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# SEMIOSPHERE OF NARRATOLOGY: A DIALOGUE OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

*An international volume of scientific articles*

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В сборнике представлены статьи российских и зарубежных исследователей, отражающие их опыт осмысления нарратива. Разнообразие тем — от теоретических проблем и методов постклассической нарратологии, игровых аспектов культуры, нарративных стратегий, семиотических аспектов художественных нарративов, нарративности СМИ и фотоблогов до использования нарративов в социологии и педагогике — дает представление о современном состоянии нарратологии как междисциплины, оперирующей разными языками (кодами). Идейным началом и структурным принципом сборника, который адресован филологам, культурологам, социологам и всем, кто интересуется нарратологией, полагается концепция семиосферы Ю. М. Лотмана.

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The volume features articles of Russian and Western scholars, representing their experience of theorizing on narrative. The diversity of the topics — from arguments and methods of postclassical narratology, the play aspects of culture, narrative strategies, semiotic aspects of literary narratives, the narrativity of mass media and photoblogs to the use of narratives in sociology and pedagogy — would give a summarized picture of the present-day narratology as a meta-discipline operating a variety of languages (codes). The ideological basis, as well as the structural principle of the volume, are based on Yuri M. Lotman's concept of the semiosphere. The volume is addressed to those engaged in literary theory, cultural studies, sociology and narratology in general.

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POSTCLASSICAL NARRATOLOGY VS. POETICS: DAVID HERMAN'S  
«HYPOTHETICAL FOCALIZATION» AS A TEST CASE

Abstract: In this article I discuss David Herman's thesis about «hypothetical focalization» (HF), as it is presented in *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* [1], in relation to different theories about reader interpretations (taken in a very basic sense) of narrative fiction. I will simplify the theoretical options to two approaches: the first is based on the assumption that fictional narrative is a secondary variant of factual narrative with the simple modifier «as if». Accordingly, it is assumed that a fictional narrator informs a narratee about persons and events in a fictional world using linguistic means that work according to common grammatical rules. The alternative, advocated by theoreticians such as Käte Hamburger [2], Lars-Åke Skalin [3; 4] and Richard Walsh [5]<sup>1</sup>, is a «separatist» approach, which assumes that fiction is a particular «context» or «language-game». According to this paradigm an author (or narrator) does not inform about objects but rather stipulates motifs that will have an aesthetic impact on readers. Such an approach can be described as pragmatic and it must, when used analytically, go from effects to poetics (in the sense of theory) since it cannot be assumed that certain forms have the same function or generate the same effects in different contexts.

An important argument for the latter opinion is that the former theoretical variant will, if applied to literary texts, generate «disquieting» interpretations that do not fit in well with the intuition of readers<sup>2</sup>. This implies, according to the critics, that readers interpret fictional narratives from the perspective of another poetics — in the sense of an internalized rule-system<sup>3</sup> — than the one assumed by the theoreticians advocating the former model. The putative counter-argument that theoreticians like Gérard Genette in his analysis of Marcel Proust [7] have come up with what are taken to be good readings is met by the answer that these theoreticians did not read the literature in accordance with their own «method» [8].

<sup>1</sup> I do not associate what is called unnatural narratology with this theoretical approach since their very use of the concept «unnatural» implies that they assume the traditional approach [cf. 6].

<sup>2</sup> «Disquieting interpretations» is used to denote interpretations that seem to be at odds with basic intuitions concerning the language game and sense of certain texts.

<sup>3</sup> When speaking about reading in this article, I do not refer to a professional reader but to the ability to read as a reader equipped with poetics — that is, a more or less consciously internalized theory of how to make sense of narrative fiction. I thus use the terms *poetics* to denote this «internalized theory», or understanding of the rules and constraints of narrative fiction.

Повтор событий используется и в повествовании о судебном заседании: *The family and friends in the courtroom cried (though, truth be told, they had been crying throughout). The Seattle Times reporter seated next to me cried. I cried. The camerawoman who was shooting video for all the television stations in town cried <...>* [14, p. 6].

Плач — сильная эмоциональная реакция, как правило, проявляющаяся нечасто, становится часто повторяющейся, почти непрерывной для слушателей. Прием повтора позволяет читателя «проживать» ужас событий, намеренно пропущенных нарратором, если эта информация оказала такое сильное влияние на всех присутствующих.

Неоднократный повтор единственного события является эффективным когнитивным приемом выдвижения наиболее значимой для героя или нарратора информации. В анализируемом очерке дважды показана сцена смерти Батз. Сначала читатель «видит» мертвую женщину через «нарративную камеру» пассивного, обезличенного наблюдателя:

*Other firemen and medics would go to Butz, but it would be too late* [14, p. 8].

