

PROJECT-BASED ART AS NARRATIVE.

<http://josevicentemartin.edu.umh.es/project-based-art-as-a-way-of-telling/>



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1. PROJECT-BASED ART

The paradigm of contemporary art

Variables	Factors	
How art is considered (as...)	EXPRESSION	PRODUCTION
How we judge it (in terms of...)	SINGULARITY	BEAUTY

CLASSICAL ART:	Expression / Beauty
MODERN ART:	Expression / Singularity
CONTEMPORARY ART:	Production / Singularity

FROM THE OBJECT (painting, sculpture...) TO THE PROJECT

FROM ONE TRADITIONAL MEDIA TO MANY TRADITIONAL AND NEW MEDIA

- Interdisciplinarity
- Questioning the boundaries, expanding what can be considered art
- Dematerialization of the artwork

FROM AUTOGRAPHIC TO ALLOGRAPHIC ART (Nelson Goodman)

- The artist might not produce their art by his own hand
 - > manager or movie director
- Optionally, the discredit of craftsmanship

FROM SPACE TO TIME

- Visual arts > performing arts / cinema / literature
- The importance of context
 - > physical: installation / social-cultural: web of references

THE NEED OF A "STORY".

- Justification is as important as the artwork
- The explanation / the interpretation
 - > "user guide" (to give meaning/how to read, experience)

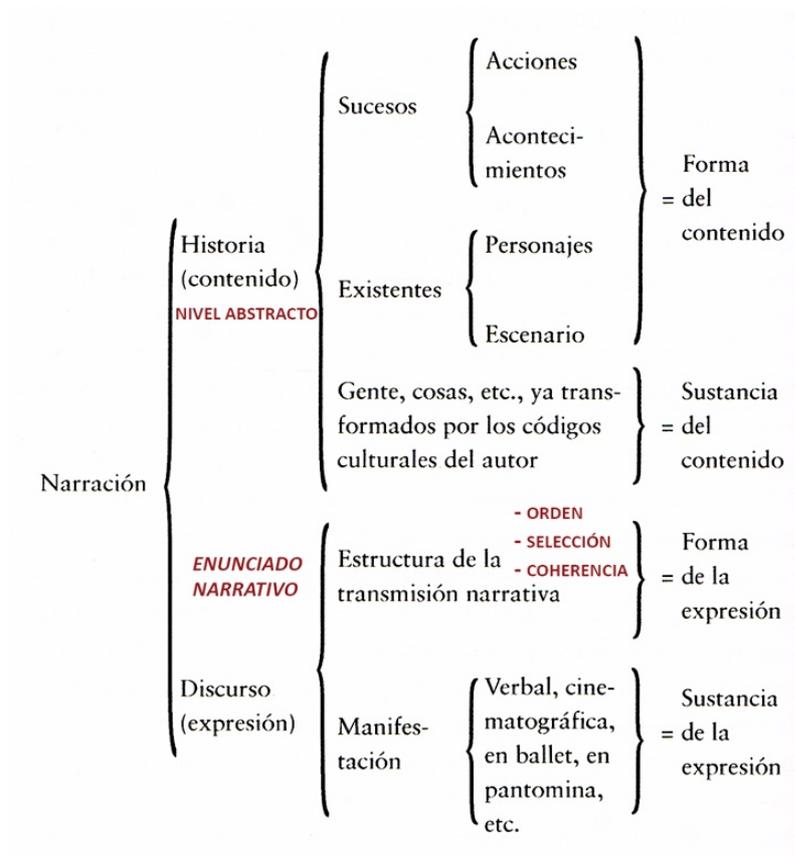
The artwork is not a single object any more:

It is a device -and a story- that provokes experiences / sensations

Artwork > DISCURSIVE (TELLING) DEVICE

REFERENCE: Spanish edition: HEINICH, Nathalie. *El paradigma del arte contemporáneo. Estructuras de una revolución artística*. Casimiro Libros, Madrid, 2017 / Original French edition: HEINICH, Nathalie. *Le paradigme de l'art contemporain. Structures d'une révolution artistique*. Gallimard, Paris, 2014.

2. STORY vs. DISCOURSE



Story/Discourse diagram (taken from CHATMAN, Seymour, *Historia y discurso. La estructura narrativa en la novela y el cine (Story and Discourse, The narrative structure in the novel and the cinema)*, RBA, Barcelona, 2013)

The **story** refers to *What*, to what the narrative is about: events, characters, timeline, etc.

The **discourse** looks at *How*, how events are presented: the medium, chronological order, the emphasis on one fact or another.

What is interesting is the way in which *story* and *discourse* interact as if *story* were pre-existing and, somehow independent of a particular *discourse*. The story precedes any material concretion, any medium, any selection of events, any emphasis, any *discourse*.

