Towards a new interdisciplinarity: Integrating psychological and humanities approaches to narrative in foundational Literary and Media Interaction Research (LIR)

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Contents

1. Introduction: Are there anti-interdisciplinary reservations in the humanities?

Attempting to integrate psychological/ empirical and philological areas of inquiry seems to have never really worked very well. Even the mere idea of doing so and thus of creating a truly interdisciplinary research approach was never really liked much. In fact, many times one gets the impression as if the humanities and literary studies in particular were affected by deep-seated anti-psychological and, in fact, anti-interdisciplinary reservations, which, besides, in recent years seem to have strengthened rather than abated. And yet we don't know for sure what is really going on here. Looking upon this intricate situation from a contemporary perspective and taking into account the options available in the scientific community/ies today, basically leaves two ways of going about this question: The first approach (1.1) would be to collect initial observations and data which ascertain in which respects this assumption about the humanities is correct and, if yes, formulate a critique of this. The second, consecutive approach (1.2) would be to emphasize: what literary studies are actually missing out on if they indeed were to further nourish a somewhat anachronistic epistemological self-concept in which they position themselves beyond the legitimate reach of psychological and empirical research.

1.1 Some initial observations

As to the first approach: Anti-interdisciplinary reservations in the humanities are rarely expressed very openly – in fact they mostly are held back on public or official levels of institutional communication. Also, any such positions seem hardly tenable any more these days in which 'interdisciplinarity' is common place and a minimum requirement for all fields of research and scholarship – at least on the programmatic and rhetorical level of institutional operations. Rather these reservations generally remain covered – or truly unconscious – behind gestures of compromise formation and intricate strategies of defence, one of them, for instance, being that 'interdisciplinarity' for the humanities means to interact among the different philological fields. With unintentional frankness such readings of 'interdisciplinarity' become apparent in job descriptions for literary studies' professorships which formulate the requirement that the candidate collaborates with "the other fields of the department" (of humanities/ "Fachbereich") as was recently published in xx. For sure, since humanities departments hardly ever comprise psychology or social studies this represents a quite narrow reading of 'interdisciplinarity'.

With a greater degree of cautiousness, subtlety and maybe even calculated ambiguity this particular defence strategy may be found in institutional texts such as the Fritz-Thyssen-Foundation's introduction of its annual activity report in the section "language and literature studies". For, here too, explicitly encouraged are "cross-disciplinary" projects. However, the authors rush to add that "this above all refers to disciplines which also study issues of language and text" ("sprachliche

Gegenstände"). And the concept of "language" which is presupposed here obviously does not include psychology nor social research – since it is explicitly said in the text's last lines that this appreciation of language is fulfilled "for example with disciplines such as philosophy and theology" (140).

This peculiarly restrained concept of language and literature is by no means outdated nor a minority position – on the contrary: Given the internet website issued by the federal government's ministry for education and research when announcing the "Year of the Humanities" in 2007, this position seems to be stronger than ever. For, if one turns the pages of the "ABC of Humanity", which was the – quite ambitious – motto of the year of the humanities and is at the same time a website device which allows the visitor to click each letter of the alphabet and have a humanities' key theme pop up followed by a short description and also – for what reason ever – by a short list of three to four humanities' disciplines which are suggested as being most conducive to the study of the key theme: None of the 26 key themes refers to a field of psychological or social research. Thus a theme like "desire" – for the letter "D" – is recommended to be studied with particular reference to "musicology" as well as "art and theatre history". Accordingly, the home page of the site states explicitly – once again without any apparent reason for doing so – that the humanities are "not primarily defined by their immediate societal usefulness", which, of course, does it make less indispensable to consult psychological areas of expertise.

With the utmost clearness and unambiguousness, however, the humanities' anti-interdisciplinary reservations become visible – rather: come into effect – once one submits proposals of psychological research projects on questions of literature and the arts to national institutions of research funding. There, the response is point-blank: the project, one learns, "disregard the aesthetic autonomy" and "the particularly aesthetic character of works of art", it inappropriately "hands over the definition monopoly from philology to psychology", and it disregards the academic division "of disciplinary legitimacy and authority" ("die disziplinären Zuständigkeitsbereiche"). However, statements of such frankness are given only in confidential communication; they are not put into writing but – if at all – given in brief oral evaluation summary reports about the referee's confidential statements.

It is thus mostly the informal conversations with humanities colleagues which make it more evident how much an anti-psychological and anti-empirical habitus represents an essential of these fields' epistemological position and institutional self-concept. For instance, it is frequently contended that 'one could not put a literary text on the couch of (psycho-) analytical investigation' and more precisely: that one 'could not analyze literary characters psychologically' because 'characters are textual entities and no persons and thus do not have a psyche'. In fact, after a talk which I have

given recently on issues of literary studies and psychology a younger colleague from the humanities expressed what seemed a quite deeply felt irritation about this topic by polemically asking whether in analysing Goethe's *Werther*, for instance, one were to try to cure Werther, the implication being that there is no other imaginable use of psychology for – autonomous – literature and, thus, no reasonable use at all.

aaa From this it becomes quite apparent: As evidently nonsensical as such contentions are by any standards of scientific methodology, as breathtakingly self-confident and unyielding nay the attitude sometimes be in which they are put forth. Also, one can vividly imaging how fervently these anti-interdisciplinary reservations are enforced with the students in literature studies' seminars once they fall upon raising psychological questions – which, after all, is the most plausible thing to do, indeed, when reading literature. There, one would probably have a hard time arguing that, of course, fictional characters and their (inter-) actions do have a psyche, if you wish, and are no just text, made of ink and paper, because characters are conceived of by the psyches of their authors who use all their explicit and implicit knowledge about the world and the human psyche. Moreover – so one could further insist – these characters are perceived and mentally assimilated by the psyches of the readers who also draw all registers of their psychological knowledge and capacities to understand what these characters are about. In fact looking upon it this way makes it pretty clear: not only do fictional characters follow a psychical logic and may be explained this way, they do not even really exist empirically outside of human psyches and the mental processes of (re-) construction – except one takes the status of being a text, printed black and white on paper, to be the most essential prerequisite of existence and empiricity in human life, which is why a narration theorist as Alan Palmer who does not hold an academic position advocates the systematic „study of fictional minds" as a „clearly defined and discrete subject area in its own right within narrative theory" (xx).

Yet, mainstream literary studies' epistemological position seems to be largely unimpressed by and inaccessible to such argumentations. Given the unanimously adhered to statute of the "autonomy of art", psychological or empirical questions seems to be considered 'incommensurable' to the study of literature and cultural phenomena. Or else they are – in an even more far-reaching implication – declared to be 'un-researchable' in principle, as the linguist Uta Quasthoff already pointed out in 1980 (1980, S. 131-148).