Затем сцена смерти показана через сознание героини:

*A part of her knew Butz's fate. Still, she shouted into the night. Even if Butz couldn't hear her anymore, maybe someone would hear: «I love you, Teresa! Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight!»* [14, p. 8].

Кроме того, эта сцена является финальной сценой всего очерка, т. е. занимает сильную позицию, что опять свидетельствует о ее когнитивной значимости.

Таким образом, ритмизация темпоральных точек зрения способствует погружению в психоэмоциональное состояние героини, пережившей ритмичную череду неконтролируемых садистских атак преступника, а затем воссоздавшей в зале суда драматичную картину бесконечно повторяющихся актов насилия, отвечая на бесперебойно задаваемые вопросы прокурора.

Итак, темпоральная сетка является действенным способом подведения читателя к реконструкции мира героини — жертвы изуверского преступления. Погружение читателя в эмоционально-перцептуальное состояние героини осуществляется за счет представления событий в режиме сцен и замедлений. Драматизм повествования поддерживается ритмом чередования кадров преступления со сценами в зале суда и эпизодами «мирной» жизни, а также неоднократным «проигрыванием» ключевых событий с разных темпоральных перспектив.

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#### NARRATIVITY OF THE PHOTOBLOG

Annotation: This paper examines the storytelling dimension of personal photoblogs from the point of view of narrative semiotics, taking into account both deliberate and spontaneous narrativity, and the narrative sequences constructed by the medium as well as those constructed by the viewers. The author's intention is to substantiate further insight into the nature of the photoblog as an emerging genre of narrative, which opens a promising perspective for narratologically-minded cybertheory.

Аннотация: В настоящей статье рассматривается повествовательное измерение личных фотоблогов в аспекте нарративной семиотики. Характеризуются как

продуманная, так и спонтанная нарративность, а также повествовательные последовательности, создаваемые как медийным пространством, так и зрителями. Автор доказывает необходимость изучения фотоблогов как нового нарративного жанра, проходящего период становления, который открывает интересную перспективу для нарративно-ориентированной кибертеории.

Keywords: Blogs, photoblogs, computer-mediated communication, Internet, images, semiotics, narratology, narrativity, narrative sequences.

Ключевые слова: Блоги, фотоблоги, компьютерно-опосредованная коммуникация, Интернет, изображения, семиотика, нарратология, нарративность, последовательности повествования.

Human semiosis, as understood by Yu. M. Lotman, is a plural and shifting multiplicity of interconnected semiotic sub-systems and communicative practices. With the advent of digital media its complexity has grown exponentially, with new technologies, new genres and new practices providing a fertile ground for the development of semiotic sub-systems and modes. One may thus speak of the new and yet emerging digital semiospheres — not indeed as a separate realm of semiosis, because by definition all semiotic subsystems «function only by being immersed in a specific semiotic continuum, which is filled with multi-variant semiotic models situated at a range of hierarchical levels» — the semiosphere [1, p. 206]. With this proviso, digital genres, computer-mediated art and online communicative practices can be analyzed keeping an eye both on their specificity and on their continuity with «analogic» practices they develop. There has been much talk, both popular and theoretical, about the blogosphere — perhaps one such particular semiosphere. But, blogs being such a wide-ranging and varied phenomenon, it is perhaps not surprising that photoblogs as a specific genre have not been sufficiently theorized so far, in spite of their popularity<sup>29</sup>.

A photoblog is defined by *photoblogs.org* as

A website whose primary content is photographs displayed in a log format. A photoblog, therefore, is a form of weblog (blog). Whereas a typical blog uses text as its primary form of communication, in a photoblog the emphasis is photographs. Some blogs also contain pictures; some photoblogs also contain text. When is a blog a photoblog? When the emphasis is the photography and the images are not just used to illustrate the text [7].

Scheidt's (2009) thesis situates photoblogs among other web-based diary genres. To that extent, a narrative dimension is acknowledged, «on the grounds that personal narration is a common use of each format» [8, p. 40] — but the complex panorama suggested by the narrativity of photoblogs needs further

<sup>29</sup> On blogs in general, see e. g. [2; 3]. For a rough-and-ready sample of a variety of photoblogs, see [4; 5; 6].

specification. The present paper suggests some narrative dimensions of the genre that may point out further avenues of study for narratologically-minded cybertheorists. But there is much potential for semiotic analysis in this corner of the blogosphere, and this paper can provide only some pointers for the analysis of the narrative dimension of photoblogs.

