

tick followed by a tock followed by a tick followed by a tock followed by a tick followed by a tock' is, in some very obvious sense, identical in structure with the ticking of the clock (p. 80)

In the primitive expression of tick-tock we discover semantic correspondences grounded in “those obvious associations established by long usage between certain sounds and certain items of experience” (p. 78). Yet this obviousness can easily turn into a blind spot in our understanding of the dynamics of lived experience and its temporal configuration.

Kermode (2007) in his influential study *The Sense of an Ending* invokes also the example of a ticking clock to illustrate the operations of emplotment. Similar to Storer, Kermode regards the ticking of a clock as “purely successive, disorganized time” that we need to narratively process. “It is we who provide the difference between the two sounds; tick is our word for a physical beginning, tock our word for an end” (pp. 44–45). Using the emplotment principles, we give form and charge the interval between tick and tock with significant duration: in this way we humanize time by converting pure succession (*chronos*) into *kairos* – organized and meaningful time. Thus for Kermode, the tick-tock becomes “a tiny model of all plots” (p. 191) as it most clearly reveals how fiction organizes time by providing it with the form and significance it otherwise lacks. Time is humanized by fiction, more precisely by the operations of emplotment, and therefore the resulting organizations of shape and rhythm in spatial and temporal objects are illusory (p. 45). The use of fiction thus appears to be indispensable as “we can perceive duration only when it is organized” (p. 45).

Kermode's view has been held by other scholars who have studied the contribution of narrative to the temporal organization of human events and actions. One of the most detailed models of narrative configuration of temporality has been offered by Hayden White, who clearly shares Kermode's conviction about the indispensable nature of fictional emplotment in organizing temporal horizons and making sense of personal and collective experiences of time. In White's (1976) view, narrative is founded upon language, which is “the instrument of mediation between consciousness and the world that consciousness inhabits” (p. 126). Prior to both the superstructure and the base of cultural praxis, language is the primary medium for articulating human experiences. Following Roland Barthes, White maintains that narrative operates between the human experience of the world and attempts to describe this experience in the language. In other words, narrative is a form of representation that makes sense of the experienced world. Grounded on a linguistic foundation, narrative is a universal meta-code that articulates transcultural insights into the nature of the surrounding reality. As such, narrative is not derived from events themselves but is a form that the historian imposes on such events. Narrativization of events is achieved through emplotment: the historian “makes a plausible story out of a congeries of ‘facts’ which, in their unprocessed form made no sense at all” (White 1985, p. 83). The emplotment is an encoding of events in terms of plot structures and it is an essentially literary operation, similar to the procedures that we find in a novel or a play.²

² “How a given historical situation is to be configured depends on the historian's subtlety in matching up a specific plot structure with a set of events that he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind. This is essentially a literary, that is to say fiction making, operation” (White 1985, p. 85).

The question arises whether we can describe more precisely the “unprocessed form” of an object of our experience such as a ticking clock. A detailed description should allow us to see more clearly how the operations of emplotment engage in temporal configuration and charge what appears to be a mere sequence with coherence and meaning. To better understand the problem of narrative configuration of temporality at its simplest, most basic level I turn to Francisco J. Varela’s account of lived experience and its natural biological basis.

3 Neurodynamics of lived time

Bridging phenomenological inquiry with study of neural dynamics, Varela (1999) looks for the sources of time-consciousness in neural architecture. More precisely, he examines neural correlates that underlie Husserl’s model of internal time consciousness by providing “an explicitly naturalized account of the experience of present nowness” (p. 266). The adopted neurocognitive perspective reveals mental acts as “characterized by the concurrent participation of several functionally distinct and topographically distributed regions of the brain and their sensorimotor embodiment” (p. 271). Consequently, temporality is studied as a neurocognitive process based on the coherent activity of subpopulations of neurons and the experience of time as involving a bodily framing processes generated by self-organizing neural assemblies. This endogenously constituted integrative framework embraces sensory activation and motor consequences. The framework is explicitly enactive as it recognizes agents as situated and embodied, and their identity as based on emerging configurations of neuronal activity.

Varela argues that this approach can enrich and complement Husserl’s formulation of the basic structure of lived time by articulating his phenomenological account of protentional-retentional processes³ in terms of three neurological levels of duration: those of basic or elementary events (1/10 scale), of large-scale perceptual integration (1 scale), and of descriptive-narrative assessments (10 scale). To explain the retentional dynamics in terms of neuronal ensembles, Varela uses the example of the abrupt perceptual shift that occurs while viewing the Necker-cube: the gesture of reversal, as we flip back and forth between two equally possible perspectives of the cube, “is accompanied by a ‘depth’ in time, an *incompressible* duration that makes the transition perceptible as a sudden shift from one aspect to the other, and not as a progressive sequence of incremental changes” (p. 269, emphasis in the original). In neurological terms the reversal corresponds to a temporary stabilization of the cognitive and sensorimotor system and the experience of “depth” is correlated with the deployment of widely distributed and competing neural processes. “These various components of neural processing,” Varela argues “require a *frame or window of simultaneity that corresponds to the duration of lived present*. In this view, the constant stream of sensory activation and motor consequence is incorporated within the framework of an endogenous dynamics [...] which gives it its depth or incompressibility” (p. 271, emphases in the original). The integration of these different components that lies at the root of lived temporality, Varela points out, is not to be understood in terms of informational–computational dynamics. Synchronous coupling of neuronal assemblies

³ I will discuss Husserl’s account in more details in the following section.

occurs in vast and geographically separated regions of brain which “cannot be seen as organized in some sequential arrangement” (p. 272). Perceived time comes forth as discrete and non-linear, “since the nature of this discreteness is a horizon of integration rather than a string of temporal ‘quanta’” (p. 271). The temporal horizon combines the non-perceptible microphysical elements of the 1/10 scale into cell assemblies that emerge as incompressible and complete cognitive acts on the 1 scale. To put it simply, the subperceptual elements beneath the 0.3 s threshold⁴ are organized into the durational immediacy of the now (the correlate of the 1 level) that reaches back into the just-past and is directed towards the near future. The completion time of neuronal-level events is “dynamically dependent on a number of dispersed assemblies and not on a fixed integration period; in other words it is *the basis of the origin of duration without an externally or internally ticking clock*” (p. 274, emphases added). Lived time is not physical-computational as it has a complex texture, which is not an outcome of successive accumulation. Our temporal neural architecture does not operate sequentially but instead is founded on reciprocal determination and relaxation time.