Such anti-psychological and anti-interdisciplinary reservations are not only found in more informal contexts as conversations, seminar discussions, or non-public off the records statements. One will also encounter them in what are considered sources of basic knowledge of the field as, for instance, handbooks and introductions to literary studies. There, interestingly, they are backed by systematic

argumentation. For instance, in Arnold/ Detering's authoritative „Essentials of literature studies" it is clearly stated that any „hypothesis about the behaviour and feeling of a literary character is not empirical", the implication being that such hypotheses are not permissible in literary studies nor, in fact, in any other research, because only hypotheses about "real persons are empirical" – which, in turn, do not affect literary studies (483 xx). With astonishing epistemological naiveté it is held that, what is hypothesized about a person can be „definitively checked on" and verified/falsified, whereas hypotheses about "fictional characters […] cannot be falsified" because fictional characters are "in principle indeterminable". And the source which is referred to here, holds that concepts from psychology or psychoanalysis may only be used in a descriptive and "classificatory manner" and not in any "explanatory manner". And, above all, they may only be used in those cases where the author could possibly have been cognizant about, let's say, Freudian psychology (Wünsch 55 xx). Yet under no circumstances may one "explain for fact why a character might say or do something". As if "empirical persons" could really be "definitively check on"! As if their statements about personal impressions, thoughts, motivations etc. could really "definitively" be falsified/verified! And as if fictional characters' statements, "behaviour and feelings" ceased to follow a mental logic once the author is not cognizant about psychological models!

What is most striking, however, about such constitutive principles of a scholarly habitus is: with what ease and self-assuredness the humanities put literary studies in the beyond of empirical research. For, what this author contends with great determinacy – almost with pride and/or relief – is: literary studies are and may never be considered a part of empirical scholarship. Hence, if this position really has to be taken as an „essential of literature studies" then literary studies are bound, indeed, to be and remain being an anti-interdisciplinary field of scholarship. For, under such circumstances it can hardly be successful to raise awareness among these academic disciplines that they, too, are meant to belong to the enlightenment project of engaging in scientific research about the human condition. Because this would imply – according to epistemological theorist Hartmut Esser – to accept that the "fundamental structure of […] explanation [is] an essential component of all research dealing with the reconstruction of the subjective logic of human (inter-) action", and thus that the "explanatory" use of psychological knowledge (xx) may not any longer be ruled out. Moreover, Esser considers the "object mater of the quest for explanation" to be "(inter-) action" and adds that "explanation" will always also implicate to look at the "psychic causation of (inter-) action" (xx 205).

Not even the more innovative and theoretically ambitious literary studies representatives seem at all conscious of the methodological predicament at hand. For, these scholars tend to emphasize many undoubtedly valuable venues of broadening what they conjointly assume to be the all too narrow theoretical scope of literary studies. They instead opt for considering innovative aspects such as the

new media, culture studies, gender theory, post-colonial studies, discourse analysis, inter-culturality, hyper-textuality and many others. However, none of them aspires to establish a truly integrative interdisciplinary collaboration with psychological and clinical fields of scientific knowledge, let alone discuss the institutional and epistemological obstacles which one runs into when trying to do so.

Few of those more progressive scholars ponder about concepts of cognitive psychology (as 'frame' or 'script') without, of course, really aspiring to bring them to bear for concrete questions of text analysis. Few others think about neurobiological brain functions – or evolution theory – in humanities terms which most recently seems to have become a quite fashionable – and 'interdisciplinary' – thing to do. This, fortunately, does not really appear to support the – quite nonsensical – expectation that literary studies may gain much in methodological respect from looking at clinical and experimental neuroscience; however, the implication thereof sometimes seems to be suggested. Rather – and this again is less fortunate – one gets the impression that such new preoccupations are about making-believe that one is interdisciplinary while still avoiding to really expand the humanities' epistemological horizon and call into question their methodological traditions. A humanities scholar thinking and philosophizing about neurobiological brain functions only seemingly acts in an interdisciplinary fashion. For, while he, indeed, touches upon an issue which is normally dealt with by an academic discipline other than his own, methodologically he is doing what humanities scholars have always done: think, philosophizes, and interpret hermeneutically. Also, literary studies' main object matter – literary texts – is left widely untouched by such projects.

At any rate, this surely demonstrates that this paper's proposal to "integrate psychological and humanities approaches to narrative" in literary studies – as plausible as it might seem – is not an easily attainable target.

1.2 The potential of narratological interdisciplinary

Now, the question in as much these troublesome observations about the epistemological self-concept of the humanities are, indeed, correct, in what ways and to what extents they might be correct, and how it comes that this concept has so unchangingly been in effect for so long and even continues to do so in effect in these days of far-reaching interdisciplinarity – pursuing this question in more detail would constitute a research project in its own right. In this place, however, I would rather like to turn to what above was mentioned as the second way of going about this intricate situation and thus emphasize: what literary studies are actually missing out on by exerting such anachronistic epistemological self-restraint; and then proceed to propose an alternative approach which may serve as an adequate response to the situation.

Moreover, today it can be emphasized: Things have changed somewhat during the last decade – at least in the scientific community of the (inter-) action theoretical fields such as empirical socio- and psychological studies which means: Whoever is intent to engage in theoretical and methodological collaborations with these fields today, will meet with more conducive circumstances. Substantial fractions of social and psychological research have turned more hermeneutical since and are not any longer as predominantly quantitative and statistical as before: Qualitative-empirical research's methodology employs approaches of narratological sequence analysis which interpret and/or analyze the oral narratives given by individuals; they thus are hermeneutical in essence – albeit in a more systematic and methodologically rigorous manner than in literary studies. Hence, a potential of cross-disciplinary collaboration comes into sight which may bring together the text-theoretical humanities and the (inter-) action theoretical social and psychological disciplines as well as qualitative methodologies. At any rate, with empirical research in qualitative sociology having thus become hermeneutical in a sense, the old days of rather unproductive – and sometimes quite ideological – confrontations between the dominant hermeneutical and the small empirical fraction in literary studies may today be resolved – and effectively sublated.

Most favorable for further strengthening this new common theoretical denominator is the fact that literary studies at present experience a rekindling of interest in issues of (literary) narration. There, narration has since been conceived of as a transgeneric form of human (aesthetic) activity which may encompasse different sorts of text and media – and which also pertains to other fields than culture studies. This may serve as a helpful vehicle for future interdisciplinarity in the humanities since narratological assumptions and narration theories today can be found in many other fields such as historiography, law, various areas of social and media studies, in ethnography, in psychology, in psychotherapy research, psycho-trauma studies, and developmental psychology. In as much literary narratology will be able to effectively profit from this potential, consequently adopt an (inter-) action theoretical concepts and methodology of literature research, and thus integrate psychological and humanities approaches to narration, is, of course, still an open question. The particular approach of narratological Literary and Media Interaction Research (LIR) which I have developed over the last couple of years might lend itself to giving an example of how such research under the sign of "new interdisciplinarity" might actually look like.