A networked array of interconnected media may be used to develop a complex kind of narrativity, whose interest and novelty may reward some reflection on the matter. I myself keep a photoblog, a couple of videoblogs, several blogs, personal or thematic, which may on occasion become photoblogs or videoblogs — and also Facebook and Twitter, which are what they are and (moreover) may absorb or link notes from the blog, photographs from the photoblog and videos from the videoblogs, added to other photos or videos exclusive to these social networks, or to other lengthy notes which may be written directly on Facebook — although as a matter of fact very few people use Facebook (not to mention Twitter) as a blog in order to write lengthy notes or articles in it. Be as it may, these electronic media constitute a web or constellation of media with significant narrative dimensions, some of whose connections are automatized (pings, links, redirections, sharing options, «likes», etc.), and some are punctual or manual, or even merely mental and interpretive, representing and helping to constitute at the same time a process which is in itself infused with narrativity, namely one's own life.

Some aspects of this complex issue were addressed in my paper on blogs and the narrativity of experience [9]. Here I will focus on just one aspect of this narrativity, the narrativity inherent in a specific kind of blog, the photoblog (sometimes known as photolog) — more specifically the commonest kind, the personal photoblog, as against the thematic or the multi-authored photoblog. And I will use as an example my own photoblog — a typical Flickr photoblog, which has the advantage that it is one I know the best, from an insider's view<sup>30</sup>. Whatever I write about it may be extrapolated to other photoblogs to a greater or lesser degree, as most of the structures described here are quite basic ones and are shared by most photoblogs. Others may be more peripheral, and likely enough other blogs may exhibit aspects of narrativity not present in mine. It is also to be expected that each photoblog will develop its own narrative patterns, strategies, and preferences, within the panoply of possibilities allowed by the medium, or should one say media<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> The insider's view is essential in order to address some specific aspects of narrativity. My photoblog (URL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/garciala>) is quite typical in many respects, e.g. using many default options, although (like any other blog) it may be atypical in some others — for instance, in its occasional exploration of liminal modes of narrativity or representation, or in its sheer size (more than 20,000 photographs to date).

<sup>31</sup> Some elements of narrativity in photoblogs are also addressed in Badger (2004) [10]. On the narrativity of blogs in general, see also Walker (2008) [11].

First things first. A photoblog, like any other blog hosted on an automatized blog platform, has a structure which links it to the unfolding of real time — of the hours and days in which the user has uploaded photographs or worked otherwise on the blog. This automatized timeline constitutes the photoblog's basic temporal sequence, and the backbone of its narrativity. Let us leave aside, as merely worth mentioning, the possibility of its falsification, with technical adjustments which are beyond the ken of ordinary users. Therefore, the photoblog has a beginning<sup>32</sup>, a lengthy middle, and two kinds of ends: the (potentially growing and provisional) end of its latest entry, and the actual ending, visible only in retrospect — therefore, an open ending, and a closed ending, with an indeterminate zone stretching between them, as one never knows whether the latest entry is going to be the last entry. A formal closure may appear when the blog is explicitly closed by the author (although it might sometimes be continued), a *de facto* closure appears when a blog is obviously abandoned. Otherwise, the most recent photographs provide a more or less open and provisional ending — which, in standard blog fashion, appears last things first<sup>33</sup>.

We may enter the blog, therefore, through a beginning which is actually the (provisional) end so far: the present, or the recent past. And then we move backwards in time towards the real beginning — one might say, in narratological terms, that the *siuzhet* and the *fabula* of the blog follow strictly reverse chronological orderings. This retrogressive movement is a prominent aspect in the narrativity of any ordinary blog, not just photoblogs. We might compare it to the Japanese *manga*, which are structured in reverse order compared to Western comic books. It must be recalled, though, that the blog's URL is only a favoured entrance point. We usually reach a blog through the «present», the latest entry, but other ways in are common enough, through links in other blogs, through tags or through search engines. And once we are *in medias res*, we may move as visitors or surfers in any direction we choose. Actually it is not so different from the usual «chronological» order once we understand the structure of relevance: the most recent item is the most relevant one, and whoever wants to jump backwards to the beginning, and follow another order, can always do so. The default presentation is just a suggestion for the viewer/reader/web surfer, and individual visitors will direct their own reading or viewing path.