This potentially polymorphic character of the various *discourses* that come from a single *story* is evidenced in **transmedia** contemporary audiovisual culture, in the proliferation of diverse media, formats, narratives that are forged, precluded or postponed, in expanding fictional universes that materialise in very different media, establishing a web of relations that allude to a single *story* that is assumed as previous and conceptually closed, hypothetically defined and which foresees or anticipates each of the events, scenarios and actors that appear in the different *discourses*.

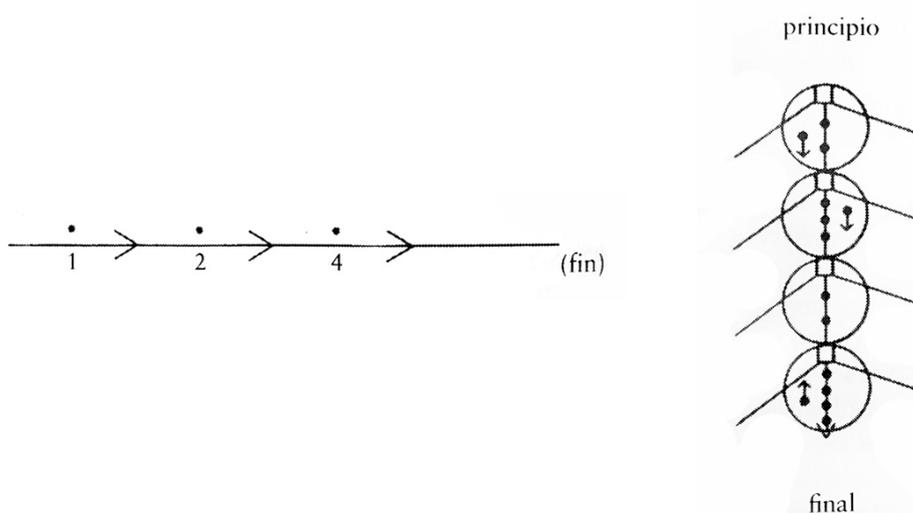
It is possible to **translate this distinction between story and discourse from literary theory to the realm of art creation**, establishing a parallelism between *story*, understood as the framework that precedes the *discourses* and that potentially encompasses them, with the idea

of art *projects*. The *project* as a previous concept, argument, proposal of meaning, *story*, which needs to be substantiated in an art *discourse* that is increasingly interdisciplinary, more and more composed of ramifications, progressively polymorphic, more interactive, more complex.

The *project*, the *narrative*, the *story*, is constituted as *justification / interpretation / guide* of the production-contemplation process of artwork, planting itself as a framework of meaning that provides coherence to the *discourse* with meaning –that is, the media, processes, particular interactions in which it takes shape– and thus becoming, by its primordial character, indispensable in the context of contemporary art practices.

3. ANTI-STORIES, NONLINEAR AND HYPERTEXT NARRATIVE.

Narrative logic



MULTIFORM STORIES

A single situation or plot is presented in multiple versions, versions that would be exclusive in our common experience.

They reflect different points of view about the same fact.

Based on the advances of twentieth-century physics: our normal perception of time and space is not an absolute truth.

It overcomes linear formats: they aim to show the perception of life as a sum of parallel possibilities.

Examples:

- *El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan (The Garden of Forking Paths)*, Jorge Luis Borges, 1941.
- *It is a wonderful life!*, Frank Capra, 1946
- *Groundhog Day*, Harold Ramis, 1993
- *Jackie Brown*, Tarantino, 1997
- *Existenz*, David Cronenberg, 1999.
- *Butterfly Effect*, Erik Bress y Mackye Gruber. 2003.
- *Rashomon*, Kurosawa, 1950

ANTI-STORIES

- They do not solve the events, but reveal a state of affairs.
- They do not solve the plot, but reveal it. In the first case solution, in the second one an exhibition.
- Focused on the characters, not on the events.

Examples:

- *Lost in translation*, Sofia Coppola, 2003
- *Short Cuts*, Robert Altman, 1993
- *Crash*, Paul Haggis, 2004
- *Happiness*, Todd Solondz 1998.
- *Smoke*, Paul Auster y Wayne Wang, 1994
- *Magnolia*, Paul Thomas Anderson, 1999

3. HYPERTEXT

Definition of Hypertext:

The hypertext is a group of texts and "documents" (called *lexias* or *nodes*) not hierarchical, linked together through links that the reader can activate and that allow quick access to each of the constituent elements of that group. Hypertext is therefore a type of interactive, non-sequential, non-linear (or multi-linear) text, that is, not based on a fixed sequence of letters, words or phrases, a text whose sequentiality can vary considerably during the reading.

HIPERTEXTUAL NARRATIVE

Characteristics:

- Break of the linear logic > multilinearity
- Reader participation:
 - Interaction
 - Open reading
- Change from the temporal narrative paradigm to another spatial

Use in the context of art:

- Need for a broader framework (STORY) than what is told or shown (DISCOURSE)
- Need for itinerary design (possible readings)
- Existence of a discarded material in each selective reading
- Renewal and breaking of a linear and predictable logic
- Fragmentary and holistic vision at the same time
- *Misse en abyme* / Labyrinth