2. LIR's core research questions, societal relevance, and theoretical base assumptions

In the following, I will lay out LIR's basic scientific objectives and research questions, explicate its interdisciplinary methodology, and give outlines of some concrete research projects which exemplify how LIR's overall objectives may be met by actual research work. In so doing I will

attempt to underline that an approach which is truly interdisciplinary – and, as it were, inter-narratological – will enable us to pursue culture studies in a way which also is more immediately applicable and relevant to contemporary societies' and citizens' questions than may have generally been the case with humanities scholarship (the academic mainstream of which still expressively insists, as we saw above, on being "not primarily defined by their immediate societal usefulness").

The essential goal of narratological Literary and Media Interaction Research is to better understand what people actually do when they interact with fictional narratives, i.e. what precisely happens with individuals in mental, psycho-biographical and developmental respects when they – in the course of their life-time personality development – read novels, engage in aesthetic experiences, and/or consume (or else write/produce) fictional media narratives.

Hence, LIR's core research questions are: How do individuals – given their personal and biographical dispositions – mentally interact with literary texts, aesthetic objects and media productions; in particular with those, which they identify as having been or still being of high personal significance to them? How do an individual's experiences in reading and media interaction relate to her/is personal life history and to the patterns of coping, which have resulted from that life history? More specifically: How do these media interactions correlate with the particular sort of mental identity work which people constantly and unwittingly perform in their every-day life and through which they consciously and/or unconsciously deal with particular biographical challenges of their individual personality development? This also implies to ask the quite difficult question: To which effects is it – be it (counter-) therapeutic or else (counter-) educational effects – that people employ aesthetic interaction in their identity work. And to which extent are they or are they not successful in using it in their continuous efforts to achieve 'sustainable personal development'?

In LIR's second main dimension the research question is: What role does the media narrative itself have in this interaction, given its specific content and form? How does a fictional narrative – which has been pointed out by an individual as having been personally significant – function in inter-actional terms? More precisely: What are this narrative's 'textual (inter-) action potentials' (regardless of how the person who identified it – or any empirical person – actually interacted with it)? How may we – while studying people, readers/ authors – not lose sight of the media narrative as text – and vice versa? How may one thus avoid taking the text as a mere 'trigger' of 'reader response', as previous empirical literary and media research tended to do? How may one instead systematically integrate text analysis and media interaction research?

It is evident already from the basic research questions how much a program like LIR is occupied with issues of immediate societal importance. For, asking how literature and media interaction really

works in psycho-social respects – both on the level of the text and empirical persons – and asking what effects it has or may potentially have for an individual in educational and/or therapeutic respects, also always means to ask how media and literature come into play on the level of societal integration, also of societal conflict moderation. In this respect 'sustainable personal development' is intrinsically interlaced with 'sustainable societal development'. Hence, one main perspective of any LIR project will always be: what specific kinds of pedagogical and didactical interventions may be conducive in teaching and/or other forms of culture-social work?

aaa More specifically in psychological terms, touching upon the issue of media interaction and societal interaction/ integration means to ask: How may aesthetic interaction contribute to tackling the quite challenging task of working-through the long-term psycho-social consequences of destructive occurrence and incidences/ experiences of violence as well as other forms of psycho-social stress. How may the 'transgenerational effects' of such occurrences be neutralized, which have been found to be quite pervasive and lasting and tend to propel the unwitting cycles of regenerating patterns of violent and (self-) destructive behaviour? Put slightly different this question means how media interaction – and the teaching thereof – may contribute to building up a person's or a group's mental resilience against stress and violence?

As to societal relevance, LIR's implications for teaching do not only have relevance in a general sense, they also are specifically relevant for the sector of academic literary and culture studies. For, they remind us how literature, theatre, and the arts used to be esteemed in the 18th century by intellectuals and philosophers such as Gotthold E. Lessing or Friedrich Schiller who considered the canonical 'works of high art' – put differently: the 'works' and the aesthetic and psycho-social interaction with and about them – to principally have a beneficial and cultivating effect on those who read and create them. Schiller, for instance, took literature and art to be a pivotal means of the 'aesthetic education of mankind'. Therefore, LIR's basic research questions about media interaction and personal and social development, as innovative as it is and as unusual as it might first appear from the perspective of today's academic mainstream of philological scholarship, also touches upon one of humanities' most long standing and enthusiastically advocated objectives: to effectively support humanistic culture and education, in other words: instil aesthetic "Bildung" (xx Michaelis HW web). Interdisciplinary narratological research thus may effectively assist the humanities to eventually achieve this very worthwhile objective in ways which are suitable to the conditions of contemporary media and knowledge societies.

The second characteristic of LIR which is immediately evident already from its basic research question is: how complex and challenging theses object matters are. Asking to which effects and

how successful individuals employ media interaction in their striving to cope with aspects of their life-history and with present challenges, and attempting to not only reconstruct but also qualitatively distinguish such developmental phenomena, is indeed quite challenging. For, this implies to estimate in a methodologically secured fashion in which respects an individual's mental media interaction and aesthetic practice may support or/and hamper her/is personal development in the sense of 'sustainable individual growth' and personal skill development.

aaa However, these questions are not only "challenging" in a general sense – and, unfortunately, also widely tabooed in most areas of culture and even social studies (which seem afraid of being accused to be judgemental about peoples' media practices, while all which is asked for here is to reconstruct the practices in their effects on peoples' lives). They are also at the same time most promising, in the concrete sense that they represent precisely those "challenging", "high-risk", "unconventional", and "path-breaking" research questions which the European Research Council of the EU's most resent 7th frame program has recently set forth as a major strategic objective. The EU has done so in order to inaugurate the build-up of a future European research landscape which lends itself to the development of innovative and applicable research dimensions (xx ERC web). And in doing so at this point in time, the EU's main target is to overcome those kinds of academic "conventional wisdom" and epistemological traditions which have recurrently proven disadvantageous in this respect. Thinking about this more thoroughly, spurring the pursuit of "high-risk" and "unconventional" research as it is laid out in the LIR program is a quite beneficial objective indeed – especially for the humanities. For, it is precisely those questions which effectively secure the humanities' applicability and societal relevance. They do so in that they help to avoid what most frequently happens to (inter-) action theoretical and psychological perspectives in the humanities: As seen above, more often than not they are basically declared to be 'un-researchable' or else 'incommensurable' to the study of art and cultural phenomena.

aaa Hence, at least one thing seems clear at this point without any further ado: Questions of such high importance for the future development of multi-ethnic media societies must not be declared un-researchable! If at all, they may – as we saw above – be called "challenging" and "high risk" methodologically. But the consequence of such attributing must be: to take to the task and begin working jointly on developing suitable approaches for the study of these questions. Another more specific consequence might be: These kinds of research issues present excellent opportunities for interdisciplinary narratological studies to prove their high scientific potential.