One is also a visitor in one's own blog. But from the perspective of the blogger's experience, and of the blog's development, the structural backbone of a photoblog is constituted by the gradual and sequential addition of photographs, as bloggers work on the blog and the days of their life pass by — as

<sup>32</sup> «alfaromeo». URL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/garciala/92662783/>

<sup>33</sup> URL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/garciala>

long as life lasts, or rather as long as the photoblog, a recent invention, lasts and keeps growing.

But apart from this main «life-sequence», there is the issue of partial narrative sequences, which complicates the issue and adds some additional structural interest. We shall deal with them straight away.

And we shall begin with the minimal sequence, where the notion of sequence begs the question of its identity: the sequence consisting of just one photograph. This issue is not specific to the narrativity of photoblogs, but has to do more generally with the narrativity of isolated photographic images, and with the narrativity of events<sup>34</sup>. It is not therefore central to our subject here, but nonetheless I will comment briefly on it. Individual photographs are quite different from one another in ways too numerous to comment or list, but some of these differences have to do with time and narrativity. Some snapshots depict what we might call a self-contained moment, while others suggest a whole story — they are narrative photographs. They may be, for instance, photographs of a special moment, very difficult to get unless you happen to be at the right place at the right time. These are highly appreciated by some photographers and by the public — and there are not many of this kind in my photoblog. These photographs depict with special force not just the story they represent — the narrative sequence of which the photograph is only an epitome — but also, and this is what makes them successful photographs, the precise instant, at best a crucial instant. Robert Capa's photograph of the Republican soldier being killed in action may serve as an example<sup>35</sup>. The narrative quality of this photograph reinforces that instant's nature as an instant, and the instantaneous quality of the photograph (as a unique, unrepeatable testimony of the event) is also foregrounded; perhaps paradoxically, the narrative background emphasizes the instantaneity of our access point to the same, provided by the image in question.

A photograph may tell a story, or it may be used to tell a story. Sometimes it tells a story quite apart from the photographer's intention or aims, perhaps due to unforeseen and peripheral elements: as noted by M. Badger, «multi-level narratives can form between images on blogs even when they were not intentionally constructed» [10]. And of course photographs may be used, like other sign systems, to articulate a narrative in a more or less deliberate way (See for instance Shuiman (2012) [6]).

Note also that the same photograph can be read as a narrative photograph or as a non-narrative one: that is, a critical metatext may emphasize or foreground

<sup>34</sup> There is a long bibliography on narrativity and on minimal narrativity. The reader may be referred to the discussions in Sturgess (1992) [12] and Pier and García Landa (2008) [13].

<sup>35</sup> Actually it seems that Robert Capa's photograph was a *simulation* of this kind of photograph, being a scene constructed with actors that was passed off as a live record of combat action (See: Pérez Abellán [14]).

the narrative elements, make them visible, or (conversely) play them down in order to situate the photograph within another frame of reference. The same may be done by any discourse framing or accompanying the photograph. This does not mean that all images are equally narrative, or that narrativity is only to be found in the surrounding metadiscourse. More general narrative paradigms determining the eventfulness of actions or situations help to establish a degree of objectivity regarding the narrativehood of an image; in any specific interpretive instance this natural narrativity of the image interacts with the modulation provided by the metadiscourse.

That is, once we have established the difference between narrative and non-narrative photographs, we must proceed to relativize and deconstruct it. To begin with, by emphasizing the observer's role — since it is what the observer contributes to a static image which helps turn it into an event in a story. Assuming for the moment that the observer is the one who is responsible for narrativization, we can proceed to the observation that the observer can narrativize any photograph. Any photograph contains a potential for narrativity, since any photograph, having been taken at a moment in time, is an iconic record of that moment, an index of what preceded it and a symbolic premonition of what might follow. It is thus because any object which can be photographed is also an index and a fragment of a grand narrative history — the history of how everything came to happen, how reality came to be what it is, through an evolutionary process of transformation<sup>36</sup>. Everything we see is a fragment — a potential metonymy — of this grand global story, *big history*; reality conceived as a great unified narrative. And every moment in time, every object (present or represented, real, imaginary or photographed) can find in its narrative anchoring in that comprehensive narrative<sup>37</sup>.

Thus, a photograph of a dead leaf such as «Símbolo de algo» [19] may be suggestive of temporal cycles, of growth and decay — of the passing of seasons or, symbolically, of life. On the other hand, it refers us to the historical moment in which such a photograph might be taken — using a given equipment, for instance. Flickr helpfully tells us that «This photo was taken on November 30, 2009 using an Apple iPhone 3G», a statement which should be treated with due caution. And the network hosting the photoblog and enabling the photograph to be seen has its own history and historicity. The leaf itself carries an inscribed biological history; the floor itself is potentially historical — is the leaf lying on the sidewalk, or on a car (See: [20])? Such a photograph

<sup>36</sup> Global evolutionary accounts of reality have always been among mankind's interpretive tools, whether in the form of myth or science. For an early scientific evolutionary narrative of the way *everything came to be out of nothing* see my commentary on Herbert Spencer [15].