Varela is not alone in distancing himself from the computational concept of time as a sequence-stream. Biological time is not the time as measured by the clock. As Buonomano (2014) reminds us, the biological solutions to measuring and telling time are fundamentally different across different timescales:

First, the biological components—be they biochemical reactions occurring within a cell or the emergent behavior of large networks of neurons—lack the digital precision of modern clocks. Second, the features required of a biological timer vary depending on whether its function is to process speech, anticipate when a traffic light will change, or control the circadian fluctuations of sleep-wake cycles. (p. 329)

The idea of biological “clocks” is therefore somewhat misleading as these timers do not rely on clock-like oscillators which use clear ticks to establish an absolute measure of elapsed time. “There is currently little evidence that biological ‘clocks’ on any time-scale rely on the counting of ‘tics’ of an oscillator. Indeed, even the circadian cycles of animals, which rely on the oscillatory behavior of biochemical reactions, code time in the phase of these reactions, not by integrating the number of cycles” (p. 337). If one were to visualize the “biological” clock concept, it would be a somewhat bizarre looking device: a silent ticker without an hour or second hand.⁵

⁴ More precisely, “[t]hese events fall within a range of 10 msec (e.g., the rhythms of bursting interneurons) to 100 msec (e.g., the duration of an EPSP/IPSP sequence in a cortical pyramidal neuron) [...] Behaviorally, these elements give rise to micro-cognitive phenomena variously studied as perceptual moments, central oscillations, iconic memory, excitability cycles, and subjective time quanta” (Varela 1999, p. 271).

⁵ “Technologically, we can use the same devices to tell time across the full spectrum of timescales: atomic clocks are used to time nanosecond delays in the arrival of signals from different satellites, as well as to make adjustments to the calendar year. Similarly, digital wristwatches are used to time hundredths of a second as well as the months of the year. In stark contrast, while animals need to discriminate microsecond differences between the arrival of sounds to each ear and the hours that govern their sleep-wake cycles, the biological clocks responsible for both these tasks have nothing in common. The ‘clock’ responsible for the millisecond timing does not have an hour hand, and our circadian clock does not have a second hand” (Buonomano 2014, p. 329).

Coming back to our example of a ticking clock, Storer's linguistic isomorphism and the temporal configuration theorized by Kermode, White and others are not entirely inaccurate as they correspond to Varela's 10 scale in which endogenous, dynamic horizons are linked together to form a broader temporal horizon. The events of the 10 scale involve our linguistic capacities and descriptive-narrative assessments. Varela thus does not rule out the explicitly narrative capacities that we employ to humanize experienced time, but requires that the narrative configurations on the 10 scale level recognize the presemantic organization of temporal perception. Within this neuro-phenomenological perspective literary emplotment operates on the pre-configured form of lived time. Instead of imposing an alien structure on the formless aggregates of data, plot grows out of the configuring and organizing processes that characterize lived and practical time. Unless we are determined to persist in abstraction and turn a blind eye to shapes and rhythm as given in our experience, we do not need to narratively glue the intervals of a ticking clock as they are already configured. The recognition of the presemantic configuration of temporal perception allows us to ground narrative dynamics in experience itself and explore the connection between temporal configuration and fully fledged narrative structures. Before we address the connection head-on, we need to expand Varela's model by refining our view of the "higher" neurological levels of duration and their noetic correlates. To this end, the next section will discuss Husserl's account of time-consciousness and then move to examine David Carr's argument for continuity between narrative and the lived world of our experiences and actions.

4 A phenomenology of time-consciousness

The backbone of the phenomenological treatment of temporality is Husserl's analysis of internal time-consciousness, which was subsequently developed by other phenomenologists, most notably by Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The ingenuity of Husserl's approach seems to consist in abandoning the tantalizing question of "what is time" in favor of how we become conscious of time. Instead of hypothesizing its nature, Husserl turned his eye to our experience of things and events that unfold and take time. Such *Zeitobjekte*, as he calls them, are configured and experienced against a temporal background.

Husserl frequently uses the experience of hearing music to illustrate the temporality of conscious life. Time consciousness reveals its essential structure in a phenomenological study of our experience of temporal objects such as melody. My perception of a melody is, first of all, an experience of temporal duration and continuity. Hearing a melody, I perceive successive tones as they appear, endure and sink back. The melody is given to me in a temporal continuum: a tone, after being given in the here-and-now, does not vanish utterly, but in its sinking back it leaves a trace. Our experience of the present, to use William James's expression, is not a knife-edge but a saddleback. We experience tones as temporally extended and ordered. The objects of our experience come into presence and then trail off. Essentially, they present themselves in three fundamental modes of appearance: as now, no-longer now and not-yet now. The now,