At any rate, one last consequence of looking at LIR's "high-risk" and "challenging" research questions is entirely indisputable: Attempting to successfully tackle these complex questions

requires drawing from various different disciplinary fields. Therefore, the LIR projects will combine resources from (1) the humanities, especially text-linguistics and recent narratological literary and media studies, (2) qualitative-empirical social and (inter-) action research, especially recent biography studies, and (3) developmental, clinical and psychodynamic psychology and psycho-trauma studies as well as qualitative-empirical psychotherapy research. And here the last of the three areas of resource may be of particular importance. Since psychology and psychotherapy research, as a matter of course, ask the questions of 'therapeutic impact' and 'conducive personal development' in a systematic manner and put them centre-stage of the disciplines' very mission.

aaa Concretely speaking, this joint effort of advancing a 'new interdisciplinarity' requires, first of all, *trans-disciplinary theory-building*: For instance, it needs to be spelled out and discussed how LIR's underlying theoretical notion of 'interaction' is understood to comprise both the social and the mental dimension of the concept. 'Interaction' is taken to refer to both intra-psychic and extra-psychic processes. And the more one thinks about this distinction with respect to what theory's main task is – i.e. guide the operationalization of questions for empirical research – one wonders whether this is a reasonable distinction at all. For, individuals interact socially with other people in real-life occurrences; and they at the same time always also interact mentally with associations and memories of occurrences and people which they have encountered in their past and which are now psychically activated by the present inter-actional situation. Hence, interaction – being both a mental and social phenomenon – always has the dimension of time and biographical memory (xx in Erll/ Nünning 2008), more precisely: of lived-through experience in the course of personal development. In a way, a person's whole life is co-present in any of her/is interactions, and interaction thus is biographically embedded.

Another theoretical base assumption about 'interaction' is immediately relevant to narratology: A privileged mode of – biographically embedded – (media) interaction is: *(co-) narration*. (Co-) narration brings a personally experienced event (and the accompanying personal associations/memories) into a narrative form, which means: into a chronological order and subjective logic and into a psycho-affectively charged situational context which is designed to illicit particular responses from the co-narrative interlocutor. As opposed to giving factual reports of occurrences and descriptions of things and surroundings, or else to leveling arguments about more abstract issues of though (modes of self-expression which may, however, be part of an unfolding narration), narrating an experienced event is 'privileged' in that it best serves one of the most important functions of human (media) interaction: to help the individual to understand and come to terms with her/is lived-through experiences, to develop personal knowledge and capability from it,

and to better anticipate future occurrences and arrange future (inter-) action. This seems to be what human individuals live for – and what they narrate stories for (HW Homo narrator xx).

Since this pivotal function undoubtedly holds true for co-narrative interactions both with real-life people/ occurrences and with fictional media representations/ narratives about such people/ occurrences – notwithstanding modal differences between the two (see below) – one consecutive theoretical ambition of the LIR approach will be: to re-evaluate the distinction between *fictional versus factual* narratives – rather the interaction therewith, in order to better take into account the parallels and interrelations between these two modes of narrative interaction. And, remarkably, this possible synoptic perspective – on *fictional and factual* narratives – only comes into view at all if one systematically takes into account the fundamental psychological dimension of narration.

With literary studies and humanities, however, – which almost exclusively handle the area of 'Narratology' proper today – this theoretical assumption needs to be explicitly underlined: Interaction both with fictional media narratives and with factual real-life narratives and encounters reciprocally contribute to the afore-mentioned (develop-) mental and narrative processes of biographical identity work – as well as of societal discourse work. Hence, the LIR-aproach is based on the – I think genuinely narratological – assumption that the interaction with fictional media narratives may have profound and lasting impact on a person's – and a society's – patterns of actual real-life interaction and biographical decision-making. And this theoretical assumption is key, of course, to LIR's claim to be able to approach issues of societal relevance.

Most importantly, however, the joint effort of advancing a 'new interdisciplinarity' – on a narratological basis – requires *creating a solid methodological frame* and developing a multi-method research design which is up to the task. In other words: How may we make LIR's seemingly un-researchable or at least highly challenging research questions researchable, i.e. approachable by methodically rigorous inquiry which then may be inter-subjectively evaluated? And how is it that 'new interdisciplinarity' of a novel narratological kind may have a pivotal function in this?

3. The LIR-program's methodological approach

3.0 Methodological preface.

The question of what qualitative-empirical interaction research is all about, how it is narratological, and above all: how it may contribute to inaugurating a 'new narratological interdisciplinarity', will in the following be illustrated in more detail. (And maybe it is a good idea for didactic reasons to – in parentheses – keep an eye on what literary research is in comparison to empirical interaction

research or rather: what it may become when it comes around to participating in 'new narratological interdisciplinarity'. For, LIR aims at integrating empirical and literary research; and in point 3.2 we will deal with literary narratives and how they may be analyzed in an inter-actional perspective, too.)

The object matter of qualitative social research is: oral narration, impromptu storied accounts and spontaneous narratives which individuals give in interviews vis-à-vis someone who asks questions and listens. For this reason qualitative research is in and of itself: narratological. Qualitative research's base assumption is that in (oral) narration the individual expresses her/himself in ways which are subjectively felt to represent the most authentic and thorough account of what s/he experienced in the past and thinks about in the present interview situation. Therefore, (oral) narration is considered to be the prime resource for anyone aiming to understand how individuals operate in their subjectively organized worlds – which, of course, always are intertwined in specific ways with fictional worlds from the literary and media narratives which these individuals consume. (The complement to this in the field of literary/ cultural research would, of course, be: fictional narration in literature or other media produced by authors – arguably in a less impromptu and a more artful manner – to be read, understood, and appreciated by readers/ viewers. And while the author, not dissimilar to a narrating interviewee, may feel about her/is fictitious narration to be her/is most authentic and thorough aesthetic expression, at least one pivotal difference to oral interview narration seems rightfully claimed: that the interviewee gives what is generally understood to be a factual account and the author produces a narrative which is fictional.)