<sup>37</sup> I have devoted several essays to the issue of narrative anchoring, notably «Harry Thompson, *This Thing of Darkness: Narrative Anchoring*» [16]. See also my notes «There Is a Tale in Everything» (2011) and «This Object Tells a Story» (2012) [17; 18].

may also find its place within a historical stylistics of images, as it was not dead leaves that were chosen by mankind as the earliest photographic subjects (it was rather the human face — see [21]). That is, the photograph of a dead leaf may be less narrative, but it is also narrative, since it refers us to more general processes and sequences which have a narrative dimension. Besides, a given observer may extract more or less narrativity from that image, as we have done here. Potential or invisible stories lurk behind anything visible.

This is not to deny that some images will be more immediately narrative for most observers, because they may represent identifiable and engaging processes of human action, because they may carry an intertextual reference to images which are themselves narratively charged, or because of the way the image itself may be already multiple, an actual condensation of several moments or events, not just one.

But let us leave aside the narrativity of single images, given that (as stated above) it is not specific to the photoblog, though rife in it. A narrativity more proper to the photoblog is that of sequences of images, comparable to those in a photo album. Any succession of photographs may generate or suggest more or less consistent, more or less clear or well-defined narrative sequences. Besides the inherent connection of the represented moments, the greater or lesser consistence and repeatability potential of the sequence will depend on the technology used for the generation of the sequence. On the whole, the technology of the photoblog may assimilate the sequencing potentials of previous technologies, such as (say) the family album or the shoebox full of snapshots. The album provides relatively stable sequences: nothing prevents us from reorganizing it, but it is not often done. Note that printed albums generated with digital online technology are different in this respect: again, the concept of the album may be reorganized, but each physical object generated by that technology is more stable than the old albums on which physically distinct photographs were pasted, stuck or kept under a plastic film. Here photos were originally put in a given order, and they tend to keep it for years, often during the whole existence of the album (with all the disgregations and partial reshufflings one may want to imagine). The shoebox, on the other hand, gives rise to more mobile sequences: photographs are disordered, they easily move to another box, they generate unstable and random sequences, they appear in unexpected combinations, different every time the box is opened. Again, the technology inherent in a CD or DVD presentation, a PowerPoint sequence or a photovideo introduce their own levels of potential variation between the established sequence, the viewing and the individual image. Any development in the management of digital technology (e.g. applications for the management of online photovideos at YouTube) may help modify current practices, eminently changeable in the age of the Web. 2.0 bubble, and may provide different experiences for manag-



ers and users of image technologies. For instance, a photoblog, too, may provide a digital variation on the shoebox technology when it is automatically shuffled with a widget — see for instance a widget showing random photos from my photoblog at the foot of my *Blog de notas*:

[http://www.unizar.es/departamentos/filologia\\_inglesa/garciala/blog.html](http://www.unizar.es/departamentos/filologia_inglesa/garciala/blog.html)

In physically solid albums it was (is) more usual to find photographs from the same period or sequence to be arranged together. The album may itself be a part of a collection of albums (an individual's, an event's, a family) in which each individual volume is devoted to a given period or is otherwise arranged (thematically, for instance). Thus, the physical album itself may be a narrative unit, subordinated to a larger sequence constituted by the totality of available photographs — on the family, for instance, or on the photographer's life, if we read the complete collection of his photographs as a fragmentary autobiography in images.

Photoblogs are also subordinate units in such overall life sequence of personal or family histories, although due to their public or potentially public nature they tend to include less photographs than the larger sequences found in the user's computer image files. Most paper photographs used to find their way into one or another family album; arguably, public photoblogs tend to be more selective and to include a lower percentage of the individual's digital photographs, all the more as the digital technology allows photographers to take many more snapshots than ever found their way to photographic paper, or to a negative, using analogical technology. Conversely, it can also be argued that printed albums have become comparatively rarer and more selective physical objects, including a much lower percentage of the available photographs recording an event, a family history or an individual's life.