as the point of orientation, has a certain privileged status⁶ but cannot stand on its own; it is not an independent phase of an intentional act.⁷ It always appears in a kind of halo that incorporates the immediate what-has-just-been-past and the what-is-not-yet. All three modes are necessarily interrelated and form the “temporal fringe” or horizon in which all temporal objects are given. “During the flow of perception proper, not only what is actually seen is posited as enduring being in the flow of its appearances, but also what has been seen. And so too with respect to the future: What is coming to be perceived in the expectation of the further phases of perception proper is also posited as now” (Husserl 1991, p. 127). The current moment of the horizon is a primal impression of the hyletic data (of sound, shape, color etc) accompanied by what has just-been-past (retention) and what is not-yet (protention). Retention and protention provide a rudimentary sense of the past and the future. Retention is the immediate consciousness of the past: “the consciousness of just-having-perceived – immediately following on the perception” (pp. 169–170). Protention, in turn, is openness towards what is to come. It is important to note that retention should not be understood as the elapsed phase of a temporal object, and protention as the anticipated, future phase. Retention and protention are moments of the living present; they, respectively, retain the past phases in the present and pretend the future phase in the present. As such, they are not to be confused with the proper cognitive acts of recollection and anticipation, which we can initiate voluntarily. Both retention and protention are structural components of the intentional acts, which in their modes grasp the past and the future in fundamentally different ways. Recollection, to give an example, is nothing more than a memory, in the ordinary sense of the word, of the concert that I attended last week. Retention, in turn, is tightly bound to the constituting activity of perceptual act (my listening to a particular sonata etc.) and embraces that what has just elapsed in the sense of originally given. In phenomenological terminology, retention presents the past, while secondary memory represents it. Re-presentation [*Vergegenwärtigung*, *Re-Präsentation*] consists in reliving the past, that is in giving back the past once again as it was lived, as it was experienced in the original appearing and flowing-away of its running-off modes. In later studies Husserl rejected his schematic interpretation of temporality; consequently, he no longer regards primary impression, retention and protention as directly belonging to the perceptual act. They are rather moments of the “absolute time-constituting flow of consciousness”, which funds the temporality of all the activities in our conscious life.⁸

⁶ As John Barnett Brough (1991) notes, it is the point of reference for the temporal experience. “It is in relation to the now that things and events appear as past and future. Another side of the now’s role shows itself in the fact that I am conscious of a past object or event as something that *was once now*; similarly, I am conscious of whatever is in the future as something that will be now” (p. xxvi, emphasis in the original).

⁷ It is a falsifying abstraction to consider, as for instance Derrida does, primary impression and retention in separation. As Gallagher and Zahavi (2014) point out, primary impression cannot be reduced to “a direct, straight, and simple apprehension of some now-point S that is unaffected by retention and protention” (p. 92).

⁸ Absolute temporality is the ultimate horizon in his mature phenomenological investigations. “The flow is something we speak of *in conformity with what is constituted*, but it is not ‘something in objective time’. It is *absolute subjectivity* and has the absolute properties of something to be designated *metaphorically* as ‘flow’” (Husserl 1991, p. 79, emphases in the original). Husserl clearly distinguishes the flow from time-constituted objects such as perceptions, recollections. Each of the flows’ phases is purely intentional; there are no sensory contents, no apprehension- and content-continua on this absolute level of temporality. Essentially, the flow constitutes immanent objects such as perceptions in immanent time. “Perceiving is the consciousness of an object. As consciousness, it is also an impression, something immanently present” (p. 94). Primary impression, retention and protention are thus modes of “impressional” consciousness through which we become aware of what is immanent to the consciousness in its flow.

The triadic structure of time-consciousness does not operate in accordance with an additive function, but integrates the ‘impressionable’ moments of the flow into a field framed by a horizontal gestalt. Retention retains the living present that precedes it; however, the elapsed living present that has just been retained is itself made up of a primal impression, protention, and retention. This retention-within-retention points to an even more distant living present, again made up of a primal impression, protention, and retention. In brief, as the ever-new primal impressions are generated and each now-phase becomes a past phase, the elapsed nows are retained as what-is-past in an unbroken series of retentions. The now, which Husserl likens to “the head attached to the comet’s tail of retentions” (p. 32), incorporates also a horizon of protentions, which emptily constitute what is coming, catch it and bring it toward fulfillment (p. 54). In its pointing ahead to the future, protention remains indefinite: it leaves open the possibility of things being otherwise or not being at all.⁹ As Gallagher and Zahavi (2014) argue, the self-replicating activity of the triadic structure of time-consciousness has a fractal character: “any closer examination of primal impression (or retention or protention) finds the same structure repeated—again, not in an additive way, but in a kind of fractal effect” (p. 95). This effect is not generated by an overlap of protention and retention¹⁰ but “multiplies itself in such a way that any attempt to define primal impression in itself always finds the effects of retention or protention already included” (p. 95).

What emerges from Husserl’s analysis is a temporal consciousness that is different from time in an objective, cosmic sense. Human consciousness is not situated above or outside time. Being the opening onto the multiple temporalities of our experienced world, human consciousness is a kind of gaze that offers a perspective from within, so to say. On this account, the positivist conception of simple, moment-like experience of time must be abandoned as our most basic experiences are temporally configured. Even the minutest event in our life is characterized by temporal thickness, beginning and end. Time conceived as a sequence of now-points is an abstraction contradicted by the most basic instantiation of temporal experience such as hearing the ticking clock or a melody. Moreover, an event is always seen as a part or phase of a larger whole, as is the case of a particular note in a melody. The whole is internally articulated and secured from “melting” in its temporal surroundings by a closure that separates the given temporal configuration from what goes before and after.

5 Temporality of action

The unity of time-consciousness, as Gallagher and Zahavi (2014) point out, is not static or additive but is essentially enactive. As such “the temporal structure of consciousness should be considered as in-the-world, and in very pragmatic terms” (p. 95). Husserl’s account, therefore, allows itself to be expanded to account for the possibility of an enactive engagement with the experienced world.¹¹ Acknowledging this possibility,

⁹ A primary impression is in a sense either fulfillment or disappointment of its protention. In hearing a melody, my anticipation of the forthcoming part may be confirmed by what is being perceived or it may need to be revised. In the latter case, my surprise is caused by the fact that an established series of fulfilled expectations has just been broken.

¹⁰ See Rodemeyer (2006, p. 33).

¹¹ As Berthoz (2002) and Gallagher (2005, 2011) have argued, the retention-primary impression-protention model applies not only to consciousness but also to movement and non-conscious motor-processes.