The target of qualitative interaction research on the basis of narrative accounts taken from interview materials is to reconstruct an person's 'guiding inter-actional principles', i.e. isolate the basic principles of an individual's biographical development and decision making which characterize both her/is life history as well as the principles of her/is coping in the present and planning for the future. In a way, it is nothing more nor less than asking: 'What makes the person tick?', which, however, qualitative research asks in a highly systematical manner and with quite some methodical rigor. The reason why qualitative and/or biographical research strives to understand how individuals 'tick' – and also: how types of individuals and particular social groups function – is that it wants to find out how people and societies may best be assisted in arranging their individual and social lives in a most conducive manner.

(Literary research's complement to this may not easily be defined with any sufficient degree of conceptual precision. But, much of what is done in thinking about and interpreting literary works might be paraphrased as asking: 'What makes the text tick?', and: 'What is its guiding principles?'.

However, these questions are mostly directed towards 'formal principles' rather than inter-actional ones: Only very view literary interpretations proceed in ways in which 'ticking' is, indeed, understood in an interactional manner and which thus grant that texts in some sense imply interaction of authors and readers. And those interpretations which do so tend to present their interactional conclusions in a rather unmethodical by-the-way fashion. Narratological literature and media research might be able to effectively change this. At any rate, not unlike qualitative social research most of literary studies, too, is oriented towards the goal of supporting the society's – or even the civilization's – most conducive and, in fact, sustainable development.)

The 'guiding inter-actional principle' of a person's life history and modus of arranging the present biographical situation is not anything which is easily detectable, certainly not anything which the person her/himself , or any analytic specialist might always be able to spell out right away – or at all. These principles sometimes are quite concealed; and their biographical effects may take various guises and emerge in many different and unexpected sectors of life. Hence, the analysis of these principles implies much intricate and laborious work of systematically probing a multitude of hypotheses, weighing different estimations, and extracting the most operative and influential biographical vectors from the array of actions, occurrences, intentions, fantasies, impulses, opinions which an individual presents in her/is narrative and which have evolved from the complicated web of her/is life history.

aaa Even in cases in which the interviewee in her/is oral narrative presents a very clear and convincing idea of how s/he ticks, qualitative biography research in its well thought-through methodical approach employs reconstructive means which are likely to substantially augment or even correct the person's own estimation – if at all s/he has given any such estimation of a personal principle in an explicit manner (which is certainly not what a narrative interview asks for). Almost any approach of social and psychological research claims the possibility – in fact the almost imperative probability – of significant differences between the subjective and the analytic perspective, or to put it more precisely and in biography studies' terms: a difference between the lived-through, experienced *life history* of a person and her/is narrated *life story* (Rosenthal xx). All these approaches have abundantly corroborated the assumption that human intuitive (self-) perception and awareness generally is too unreliable and incomplete – also too ambivalent and conflictuous – to secure a great deal of accuracy in self-evaluating anything as complex as the guiding inter-actional principles of a person – let alone of oneself.

Hence an interviewee's narrative is less reliable and "factual" than one would assume. And yet any information as to the more elusive *life history* and its *principles* is – in however unwitting and (un-)

conscious ways – given by the person her/imself and it is intrinsic to her/is narrative account (unless it has been subtly imposed by the researcher, as it were, by the researcher's own narrative – in an unsuspecting and involuntary dynamic of co-narrative interference which must be effectively prevented from happening by means of methodological precaution). Therefore, the interviewee proper – the person operating as the narrator of her/is own life story (or of any other personally given narrative about a subjectively encountered experience) – might, in a way, not be the one and only agent of narration. Since, evidently, on some important levels of her/is account, the interviewee conveys personal key issues unknowingly, as it were between the lines of her/is explicit narrative. And this means: s/he communicates key issues the biographical meaning of which – for whatever reason, conflict, or ambivalence – s/he would not be able to point out explicitly.

As a result, in conceptualizing the interviewee as object matter of qualitative research, it might be advisable to distinguish two agents: the 'narrator' and the 'person', or more precisely: the actual 'interview narrator' and the 'narrative composition subject' of the interview which are co-narratively intertwined, but operating on two different levels of subjective awareness/ consciousness (xx Malte). Qualitative social or biography research hasn't yet explicitly done so, but the dichotomy of the two concepts of *life history* and *life story* unwittingly covers some of this distinction. Moreover, when Rosenthal repeatedly insists on biography studies' "particular attention […] to structural differences between what is experienced and what is narrated" (53) and when she insists on "latent structures of meaning" (55) she touches upon phenomena which in psychodynamic approaches are conceived of as being unconscious, i.e. as being situated in sectors of mental activity which are outside the person's subjective awareness and which are most often of a conflictuous nature for her/im.

The same implication applies to biography studies' notion of a "co-present" issue, i.e. of a biographical issue which is "co-narratively" and semi-consciously associated with a given narrational sequence – while not being mentioned by the interviewee in any explicit manner. Moreover, one particular and still quite young sector of qualitative research: psychodynamic psychotherapy research – which maybe hasn't yet been recognized in its full methodological importance to the field – is, of course, firmly based on a concept of selfhood which assumes different more or less un-conscious sectors of the self – and above all: differently situated vectors of the self's inter-actional principles. Since this field studies the co-narrative processes in psychotherapy and how they correlate with lasting changes in the person's state of mind. (xx Formmer, Boothe, Malte, Posch, Luif).

Hence, qualitative research has intuitively developed analytic methods which lend themselves to reconstructing how such more or less un-conscious (conflictuous, ambivalent) vectors of experience

and interaction work in a person's life, where they show in her/is self-expression – at the points of divergence between what a s/he narrates today and has experienced then –, and what impact these vectors have on her/is biography. Qualitative research has intuitively done so without having read much – and maybe even without having wanted to read much – about psychodynamic, psychoanalytic, and clinical research (which indeed constitutes an unexpected parallel to literary studies).

(All strains of literary studies would certainly agree that a text's guiding principles, too, are not easily detectable. And any naïve attempts to call upon the author as arbiter of this difficult question have surely proven what has just been said above about the interviewee as a seemingly factual and reliable narrator. For, he author, too, cannot be taken as reliably judging about such principles. Also, there too, is quite some awareness of the necessity to differentiate diverse levels of agency in literary narratives. In fact, the distinction between narrator and person, i.e. the text's narrative voice and its author, is what literary scholars are most acutely aware of (also the fact that a narrator may be unreliable) (Jannides xx Detering). Possibly, this awareness is even a bit too acute, if one takes into account that it usually correlates with the disciplinary imperative that only the narrator/ narrative voice may be a legitimate object matter of literary studies and the author – as "empirical person" – may not really be thought about in any profound analytic respects (Müller/ Kindt xx). Thus, here too, conceptualizing a double agency of narration might be advisable, and would imply: not only making the distinction between the narrator and the 'composition subject' of the text but also viewing both integratively and taking them equally serious in methodological respects. Hence, distinguishing the 'narrator' from the 'author'/ 'composition subject' and making this distinction operational in research design and methods is – for different reasons – not yet sufficiently achieved both in qualitative research and literary studies. Achieving it may well lay the grounds for inaugurating a more effective interdisciplinary collaboration.)