The narrative sequence of the album, box, iPhoto files, or photoblog may enhance the narrativity of the isolated image. A single photograph may contain or suggest a story on its own—but, as it relates to other photos, some senses are limited or defined, others may appear for the first time, or they may become focused and developed. Two photographs constitute a semiotic system, in which parallelisms and differences are established, hypothetical analogies and potential histories are postulated. With more photographs, the possibilities of sense-making are correspondingly enhanced, and correspondingly limited and defined. Sometimes a few photographs set themselves up (or are explicitly designated in captions) as a sequence. They were taken successively, at the same place, in a short interval of time — or else are otherwise, thematically or stylistically, related. Whatever the grounding of the sequences, some of them are clearly set out as compared with others; in other cases, the sequence is doubtful, potential, fuzzy. A sliding scale suggests itself here, a continuum between the two ideal poles: *sequencing* and *non-sequencing*. A strong sequence may be

made of variations on the same photograph: photos of the same dead leaf, or of a series of dead leaves; photos of the same person at the same place, with or without variations, photos of the same event or group of people, photos using the same finish or digital treatment of texture, color or light... Landscapes, actors, clothes worn, lighting, anything may be a cue to generate sub-sequences in the viewer's mind. Principles of sequence-making are also diverse in thematic, formal or stylistic ways. For instance, a sequence of photos may be based on a single image, selecting or underlining in close-up the elements which appear combined in the image on which the sequence is based<sup>38</sup>. This kind of sequence is less common, as it has been done as a deliberate experiment. Usually sequences can be related to social events which invite the taking of photographs — family celebrations<sup>39</sup>, excursions, holidays — or travel, which is also tempting for cameras — or thematic interests: events, collecting (of images or of the objects they represent), pets, architectural icons or monuments, etc. Others may result from formal and compositional experiments — see for instance «Visto desde aquí» in my photostream [23]; or the sequences based on the distribution of leaves or on shadows and reflections. «Cielo de agua» [24] stands at the crossroads of two sequences or subsets — being a reflection of an architectural icon, the Basilica of El Pilar, at Saragossa.

There is some ambiguity in the term «sequence» as I have been using it: it may refer both to a continuous or a discontinuous sequence (e.g. photos made at an event vs. photos of the blogger's pet cat). The discontinuous sequence is, inherently, less of a sequence, and may easily veer into a mere subset with zero narrativity. Space-time continuity reinforces the sense of sequentiality: but discontinuous sequences may be identified, dispersed throughout the photoblog, due to the recurrent themes, forms, styles, people or landscapes: *Winter photos*. *Photos of the beach*. *Photos of Pibo*<sup>40</sup>. *Photos taken in Galicia*. *Self-portraits*. *Shadows*<sup>41</sup>. *Reflections*<sup>42</sup>. Etc. The blogger may add tags which effectively link these images into an «official» subset, besides the subsets or sequences constructed by the observer; depending on the software or site used, the tags may classify the photos in the photoblog or they may link them to sets by other bloggers on the same system; they also make them searchable on the web. But let us focus on the *sequential, temporal, narrativizing* dimension of these subsets. All these thematic groupings may suggest a temporal development, a sequence, a narrativity perhaps projected only by the interpretive frames of some

<sup>38</sup> See for instance the sequence generated out of the photograph «Una tarde en casa», *JoseAngelGarciaLanda's Photostream* 27 Jan. 2008, comprising 31 preceding images.

<sup>39</sup> «El fraileuco capturado» at *JoseAngelGarciaLanda's Photostream* [22] belongs to one such sequence. Equipment used may also provide its own sub-sequences: «This photo was taken on October 23, 2008 using a Ricoh R8».

<sup>40</sup> «Pibo me atormenta» at *JoseAngelGarciaLanda's Photostream* Dec. 4. 2009 [25].

<sup>41</sup> «Poniendo ojos» at *JoseAngelGarciaLanda's Photostream* June 21. 2009 [26].

<sup>42</sup> «Cielo metalizado» at *JoseAngelGarciaLanda's Photostream* April 10. 2007 [27].

observers. Children grow<sup>43</sup>; we get older, the cityscape changes. Any unplanned detail may suddenly reveal the passing of time, things or people lost forever, a story which was taking place and whose closure may take place suddenly, retroactively, as the photograph brings something back to our attention.

Special mention may be made of «out of sequence sequences» — photographs which do not belong to the general chronological order of the photographer's/collector's/blogger's life, or which otherwise disrupt the usual sequence-making arrangements. For instance, in the case of photoblogs, old recovered photos, newly scanned and digitized and included among the latest novelties. These constitute something like a photographic analepsis or flashback, often taking us back to a time previous to the opening of the photoblog — or of photoblogs in general.