Carr argues that the configured experience is not merely an expression of “now and then”; it always involves the tripartite temporal horizon, which includes the future. The protentional horizon is of paramount importance in this respect as it allows us to extend the field of configurational operations from a perceiving consciousness over to the sphere of human actions.

In our dealings with the world, actions are not something we merely encounter, but are rather events that we “live through”. Consequently, when analyzing action, protention should not be seen as a horizon on which the expected event appears. “In action the content of my protention is not a state of the world that I expect, it is something that I *effect*” (Carr 1986b, p. 34, emphasis in the original). When I am serving a tennis ball, my protention is not the expectation of sending a ball on its way; it is the outcome or completion of my action. Similarly, retention should not be viewed in terms of memory (as in the passive experience of hearing a melody) but it refers to all the successive phases and positions of my body that lead to the desired outcome.¹² Despite all its advantages, the protention—primary impression—retention model is in Carr’s view not entirely appropriate for the analysis of temporality of action. To appreciate the radical temporal difference between experienced and practical time Carr takes recourse to Heidegger’s exposition of the agent (*Dasein*) and connects Husserlian analysis of configured experience with *Dasein*’s projective character (*Entwurfcharakter*).

For Heidegger (2008), *Dasein* in its everyday concern and preoccupation is always ahead of itself: “Being towards one’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being means that in each case *Dasein* is already *ahead* of itself [ihm selbst. .. *vorweg*] in its Being. *Dasein* is always ‘beyond itself’ [‘über sich hinaus’], not as a way of behaving towards other entities which it is *not*, but as Being towards the potentiality-for-being which it is itself” (p. 236, emphasis in the original). To put it more plainly, human existence is not made up of mental pictures but consists in projecting the being of the agent. Engaged in acting, we are not merely concerned with picturing future goals but most of all, we intend these future goals. If in the temporal configuration of experienced time, our focus is on the present, the temporality of action, in turn, requires a shift from the present into the future: “[...] when we are absorbed in an action the *focus* or direction of our attention, the center of our concern, lies not in the present but in the future; not on the tools, as Heidegger says, but on the work to be done” (Carr 1986b, p. 39). Acting involves intending that results both in temporal and spatial arrangements of the phases of action: the future becomes salient and the past and the present constitute its background. Yet, despite the emphasis on the future, the agent is still posited in the present; thus, “[a]ny retrospective element of action (looking back on it as completed) can only be a quasi-retrospection” (p. 40). Moreover, even though protention connects the past and the present into an envisaged whole, the outcome of action is contingent upon a real future that can prevent, destroy or modify the future goal.

¹² Carr (1986b) rejects the phenomenological approach to action of Alfred Schutz as “[he] over-intellectualizes action, perhaps because his ultimate aim, like that of Dilthey, G.H. von Wright, and many others, is an epistemology of the human sciences and thus an understanding of action viewed from the outside” (p. 38). Contrary to Schultz, Carr analyzes action not from the position of an external observer but from the standpoint of a person engaged in an activity.

6 Temporal configuration and narrative structure

The analyses of experienced and practical time reveal that human temporality, even in its simplest, most basic manifestations, retains a configurational character and cannot be reductively explained as ‘a mere sequence’. Both experience and action are configured: they involve “at bottom a sequence of distinguishable events or event-phases that we live through or act out one at a time, one after the other, such that we are always ‘located’ at one such point a time” (Carr 1986b, p. 40). In the case of experience, the temporal span is configured into events, while in the case of practical time, the temporal span is configured into actions. Human time is lived as events and actions. The protentional-retentional grasp configures experiences and actions by providing them with unity, inner articulation and external demarcation. Furthermore, the temporal configuration entails the unfolding of a sequence whose phases are experienced as beginning, middle and end, suspension-resolution, means and end. This configurational operation is a strictly temporal ordering principle and as such it lends itself to a comparison with the organizing dynamics of narrative mode. As Carr (2014) writes, the human reality of action and experience “has a structure of its own that we are directly acquainted with and can describe meaningfully” (p. 68). This structure shares many features with narrative form: it is made up of temporal sequences of events and actions that are shaped into configurations by intentions that span future and past (p. 68). We can thus distinguish proto-narrative temporal structure on the pre-reflective level of embodied experiencing and acting.

The relationship between narrative mode and embodiment is a contentious issue in narratology, and one that has provoked long and heated discussions. The central problem of this debate is the extent to which an embodied experience can be characterized as possessing narrativity. More precisely, the problem concerns “the intensity with which [an embodied experience] exhibits the type of relations between the elements that we characterize as narrative” (Køster 2016, p. 899). Despite differences between theoretical models and perspectives, it seems that most of them acknowledge the temporal as a primary element characterizing a minimal idea of a narrative, which continues to be regarded by contemporary narratology as the principle mode for organizing our understanding of time (Abbot 2008, p.3). In most accounts the bare minimum needed for “generating the impression of narrativity is [achieved] through temporal sequentiality” (Køster 2016, p. 899).¹³ Unsurprisingly, as Dannenberg (2005) reminds us, “many key definitions of narrative hinge on the aspect of temporal sequentiality, and the repeated attempts to redefine the parameters of plot reflect both the centrality and the complexity of the temporal dimension of narrative” (p. 435).

And yet, as I have argued here, this dimension cannot be fully embraced if we ignore the question how narrative is related to situated bodily experiences. The problem of embodiment needs to be taken seriously by narratologists, not only, as Mackenzie (2009) has suggested, when considering the nature of the relationship between the narrative self and the embodied agent,¹⁴ but also when approaching the structure of

¹³ For a recent overview of different theoretical ways of dealing with sequence in contemporary narratology, see Baroni and Revaz (2016).