When qualitative research reconstructs the difference between the lived-through, experienced *life history* and the narrated *life story* – and thus unwittingly anticipates a conceptual distinction between 'narrator' and 'person'/ 'composition subject' – it not only touches upon phenomena which psychodynamic approaches conceived of as unconscious and conflictuous. It also quite unexpectedly touches upon an element of the imaginary, even an almost fictitious element in what is generally referred to as factual interview narrative. Since, plainly speaking, if it does not prove correct or sufficiently complete analytically what the person in her/is subjective view holds to be her/is most authentic life experience and her/is principles of interaction – and not even some hard facts in a truthfully given and authentically felt self-account may be accurate – than parts of a most factual and yet partially erroneous or misleading narrative may in some sense be fictitious. These parts are, as it

were, 'unintentionally fictitious'. (Surely, thinking about literary narration in comparison one cannot be certain that fiction writing, in turn, is not always also in some sequences and/or aspects, as it were, 'unintentionally factual'.)

 (Looking from here at literary research, one realizes that the distinction between fictional and factual may, there too, come into flow. Since hardly any strain of literary studies would go as far as claiming that the author's life history, her/is modes of coping, and the situational and historic context in which s/he operates as a person have nothing at all to do with the fictional creations s/he produces in her/his literary writing. For, of course, in any fictional narrative there are many factual elements which go back to the so-called real world and biographical context. This, however, is not to say, that very many literary critics are really interested in the interface of fictional and factual/ biographical elements of a literary narrative or even consider this interface to be researchable at all by any standards of philological scholarship. In fact, entertaining psycho-biographical and/or interactional hypotheses in text analysis has for quite some time equaled almost self-disqualifying oneself as humanities scholar – and probably still does. This notwithstanding, conceptualizing a two-fold agency of narrative for literary narration, too, and thus defining two different dimensions and functions – may they be provisionally labeled as 'more fictionally oriented' versus 'more factually oriented', or 'manifest' versus 'latent' or else in narratological terms as: 'narrative perspective' versus 'focalisation' (in the sense of Malte xx) – might be quite worthwhile methodologically. It would certainly enhance literary narratology's potential to enter interdisciplinary research designs.)

Consequently, one of the most – if not the most – important and challenging task which narration analysis has to take care of methodologically (be it in qualitative social/ interaction research or in literary studies) seems to be – colloquially speaking: to reconstruct the interplay of the rather more fictional and the rather more factual aspects of a narrative (be it an oral/ factual or a literary/ fictional narrative). In more precise terms this, once again, means: reconstruct the interrelation and mental interaction between what the individual has actually experienced in the past in her/is real life on the one hand and what the individual gives as storied account about these experiences in the present before a listening interviewer on the other (or else what the individual as a fiction text author may create as a personally inspiring imaginary story before a literary audience). In other words the basic task is: reconstruct the interplay of the 'narrator' and the 'person' ('author'/ 'composition subject') of a given narrative – in a psychologically informed sense of these terms.

It is Literary and Media Interaction Research's core objective (LIR) to take on this challenging task and realize its inherent potential of interdisciplinary research, which first of all means to effectively

integrate the two hitherto largely separated academic areas of studying the *world of (fictional) texts* on the one hand and the *world of so-called real-life* and *empirical persons* on the other.

Therefore, LIR encompasses two methodological dimensions: (3.1) qualitative-empirical interaction research with readers and authors (formerly called 'reader response research'), and (3.2) (inter-) action theoretical, reconstructive fiction text analysis of literary or media narratives. (3.3) Eventually the reader/ author research case studies and the text analyses of the respective narrative are integrated, i.e. actual empirical variants of 'author-text-reader interaction' – or at least of 'reader-text interaction' – are reconstructed.

3.1 Qualitative-empirical interaction research

How does qualitative-empirical social research go about reconstructing an individual's 'guiding inter-actional principles' which succinctly describe 'what makes the person tick' – both in her/is real-life interaction and in her/is literary and fictional media interaction. Largely following biography studies' methodology to begin with, LIR employs state-of-the-art qualitative interviewing for data acquisition (3.1.1) and narrational transcript analysis for data analysis (3.1.2). aaa For the consecutive procedural phases of the case study work, however, LIR has developed substantial methodological expansions mostly in two directions: (a) It first systematically integrated psychological knowledge particularly from psychodynamic resources which lend themselves to better understanding how biographically molded mental interaction works and in particular how its psycho-affective dynamic works. Biography research hadn't yet referred to these resources in any systematic way. Second (b), LIR developed methods of qualitative interviewing suitable to reconstructing media experience and media interaction because these had not yet been a fully established issue in biography studies and the attached methodological questions attached to them had not been satisfactorily solved by qualitative media research.

3.1.1 Biographical-narrative interviewing

Biography research's meticulous and strict methodology of conducting narrative interviews reflects the fact that there are many things that can be done wrong – or put positively: there are some technical rules which, if aptly observed, permit acquiring interview materials sufficiently rich in content, which means that they contain enough of the kind of narrative self-expression that facilitates successful reconstructive case study analysis. In that it substantially differs from how we act in natural conversations or in journalistic interviews, conducting biographical-narrative interviews is a practical expertise which needs to be trained first (a fact which isn't always adequately observed in qualitative research).

In essence, qualitative interviewing procedures follow one basic principle: the principles of maximal openness, providing conditions which secure the utmost freedom for the interviewee to design and arrange her/is story-telling. Quite some methodological precaution is taken in order to ensure this openness and reduce as much as possible any unwitting influences by the interviewer: Firstly, the interview is set off by a 'narrative initial question' which is formulate in a maximally open, non-specific way and which is directed not to a specific topic or period of life history but asks the person to recount her/is whole life history from the very beginning (and increasingly also with respect to the family history; Rosenthal xx). Rosenthal (xx) herself quite illustratively tells how in the course of her methodological development she came to realize that with almost any research question it is necessary or at least desirable to ask the interviewee to give her/is whole life history and "avoid any thematic restriction", no matter what the particular topic and scope of the research project is (51).