A photoblog may provide options to underline or «officially constitute» some sequences or subsets in the form of albums, galleries, collections, sets<sup>44</sup> — or merely groups of photos given the same tag. All these may be selected on the basis of many principles, theme, date, style, quality — quite apart from any narrativizing element. Any objective link between the photos (proximity, tags, inclusion in a gallery) makes the sequence more substantial as a cognitive or communicative object. Still, the spectator's mind is the most active and versatile generator of sequences and associations.

Many of the narrativizing and structuring elements present in photoblogs may be present, often in more diluted or hazy ways, in conventional photoalbums, and more clearly so in the electronic albums provided with the operating systems of computers, like the Windows photo viewer or Apple's iPhoto. Millions of such «albums» are thus provided by default to users who otherwise would not be specially interested in photography, and the same can be said about the cameras included in the previous decade in many cell phones (and now in smartphones). Indeed, any digital camera is (unlike old analogic cameras) a provisional photo album in its own right. The specific difference of photoblogs lies of course in the networked connectivity, the public or semipublic nature of the album, the potential for interaction with other photobloggers or viewers who leave their comments and links as an inscribed part of the blog. It is in this sense, which paradoxically enough is only indirectly photographic, that photoblogs have meant a radical transformation of photography, through the transformation of the social practices and the social networks for the diffusion, exchange and use of photographs. Not the least of these transformations is the inclusion of the photoblog in a wider social network of blogs (such as Flickr or Facebook) and more generally in the universal cyberspace of information search, connection and linking provided by the Internet, a universal semi-

<sup>43</sup> «Foto de Nolan» at *JoseAngelGarciaLanda's Photostream* July 12, 2006 [28].

<sup>44</sup> «Sets» at *JoseAngelGarciaLanda's Photostream*. URL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/garciala/sets/>.

osphere indeed, in which photographs interact freely with an unpredictable variety of texts, images, materials and contexts — and users.

Besides, photoblogs include a continuously developing stream of tools, applications and gadgets, which make each of them a customized individual combination of multiple options, at the same time personalizing them and helping to disseminate new applications or little-known, minority stylistic practices. For instance, due to built-in preferences, every photo in a photoblog tends now to have a title (whereas photos in electronic cameras or computers have only an automatic registration, and paper photos as a rule did not have titles or registration numbers at all). Sometimes, of course, bloggers may just use the default numbering as a title, but there is overall a greater potential for photos to include titles, labels, captions, comments... Usually, a successful Flickr photo carries along with it a trail of appreciative comments, some of which may have critical significance. The narrativizing potential afforded by multimediality is also enhanced, and both titles and captions introduced by the blogger may be used to «add narrativity» to a photo, to relate it to an ongoing story or to bring to light the photograph's narrative potential, its insertion into a series of events or a web of memories<sup>45</sup>. Each of the blogging website's affordances, every new application or gadget added to the blog (or any gadget the blog is added to or seen through, such as a smartphone) enhances the connectivity of the image and its usability in unforeseeable ways, quite a boost upon the limited potential for interaction of the average photo in a classical family album.

The consequences as regards the narrativity of the medium are simply too many to go into in a general overview: many more detailed studies of specific blogs, new applications and specific practices would have to be carried out. Simply consider the ease with which electronic photographs are copied, circulated and multiplied in the Net. Or again, the implications for connectivity and search introduced by the use of tags, or the novel possibilities afforded by the geolocation of photographs. Flickr, for instance, also includes a geolocator, but it is Google and its followers and imitators that have allowed the massive crowdsourced intergration of photographs and maps for universal use. Many possibilities for multimedia interaction are opened up, although perhaps the major one as regards the narrative dimension of many photographs is the most basic and obvious one: the integration of language and image in a single universally located informational unit, with the titles and captions, and with the

<sup>45</sup> See «El jinete clásico años después», at [29]. The caption reads: «In front of the Pablo Gargallo Museum, Zaragoza. This sculpture was, together with its companion the modern rider, at the Barcelona Olympic stadium, during the '92 Olympic Games. There is on YouTube a video of José Carreras with Sarah Brightman singing «Amigos para siempre» in that stadium, and the statue can be seen there. It was in the opening ceremony of the 1992 Olympic Games that I saw them singing that song, as a matter of fact it was the first time I heard Sarah Brightman, the starting point of a twenty-year liking. The song has its own story, as well. There is a story in everything. That's how the life gets in.»

trail of commentaries which turn the photograph itself into its own informational center — the obvious place where universally accessible information about it should be inscribed and collected. The commentaries have also an intertextualizing function, relating the image to other images, providing links to other photographs or other sequences.