¹⁴ For phenomenologically grounded discussions of this relationship, see Zahavi (2007), Menary (2008), and Køster (2016).

lived temporality. In brief, the study of narrative time remains deficient and limited without an appeal to the richly ordered and diverse structures of human experience. Both Varela's and Carr's model firmly anchor narratives in embodied experiences of the self or the agent understood as a complex biological, historical, and social being. This anchoring is also a central component of Menary's (2008) argument, according to which narratives arise in quite a natural way out of sequences of bodily experiences, perceptions, and actions: "Experiences are the sequence of events that give structure and content to narratives. There may be additions and elaborations to this embodied sequence at a later time, after reflection, but the *temporal ordering*, the structure is already there in our lived, bodily experience" (p. 79, emphasis added). Embodied experiences and actions are as Hutto (2006) puts it, "ripe for potential narration" (p. 237) in the sense that they effortlessly offer themselves to explicit articulations. In other words, the specifically linguistic activity of narration, which corresponds to level 10 in Varela's model, requires the pre-narrative format and structure of experience. For Hutto, the distinction between the pre-narrative and the narrative proper is absolutely necessary as this allows confusion to be avoided in ascribing narrative practices to areas where they do not belong, such as non-discursive re-enactments of social happenings, and thus to assess "the importance of language in developing narrative capacities out of the pre-narrative fodder" (p. 239).¹⁵ A similar position can be found in Anthony Kerby (1993), who developing Ricoeur's idea that "the primordial experience has a pre-narrative quality or prefiguredness that constitutes a demand for narrative" (p. 42), has argued for the importance of language and narration as making sense of the key aspects of human experience such as emotion, values, recollection, and history. The central idea of Kerby's study is "that there is a level of human experience which *lends* itself explicitly to narration – but it is not in and of itself explicitly narrated" (Hutto 2006, p. 237, emphasis in the original).

It is important to point out that in Carr's model both experienced and practical time are configured irrespective of whether stories about them will be told or not. In other words, they possess an inherent configurational structure of meaning, whose existence is independent of its verbalization or manifestation in narration. The configurational structure can, of course, appear in literary narration. As a matter of fact, Katarzyna Rosner (2003) reminds us that some of its essential features have already been examined by Vladimir Propp in his study of morphology of the Russian folktale. Similar to the configuration of a perceiving consciousness, narrative unfolds in time and is characterized not only by durability and closure but also by its inner dynamism and the "auto-correcting" structure of its unfolding. Likewise in Propp's study, the sequence of functions in a fairy tale is not regarded as a textual component but as autonomous structure that generates meaning. As this structure affects all possible actions in the analyzed sets of the events in the fairy tales, the meaning of a particular event in a given tale has a relational character: the meaning of an event is defined by its effect, that is, by the subsequent event. This relational character of meaning is common to all the sequences of narrative events in the fairy tales. As long as the narrative is not closed, the meaning ascribed to a given event is not a definitive one and hence susceptible to modification. In a detective narrative, to give another example, the actual

¹⁵ In his later work Hutto develops this point as a response to Gary Strawson's critique of narrativity. See for instance Hutto (2016, pp. 11-16).

meaning of particular events and characters likewise undergoes continual modifications and is revealed only from the endpoint perspective. Similarly in the retentional-protentional grasp, the notes of a melody appear in sequence but remain within the frames of the same perceptual act. The temporal unfolding of a melody results in the change of a retention in the retention of a retention and so on. Every subsequent retention is not merely a modification of the previous one but affects all the retentional modifications from the starting point up to now. It is due to this retentional dynamics that we keep track of all the past phases of a perceptual process. Needless to say, we cannot only follow the past phases but can also re-interpret the entire configuration in a new act of consciousness and in this way change its significance for us altogether.

In the later chapters of his 1986 book Carr demonstrates how the configurational model can be extended to more complex experiences and actions. He argues that the configurational structure is operative in all aspects of our life. Our experiences and actions “[...] combine according to the very same principle by which their elements combine to make them up. That is to say, events combine to make up larger-scale events of which they become structural, not merely sequential, elements” (Carr 1986b, p. 52). Moreover, the elements that make up larger-scale events, “[...] while constituting a sequence at base, are criss-crossed with lines of resemblance (to quote Hume), contiguity, and causality” (p. 53). Actions, in turn, are guided by their goals that determine the temporal and teleological aspects of the performance. “The end in prospect or protention organizes retrospectively the elements of the action (some of them actions themselves now) that are its means, requiring not only that they be done but in many cases determining the order in which they are done” (p. 53). Thus, when our experiences and actions appear in larger structures, they are not merely sequential but have specific functions or values by virtue of the configuration that provides them with closure. The complex and larger structures ‘shape’ their constituting components by installing closure on their sub-levels.

Parallel to the extension of experience and action is the change of temporal dimension from retentional-protentional awareness to the reflective stance. The change of the temporal scale necessitates a shift simply because the retentional-protentional span is not good enough to account for complex structures of events and actions as they are frequently interrupted and mingled with other events and actions happening simultaneously. The reflective stance can manage the interrupted actions or events and retrace their criss-crossed connections. The recollection, and other ‘reflective species’ such as expectation and deliberation organize events into a unified whole so that the whole, not just a single event or sub-action, becomes thematic. The reflective stance provides intelligibility to lived experiences by virtue of its potential of *Besinnung* – “making sense” of conscious life.¹⁶

¹⁶ Carr draws here on both Husserl and Dilthey’s understanding of “lived experiences” (*Erlebnisse*) “as temporal wholes or configurations united from within. Such *Erlebnisse*, furthermore, are themselves dependent parts of larger wholes which make up the configuration of conscious life” (Carr 1986b, p. 56). He further notes that in the analysis of the temporality of conscious life Dilthey goes one step further than Husserl. “He [Dilthey] uses the melody not as an example of a temporal object we experience, but as a metaphor for the whole which experiences go to make up. Life itself, he says is like a melody, whose parts, experiences, are related to each other as are individual notes. The larger-scale ‘melodic’ character of life is not guaranteed by simply living through it” (p. 57). Accordingly, it is *Besinnung* that contributes to the general coherence of life, which Dilthey names *Zusammenhang des Lebens*.