The interviewee may than begin to tell her/is life, i.e. gives her/is 'main narration' in a most individual fashion. I have conducted interviews in which the main narration takes just two minutes and others in which the interviewee takes two hours and more. Whatever happens in this first phase of the interview, it is essential with respect to the principle of 'openness' that the "narration is at no time interrupted by questions from the interviewers" (52). Instead the interviewers give nonverbal support by various paralinguistic expressions and body language which signal personal interest and attentiveness also empathy – and give encouragement when the interviewee pauses (for instance by simply interjecting: 'and then what happened'). As unaccustomed as this self-restriction might feel at first, it is the very means which makes the interviewee arrange her/is narration in the richest ways possible and also tap into the more distant and estranged sources of personal memory. Providing this space of openness, in a way, makes the narration "start to flow" (Rosenthal), become more and more detailed, and unfold in ways which are sometimes unexpected and surprising even for the interviewee her/imself – and which touch upon issues invested by personal emotions which are not as easily attainable in an every-day conversational situation.

After the 'main narration' has come to an end the interviewers may begin to pose 'internal narrative follow-up questions' on the basis of the notes they took. These questions basically aim at generating further narration about the interviewee's lived-through experiences. Technically speaking this means to avoid posing any factual information questions as we usually do in conversations (When was that? Where was that?) or drawing parallels to our own experience (I have had this too!). Above all it means to not ask about any reasoning and argumentations or discuss opinions (Why did you do this?) because these effectively thwart narration. Rather the interviewers take note of any such argumentations and opinions given by the interviewee, also of the more detached reports and descriptions of issues and contexts and then tries to use them for a narrative follow-up questions

which are able to tap into the personally experienced events which are behind them. So, if the interviewee expresses the opinion that s/he doesn't like foreigners, the follow-up question would not ask for the reason (or discuss opinions) which would most likely produce an abstract evaluation or argumentation. The interviewers will rather ask, for instance: "You mentioned that you don't like foreigners. Tell me about a moment or event in your life in which you clearly felt that you don't like foreigners?" This will produce further narratives with which the interviewers then bring to bear the same attitude of attentiveness and empathy and which may easily be further expanded ("What happened before?"; "And then what happened thereafter?"; "How precisely did this happen?").

The carefully listening interviewers may have noted many issues and hints which seem promising for generating further narration in this way. And while there are certain formalized rules which make it quite easy to spot such hints in the interviewee's narration (for instance when argumentations, opinions, contradictions, lacunas occur in the narrative), there sometimes seems to almost be a poetic element in play in the interviewer's choice of one of them, if this choice then taps into another content-rich experience which the interviewee her/imself hadn't thought about mentioning at all, let alone narrating at length. (Therefore, perhaps, there may be a co-creative and poetic aspect to narrative interviewing which once again reminds us of the comparison with literature [studies] and creative writing.) In any event, this and other techniques of interviewing have proven quite effective in bringing the interviewee's narration into flow. People who were interviewed almost always report afterwards that they hadn't expected to come up with so much personal history and to touch upon this or that issue and often also: to get into this or that feeling.

In fact, the interviewees almost always have gotten into a quite elated mood, in a way they seem creatively inspired by the experience. And since a biographical interview is usually conducted by two attentively interacting interviewers and may take up to three hours, with a possible second appointment to follow, one may easily imagine that the product at the end is indeed quite some complex, rich, and artful personal creation (which will, if you wish, contain both 'more factually oriented' and 'more imaginary oriented' vectors of narration). (Comparatively thinking about literary studies' object matter again for a moment – this highly creative narrative experience may remind us of what is sometimes reported about the states of creative enthusiasm and aesthetic elevation which authors feel during the writing process).

There even is a complement on the side of the interviewers to the interviewees inspired enthusiasm about the creative process of narration. Getting training and first experience in conducting narrative interviews more often than not is experienced by the researchers as an almost existential experience

which in certain extents changes their over-all inter-actional style even in their every-day life and which results in a more open and perceptive attitude vis-a-vis the social environment.

(Interviewing thus might have an effect which, curiously, is sometimes also described as the effect of becoming a reader of belletristic literature and thereby developing a more sensitive perception in aesthetic and interactional respects. Hence, not only did the borders between fictional and factual narration get permeable in the above theoretical deliberations. It also seems that there might be something like a poetic or aesthetic element in engaging in biographical-narrative interviews, since the interviewees in some respect appear akin to creative writers and the interviewees to literary readers. And if these parallels should prove substantial and helpful in any way then they may represent not only personal impressions but phenomena of theoretical and methodological significance.)

However, aside of the surprisingly creative, poetic, and sometimes even fictitious elements in biographical narration, the actual technique of interviewing follows a quite down to earth, methodically rigorous, and well-structured procedure which may be successfully employed even on the most un-inspired days of any research career.

After the internal follow-up questions are finished it is only in the last phase of the interview the principle of openness is suspended and 'external narrative follow-up questions' may be posed. These may confront the interviewee with instances of narrative incoherence or conspicuous deviations from a standard reality perception; and they may also bring in external issues pertaining directly to the study's specific interest. With the LIR-approach this also is the place where a significant methodological innovation is introduced: Here key questions from a psycho-diagnostic interview technique are included (the OPD, Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis, http://www.opd-online.net) in case the pertaining issues have not already been sufficiently covered during the biographical interview. At last the interviewee is asked to identify a literary or media production which has been and/or still is of high personal significance to her/im. This narrative will then be used in the second type of narrative interview employed by the LIR- design (3.1.3).

3.1.2 Reconstructive narration analysis

This high degree of methodological rigor which – aside of its creative elements – characterizes the interview technique also holds true for data analysis. Here a novel method of 'reconstructive interdisciplinary transcript analysis' (ITA) is employed, which (1) in the first instance applies standard procedures of transcript analysis, as practiced in qualitative biography studies and then (2) in the second instance systematically integrates psychological resources.

(1) Biography studies' transcript analysis follows a well laid-out path of methodical steps which, for reasons of brevity, cannot be explicated here in great detail (see Rosenthal). Suffice it to say that the key analytic procedure is *abductive* 'sequential hypothesis building' which means that – as opposed to a deductive or inductive approach – all hypotheses which are possible and thinkable at all (among the members of the analytic team) are taken into account when looking at a specific narrative sequence or at a biographical fact and trying to find explanations for it. It is only in the chronological course of hypothesis building along the consecutive sequences of the interview transcript that certain hypotheses are excluded/ falsified and others are held on to as possibly being correct.