A whole poetics of the interaction between word and image is lurking in this new paradigm of photography. For instance, the caption may be transparent and explanatory, aimed at the explanation and clarification of the image — or quite conversely, it may be used to problematize the image, «make it difficult», or set up an enigma which the viewer may solve, bringing together the text and the image, or perhaps do both things at once — e. g. in «Tarde lluviosa» [30]. This riddle may also be an intertextual one, to be solved taking into account other images from the photoblog — see «Linza solita» and «Beti, Montse, Blanca» at [31; 32].

The title may (in the way titles do) allude to the subject matter or (less commonly) underline some formal or compositional aspect of the image; it may also allude to the moment the photograph was taken; it may refer to other received images or visual icons, literary works, cultural references, idioms, proverbs or sayings, the discourse of fashion or media, etc. — thus constructing for the viewers a possible context or meaning for the photograph, a preferred direction for attention and interpretation.

Links between images may thus be established by the images themselves, with their own iconic resources<sup>46</sup>, or by the discourse adhered to the image. The discourse of titles, captions and commentaries has the advantage of being expandible — it can be enlarged, rewritten, modified in hindsight, in order to comment on the changing significance of the photograph, as it is inserted into the blogger's life sequence or as it flows along with the general historicity of things. In this respect the textuality of photoblogs is like that of blogs in general, characterized by a close connectedness with the narrativity of experience<sup>47</sup>. Commentaries by readers and viewers may also introduce similar connections, cultural or intertextual references, which may be different in that they are not foreseen by the author/blogger.

The photoblog combines a title, an image, the author's commentary and often the viewers' comments as well. In this context, photographs become inter-medial; they were never self-standing in the sense that they take place in a historical, biographical aesthetic and technological context; but in this new paradigm of the production and use of images<sup>48</sup> these dimensions are much more

<sup>46</sup> Special mention should be made of the narrative implications of the *image inside the image*, or visual intertextuality — but that would deserve a paper in itself. See, anyway, some of the suggestions in Gállego (1984) [33].

<sup>47</sup> This is the subject of my paper «Blogs and the narrativity of experience» [9].

<sup>48</sup> See my review of a lecture by Joan Fontcuberta on the new digital paradigm of photography, in «El nuevo régimen de las imágenes» [34].

visible, information about them is much more accessible, closely linked to the image itself. In the new medium, an image is intertextually, intermedially and informationally linked to other images, other texts — and to additional groups of users<sup>49</sup>. Specific elements of the image are highlighted, and its meaning or significance is transformed and re-contextualized and thus the narrative potential of the image is multiplied. The highlighted elements may be narrative, formal, or thematic; whatever may be the case in each specific instance, the image in a photoblog is heavily mediated by its multimedial context and by the cloud of textuality which gradually adheres to it, often growing with time and adding further reframings to the image. And by the cloud of hypertextuality — the links, tags, and related websites, which exert an indirect but transforming influence on photographic practices — on the way photographs are made. And, perhaps just as crucially for their (narrative) significance, on the way photographs and ideas about them are viewed, read and circulated.

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<sup>49</sup> See for instance the «Narrative photos» group at Flickr. URL: [http://www.flickr.com/groups/narrative\\_photos/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/narrative_photos/)

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#### КРИЗИСНЫЙ ХРОНОТОП ЭПОХИ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ ЛИМИНАЛЬНЫЙ НАРРАТИВ

Annotation: It is often emphasized within the social sciences that narrative is not only literary, but rather socially dependent recount of past experiences. Special forms of such recounts are liminal narratives considered in this paper as both stories about crisis and stories that are generated by the transitional crisis context. The purpose of this paper is to reconstruct liminal narratives of the Russian orthodox believers dating back to the transformation times after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991—2003). We show the significance of the crisis chronotope as a universal interpretive scheme by which orthodox narrators conceptualize spatial and temporal changes, nationwide history and the «miraculous» private experience of the transformation period.

Аннотация: Нарратив как способ организации памяти и жизненного опыта стал в последнее время предметом пристального внимания общественных наук. При этом указывается на нарративную природу личного и социального знания как такового. Особым способом осмысления последнего являются лиминальные нарративы, понимаемые в нашей статье не только как рассказы о кризисных, переходных состояниях, но и как рассказы, порожденные переходным социальным контекстом. Именно таковым можно считать развал Советского Союза и наступившую за ним трансформацию. Целью статьи является реконструкция религиозного лиминального нарратива 1991—2003 годов. Показано значение кризисного хронотопа как универсальной интерпретационной схемы, при помощи которой