7 From practical to second-order narratives

The reflective grasp is explicitly narrational: it configures the temporal phases of experience and action in a story-telling fashion. Apart from the temporal configurations, it has the capacity to produce three distinguishable points of view on the configured events: those of the story-teller, audience and characters.¹⁷ What makes it different from literary or historical narratives is its preeminently practical character. The reflective stance recognizes and articulates the natural and pervasive features of narrative in the lived world. Narrative is “practical” for Carr (1986b) in two senses:

[F]irst, practice or action unfolds in a sequence shaped by beginning, middle, and end, suspension-resolution, means and end. Second, the reflective, narrating grasp of these elements, the story-telling aspect of actions, has the practical function of holding the action together, organizing its parts, and doing so, if need be, in the face of changed circumstances. (p. 71)

Literary and historical narratives can, in turn, be characterized as “aesthetic” (in a very loose sense) and “cognitive” (i.e. as “the means towards knowing the past”) respectively. Yet, Carr admits that the distinction is not clear-cut. One can argue that already on the practical level, narrative fulfills aesthetic and cognitive functions. Similarly, literary and historical narratives might be regarded as practical as they are capable of explicating the course, meaning and consequences of actions and events etc. This practical capacity is regulated by relations to the social and cultural contexts of experience and action, in which literary and historical narratives are produced and received. Nevertheless these contexts should not be taken as the fields from which narrative dynamics stems. Narrative performs its practical function in the pre-reflective sphere before it is taken up by literary or historical narratives: “narrative has its first role in the pre-literary structuring and shaping of real life, before it is employed in its literary embodiments for purposes which may be purely aesthetic or purely cognitive” (p. 72). The “before” in the above quotation is logical, not temporal. Narratives in their practical dimension of shaping real life do not inevitably have to be subsequently embodied in literary and historical forms; they can effectively function in the absence of the forms. This position appears, at first sight, to be inimical to literary operations of emplotment and to play down their importance and sophistication in the construction of literary narratives. However, as I will argue in the remainder of this paper, this impression is erroneous as Carr’s model not only recognizes the narrative specificity of literary texts but also provides a basis for the inquiry into more complex and nuanced articulations of time in literature.

Narrative texts as literary artifacts, which Carr terms “second order narratives”, are not at odds with the practical narrative structure constitutive of events and actions, the so-called “first order narratives”. Literary and historical narratives spring from the world of lived experiences and action. They do not superimpose their structures on lived reality. On the contrary, they derive their narrative structure from the world of

¹⁷ For a detailed argument for the possibility of distinguishing these points of view in lived reality, see Carr (1986b, pp. 57-65).

human experience and action. Narrative is not imposed, as Louis Mink and Hayden White claim, on “[...] a virtual chaos of ‘events,’ which in themselves (or as given to perception) cannot be said to possess any particular form at all, much less the kind we associate with ‘stories’ ” (White 1981, p. 795). As our discussion of time-consciousness and its neurological basis has shown, even the simplest experience given to perception is configured. The lived reality is not a mere sequence deprived of any formal coherence and narrative is not an alien form imposed on the unprocessed and meaningless flow of life. Mink’s famous claim that “stories are not lived but told” (Mink 1987, p. 60) overlooks the configurational character of lived reality and the fact that stories “are told in being lived and lived in being told” (Carr 1986b, p. 61). It is not that we first live our lives and only then we share the stories of our actions with others. Narrative is intertwined with the course of our life: it makes sense of our actions and events by configuring them.¹⁸

Carr’s model of narrative challenges also White’s claim that narrativization of events is achieved through literary operations of emplotment. Carr neither rules out these operations nor denies their importance, but locates them in second-order narratives where they poetically configure the proto-narrative elements of lived reality. The second-order narrative such as novels, plays or dramas do not merely mimic or copy the first-order narratives, but they creatively re-describe the world of lived experiences and actions and provide us with narrative explanations of this reality.¹⁹ Narrative texts are not departures from the narrative operations in the life-world, but are rather its extension, sublimation and “continuation by other means”. Carr’s argument for continuity between narrative and the real world is thus at the same time a call for “their community of form”.

[...] I am not claiming that second-order narratives, particularly in history, simply mirror or reproduce the first-order narratives that constitute their subject-matter. Not only can they change and improve on the story; they can also affect the reality they depict [...] by *enlarging its view of its possibilities*. While histories can do this for communities, fictions can do it for individuals. But I disagree that the narrative *form* is what is produced in these literary genres in order to be imposed on a non-narrative reality – it is in envisaging new content, new ways of telling and living stories, and new kinds of stories, that history and fiction can be both truthful and creative in the best sense. (Carr 1986a, p. 131, emphases added)

One of the strengths of Carr’s model is that it provides a detailed account of temporality of experience in terms of narrative configuration. And yet from the perspective of a literary scholar or a narratologist engaged in an analysis of specific aspects of literary narratives, the transition from practical to second-order narrative is not fully elucidated. This does not really lessen the force of Carr’s argument, which is primarily intended as a contribution to the philosophy of history. And yet if we are to accept the “community of form” and a sense of continuity between literary narratives and the real world, we

¹⁸ For a historiographically oriented discussion of Mink’s, White’s and Carr’s views on narrative, see Ankersmit (2009, pp. 40–52).

