Christoph Bode, Rainer Dietrich
(with material by Jeffrey Kranhold)

Future Narratives

Theory, Poetics, and Media-Historical Moment

DE GRUYTER
Content

Preface and Acknowledgements — VII

Christoph Bode

1 The Theory and Poetics of Future Narratives: A Narrative — 1
1.1 Future Narratives: A New Kind of Narrative — 1
1.2 What Narratives Do for You — 4
1.3 Approaching the Future I: Great Shock – Utopian Tales No Future Narratives! — 9
1.4 Approaching the Future II: The Unbearable Gravity of the Present — 12
1.5 Capturing the Openness of the Moment: Some Basics About Nodes as Building Blocks of Future Narratives — 16
1.6 Run Lola Run – Only a Pre-Cursor? — 21
1.7 The Road Not Taken — 24
1.8 Doing the Shuffle: Lola Runs Again, Books in Boxes, and Slatted Pages — 25
1.9 Decision (Choice) Theory and Game Theory, in Relation to FNs — 31
1.10 Into the Heart of the Matter: A Node’s Interior Life – Character, Space, Time — 42
1.11 Nodal Power — 47
1.12 Varieties of Nodes — 49
1.13 Interactivity — 51
1.14 Simulation — 54
1.15 As Node Leads on to Node: Nodal Structures and Their Representations — 56
1.16 Why ‘Narrative’ Anyway? — 67
1.17 Stranger than Fiction: The Failure of Prediction, the Virtue of Scenarios, and Why FNs Are the Key to Our Future — 75
1.18 The Human Brain as an ‘Anticipation Machine’ — 97
1.19 The Way Ahead — 105

Rainer Dietrich

2 Formal Models for Future Narratives — 109
2.1 Introduction — 109
2.2 Representations of FNs — 109
2.2.1 Nodal Graphs — 109
2.2.2 Aspects — 112
2.2.3 Consequences — 115
2.2.4 Reaching the same Situation in two different Ways — 117
2.3 Quantification of Openness — 118
2.3.1 The Spectrum of Consequences — 118
2.3.2 The Spectrum of the Agent — 127
2.3.3 The Degree of Openness of a Situation: Nodal Power — 127
2.4 Advanced Models for Similarities — 130
2.4.1 Similarity — 131
2.4.2 Formal Definition for Models of Type II — 133
2.4.3 Models of Type II without underlying Subtractive Aspects — 135
2.4.4 Path Dependency of External Aspects — 135
2.4.5 Computing Nodal Power in the Presence of External Aspects — 137
2.5 Reversibility — 139
2.5.1 Undoing Choices — 139
2.5.2 Degree of Reversibility — 139
2.6 Topological Classification of Future Narratives — 141
2.6.1 The Topology of the Nodal Graph — 141
2.6.2 Geometrical Classification: Homology Groups — 145
2.6.3 Classification including Aspects: Cohomology Groups — 148
2.6.4 Conclusion — 153
2.7 Appendix: Basic Mathematical Concepts — 154
2.7.1 Sets and Functions — 154
2.7.2 Basic Graph Theory — 155
2.7.3 Integration — 156

Christoph Bode

3 Future Narratives: The Media-Historical Moment — 162
3.1 The Historicity of 'Future' — 162
3.2 The Probability Calculus — 168
3.3 Insurances — 177
3.4 Projects and the Stock Market: Great Expectations — 185
3.5 The Coffeehouse and the Idea of Truth-as-Process — 190
3.6 The Plot Thickens: The Modern Realist Novel — 200
3.7 Future Narratives and Historical Mediality — 207

Works Cited — 217