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of narrative as a form of explanation, see Carr (2014, pp. 199–231).

have to be clear how the second-order narratives enlarge “reality’s view of its possibilities”. Clearly, the distinction between the practical function on the one hand and the aesthetic and cognitive ones on the other will not take us too far. A more cogent approach to this distinction, which Carr himself signals in *History and Experience*, is to consider the second-order narratives in terms of their authors’ intentions. Carr brings up in this context John Searle’s study of the logical status of fictional discourse in which Searle argues that no textual, syntactical or semantic properties can identify a text as a work of fiction or not. The identifying criterion can be found in the illocutionary intentions of the author that determine “how to take the statements made in the text—including whether the question of their truth should arise or not” (Carr 2014, p. 205). In the case of fictional narratives, the question about their truth-status is suspended as the author intends the statements not to be true and not to be taken as true by the audience. Historical narrative, in turn, makes claims about the real world by attempting to give an account of how things really happened. Both historical and literary narratives are products of the imagination. What set them apart are their distinctive intentionalities: the historical narrative inquires into the real as actual, while literary narrative approaches the real as possible (things that might be or might have been).²⁰

Furthermore, if Carr’s model is made applicable for the study of fiction, it must also acknowledge the specificity of literary narratives, which, needless to say, in numerous ways depart from the pre-reflective configurational operations (along with their “auto-correcting” structure) and often suspend the sense of closure that provides intelligibility to lived experiences. If we are to accept that narrative is truly “a primary act of mind” that enables us to negotiate and make sense of experienced time, the transition from the prethematic and embodied consciousness of time to noetic and cultural articulations of temporality that literary narratives make possible should be more clearly indicated. Such a detailed account of this transition has, in fact, been offered by Paul Ricoeur, who in his magisterial trilogy of *Time and narrative* appears to be heading in the same direction as Carr.

8 The narrative “community of form” and Ricoeur’s triple mimesis

Ricoeur, similar to Carr, grounds his theory in the close connection between narrative and the temporal character of human experience and action. “The world unfolded by every narrative work is always a temporal world” (Ricoeur 1984, p. 3). His central thesis is that of reciprocity between time and narrative: “time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience” (p. 3). Ricoeur’s model of threefold mimesis productively employs the affinity between the temporal form inherent in experience and the narrative structure: a prefigured time of mimesis1 becomes a refigured time of mimesis3 through the mediation of the dynamic of emplotment at the level of mimesis2. The mimetic circle seeks directly to resolve the problem of the relation between narrative and lived reality, a problem that is also central in Carr’s study. Ricoeur derives narrative from three main aspects of human life:

²⁰ There also border cases such as “virtual histories” exploring the forgotten historical trajectories of what-might-have-been, see Carr (2014, pp. 191-193).

semantics of actions, socially symbolic mediation of human events, and their essentially temporal dimension. The sphere of human action is pre-understanding in terms of certain narrative figures and mimesis2 configures “what was already a figure in human action” (Ricoeur 1984, p. 64). Addressing the possible objection of redundancy²¹ that mimesis1 is merely a meaning effect of mimesis3, Ricoeur explicitly speaks of “a pre-narrative quality of experience” and finds pre-narrative structures in the form of ““(as yet) untold” stories, stories that demand to be told, stories that offer anchorage points for narrative” (p. 74). He invokes in this context Wilhelm Schapp’s existential analysis of human beings as “entangled in stories” (*in Geschichten verstrickt*). The (as yet) untold stories emerge from the “prehistory” that binds them to larger wholes and constitutes their background. Schapp is also favorably invoked in Carr’s (1986b) study as one of the few dissenting voices that stressed the continuity between narrative and reality as early as in the 1950s.²² For Ricoeur, this continuity is not only preserved in the transition from mimesis1 to mimesis2 but also through the refiguration of mimesis3 that returns, so to speak, the configured stories to human reality. The model of threefold mimesis thus confirms the close affinity between the sphere from which narrative emerges and to which it returns.

Yet, this affinity is not as close and direct as it is for Carr. This seems to be the consequence of Ricoeur’s view on the paradoxes of time and the strategy he employs to resolve them.²³ His erudite review of the phenomenology of time from Augustine to Husserl and Heidegger aims to reveal its essentially aporetic character and the second volume of *Time and Narrative* is devoted to the argument for the impossibility of a pure phenomenology of time: “By pure phenomenology I mean an intuitive apprehension of the structure of time, which not only can be isolated from the procedures of argumentation by which the phenomenology undertakes to resolve the aporias received from an earlier tradition, but which would not pay for its discovery with new aporias bearing a higher price” (Ricoeur 1984, p. 83). Ricoeur’s striking thesis is that the paradoxes of time cannot be solved conceptually and that we should resort to “the poetics of narrativity [that] responds and corresponds to the aporetics of temporality” (p. 84). To put it simply, it’s not philosophical analyses but the poetic operations of emplotment that are capable of resolving the aporias by transforming purely successive time into lived or human time.²⁴ All in all, Ricoeur sees the experienced time as problematic and enigmatic. The experience of time is in itself “confused, unformed and at the limit, mute” (Ricoeur 1984, p.13). It is only through discursive narrative (*récit*), this poetic reply to the aporiae of time that we can make sense of time. Consequently, Ricoeur regards the aporetic dimension uncovered by philosophy of time as a partner in the dialogue with the poetics of narrativity. Hence, the threefold mimesis is, in his intention, part of a greater circle – circle of a poetics of narrative and an aporetics of

²¹ This objection would be valid “if mimesis1 were itself a meaning effect of mimesis3. Mimesis2 would then only restore to mimesis3 what it had taken from mimesis1 since mimesis1 would already be a work of mimesis3” (Ricoeur 1984, p. 74).

²² The first edition of Schapp’s *In Geschichten verstrickt. Zum Sein von Ding und Mensch* was published by the Hamburg based Meiner publishing house in 1953.

²³ See Ricoeur (1984, p. 6).

²⁴ As Ricoeur (1984) puts it, “time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode” (p. 52).

temporality. Narrative is, in fact, “a guardian of time, insofar as there can be no thought about time without narrated time” (Ricoeur 1986, p. 241).

Accordingly the dynamics of emplotment is the key to the problem of the relation between time and narrative (Ricoeur 1984, p. 53). Ricoeur describes the dynamics as a synthesis of heterogeneous elements. First of all, plot transforms a diversity of events or incidents into a meaningful story. Second, it brings together heterogeneous factors such as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, and unexpected results. Finally, it effects a synthesis of the heterogeneous in a more profound sense: it draws together different temporalities. Emplotment combines, in particular, chronological and non-chronological dimensions of time: “it extracts a configuration from a succession” (p. 66). Situated on the level of *mimesis*₂, emplotment is the narrative configuration that we typically find in fictional and historical narratives. It is grounded in a pre-understanding of the world of human action and suffering, a world that is characterized by a pre-narrative quality. However, the proper narrative configuration, for Ricoeur cannot take place in practical terms without the help of *mimesis*₂, with its dynamic of emplotment. It transpires that the proto-narrative structure of the practical field is dependent on narration for its articulation. Such an articulation should take the form of *mimesis*₂, which seems to suggest that both experienced and practical time will not be properly configured, unless stories about them are told, written or produced in broadly defined literature (including both history and fiction). Narrative configuration is thus essentially a literary operation; here Ricoeur comes close to Hayden White by underscoring the ways in which history and fiction are interwoven. It seems that Ricoeur emphasizes the poetic operations of literary narratives at the expense of the configurations of the practical field. While Ricoeur recognizes “pre-narrative character of life”, he underestimates the configurational dynamics of time-experience on the most basic levels of lived reality. According to his view, the pre-narrative structures of the practical field must be reinforced by literature before we can call them properly narrative.²⁵

This is the point that Carr cannot accept, as his theory shows that narrative in its practical dimension can effectively function without the help of literary or historical narratives. The poetics of narrativity is based on the pre-discursive and pre-thematic configurations inherent in the protention—primary impression—retention structure and its variations such as suspension-resolution, means-ends etc. “The historian does not have to ‘reinscribe’ lived time into natural time by the act of narration, as Ricoeur says; lived time is already there before the historian comes along” (Carr 2014, p. 209). As Edward Casey (2006) observes, much of the ingenuity and originality of Carr’s model is to be found in its claim that the transformation from the microlevel of human experiences and actions to the level of full-scale narrativity is not as extreme as we might have expected (p. 456). In other words, Carr’s model underscores the continuity of temporal structure between all levels of the narrational enterprise and shows that it is

²⁵ It is worth noting that Ricoeur relates *Time and Narrative* to his earlier book devoted to the study of metaphor, *The Rule of Metaphor*. In his intention, the two works should be regarded as a pair because of an important parallel that he draws between metaphor and narrative. Notwithstanding their differences, both metaphor and narrative are forms of discourse that achieve “synthesis of heterogeneous”. The former re-describes sensory, emotional, aesthetic and axiological values, whereas the latter operates in the field of action and reconfigures its temporal values. Metaphorical redescription and narrative *mimesis* are closely bound to each other as they belong to the same vast poetic sphere that transforms the world of human experience.

“narratives all the way down” (Carr 2014, p. 223) including, as I have been arguing, the neurodynamics of lived temporality as elucidated in Varela’s account. While Ricoeur’s triple mimesis is also directed “all the way down” to the pre-narrative world, it is, nevertheless, more ethically rather than epistemologically oriented.²⁶ The primary function of the mimetic activity is to transform the pre-narrative world and affect the ethical dimension of praxis. Carr is much more radical in this respect, as he not only acknowledges both of these functions, but also seeks to “ontologize” the narrative mode. He argues that narrative in its epistemological function is rooted in an ontological narrativity and as such it lends itself to a mode of existence that affects the historical and social reality as well as individual actions in time. The organization of praxis reveals its narrative “form” at the level of the constitution of actions and projects. Narrativity in this perspective characterizes not only historical knowledge, but also the object of that knowledge (Carr 2014, p. 230).

9 Concluding remarks

Despite all the differences of perspective, Carr’s model, as he himself admits,²⁷ should be taken as a complement rather than a critique of Ricoeur’s theory. While Carr’s account bridges the gap between narrative as a mode of literary production and the everyday world of action and experiences, it does so without undermining the distinctive intentionality of fictional narratives. It recognizes the imaginary in narrating and its capacity to envision and project new possibilities and modalities. By allowing us to examine the continuity as well the differences between the lived experience of time on the pre-narrative level and what Ricoeur (1985) calls “the fictive experience of time”, it provides an important corrective to Ricoeur’s account of poetic emplotment, in particular to its insufficient anchoring in the pre-semantic configuration of experience. Ricoeur’s model stresses the correlation between the narrative mode and temporal character of human experience conceived as a “trans-cultural form of necessity” (Ricoeur 1984, p. 52) by underlying the importance of cultural competence, linguistic capacities as well as the deployment of narrative techniques and strategies of representation. And yet the fictional articulations of time draw also on the temporal ordering in our lived bodily experience. While these articulations can and often depart from the pre-configured forms of lived temporality, they are made possible by the time-constituting operations of the embodied mind. Carr’s argument of narrative community of form, as I have been trying to show, allows us to recognize and appreciate the rich and diverse textures of human temporality as we move from the subperceptual neurocognitive processes towards the “higher” neurological levels of practical and lived time, and then towards the social and cultural contexts, in which literary and historical narratives are produced and received. This theoretical perspective is also applicable to literary and narratological studies as it offers a sound basis from which we can recognize the configurational, pre-narrative quality of a most basic form of

²⁶ In Ricoeur’s model ethical presuppositions operate on the level of *mimesis I*: symbolic mediation is concerned with the prescriptive regulations immanent in a culture. Due to the ethical priority with respect to configuration in the threefold mimesis, “poetics does not stop borrowing from ethics, even when it advocates the suspension of all ethical judgment or its ironic inversion” (Ricoeur 1984, p.59).

²⁷ See Carr 2014, p. 224.

temporal experience such as that of a ticking clock, and, even more importantly, it enables us to move from ticks to tricks of time—the creative temporalities and temporal experimentations that fiction excels in describing and studying.

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