The methodically formalized steps of transcript analysis are: (1) The 'extraction and interpretation of the basic biographical data' which are taken from the interview as quasi-objective information (place and social milieu of birth, siblings, education, illnesses, change of residents, historic events) and which are looked at separately while abstracting as much as possible from the interview narration. Here the guiding question of hypotheses building is: What are the probable turns of life history given these basic biographical data? What consequences are to be expected if these hypothetical turns are in fact correct? (2) The second step is the 'text and thematic field analysis' of the interviewee's narration by abductive verification-falsification procedure. Here the structure and dynamic of the person's narrative self-presentation is analyzed chronologically going along the sequences of the transcript (which were drawn according to thematic shifts and changes in text sort, as description, argumentation, report, narration). The guiding question of sequence-by-sequence text analysis is: How does the interviewee views the world, her/is life history and her/is personal agency in it? How does s/he chose to portray her/imself? (3) The 'reconstruction of the life history' aims at illuminating the lived-through pre-/semi-narrative experience of the interviewee which is independent and may be quite different from how s/he presents it as a story. (4) The 'microanalysis of transcript segments' focuses on interview passages which seem particularly pertinent to the life history and promising to further "decipher [the transcripts] latent structures of meaning" (Rosenthal 60). (5) The concluding contrastive comparison of experienced ‚*life history*' and narrated ‚*life story*' aims at finding "possible explanations for the difference between the two levels" and how they impact the person's ways of coping with life. fff

(2) In its second phase LIR's 'interdisciplinary transcript analysis' (ITA) goes beyond biography studies' standard procedures and systematically refers to resources of clinical and psychodynamic psychology aiming at formulating an estimation of the person's psychodynamic principles of mental coping and psychic defence. To begin with, ITA refers to the Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis. The OPD represents a multi-axis diagnostic tool which has been developed since 1994 in

Germany from various more recent approaches in psychodynamics/ psychoanalysis, psychosomatic medicine and psychiatry in order to expand the purely descriptive ICD-10 classification (International Code of Deceases of the WHO) by different axes as for instance 'interpersonal relations', 'specific conflicts', and 'mental structure'. The OPD today has become a widely and internationally acknowledged common denominator in psychodynamic diagnosis and thus lends itself to setting the grounds for trans-disciplinary collaborations. Beyond the OPD manual ITA may refer to further and more elaborate psychological sources as, for instance, qualitative psycho-trauma studies (G.Fischer, G.Seidler, M.Hirsch, A.Maercker xx) and approaches of narratological, relational/ attachment psychology (L.Luborsky, Angus/McLeod) and psychiatry (O.Kernberg et al.) whenever these sources appear promising for better understanding the case material at hand.

aaa In procedural terms this means: After the five steps of narratological sequence analysis are completed, the psychodynamic estimation proceeds in reverse order: starting with step 5 and confronting the conclusions (and the pertinent transcript material) with the following guiding questions: Are there psychodynamic phenomena – as defined by the OPD and other sources – which parallel the biographical phenomena reconstructed thus far? Do these parallels produce further and more in-depth hypotheses, when going farther back the path of biographical sequence analysis in reverse order? aaa Phases one and two of ITA – biographical narration analysis and psychodynamic/ developmental estimation – are conducted consecutively and not simultaneously, because the first phase of reconstruction ought to be kept uncompromised methodologically; and premature psychological conclusions are to be avoided.

In consequence, what biography research usually described in quite generic terms as a person's guiding principle(s) of life-history development, is now also specified psychologically as 'the individual's psychodynamic principle(s)' – as her/is particular 'challenge of personality development'. aaa And this psychodynamic estimation profits from having included key questions from the OPD diagnostic interview into the last phase of the biographical interview (directly targeting 'relationship themes', 'inter-actional core conflicts', and/or 'core trauma compensatory patterns').

3.1.3 Media-experience interviewing – and final LIR case study reconstruction

Having thus reconstructed the interviewee's biographical and psychodynamic principle(s) the person undergoes the second step of LIR's data analysis: the 'narrative media-experience interview' (MEI). I have recently developed the MEI (HW 2008m, r, s) because firstly, the standard modes of qualitative and/or biographical interviewing do not lend themselves to grasping media experiences, and second, what has been employed by some as so-called 'media biography interview' does neither

sufficiently grasp 'media experiences' itself nor does it really get to fathom out the biographical dimension of an individual – let alone the aspect of life-long psychological development (HW et al. 1999a, b, HW 2003e, 2006d, 2008n, o).

The MEI is conducted after the interviewee has individually re-read/re-viewed the text/film which s/he has identified as being personally significant. The LIR-team has read/seen the narrative, too, and produced two sorts of memos in preparation for the MEI: (1) a 'sequence protocol' for the interviewers' immediate orientation, in which the plot-turns and characters are chronologically registered, and (2) the 'MEI hypotheses memo' (see below). In analogy to the biographical interview the interviewee is asked at the beginning of the MEI by way of a maximally open narrative 'initial question' to talk about the recent re-reading/ re-viewing and about the personal associations during and shortly after this experience; also about the first-time media experience in the more distant past. After the main narration a set of novel techniques of 'MEI internal follow-up questioning' is applied, which basically goes into two directions alternately: (a) For one, the questions aim at prompting the interviewee to narratively elaborate on her/is spontaneous perceptions, thoughts and imaginations about the plot events and their causalities as well as about the characters' motivations and biographical pre-histories. (b) Secondly, they prompt the interviewee to articulate personal associations and memories from her/is own biographical experience, which resonate with her/is thoughts/ imaginations about plot and characters. Passages from the media narrative may directly be brought in (re-read/ re-screened) pending the path which the interview goes (HW 2008m, r). This process moves, as it were, top-down into the media narratives' world as is subjectively perceived by the interviewee, and then again bottom-up into her/is personal biographical memories triggered by the media narrative (and, to certain extents, also vice versa).

Then the 'external narrative follow-up questions' are posed (only in the last phase of the MEI !) on the basis of the 'MEI hypotheses memo'. This memo consists (a) of a collection of hypotheses about how and to which particular text sections/ plot-turns the interviewee might respond, given the analysis of the biographical interview, which – with the LIR-approach – includes hypotheses of a psychological and psycho-biographical nature. (b) Furthermore, by this point in time of the LIR methodological course, the 'narratological text analysis' of the media narrative itself is drafted (according to the NTA-method; see 3.2 below), but not yet fully worked out for research-economic reasons. This draft contains hypotheses about the narrative's 'textual (inter-) action potentials' and may be used as an optional – not a mandatory – source of hypotheses which may assist the interviewers in producing effective external follow-up questions.

The transcript analysis of the 'media experience interview' first proceeds analogously to the analysis of the biographical-narrative interview (BNI). It then, of course, also integrates the results from the BNI's analysis and enters into the integrative case study reconstruction as a whole. Here the particular path of steps is: (1) 'thematic field analysis of the *media story*' according to the interviewee's subjective reading which is inferred from her/is statements on plot and characters, (2) 'contrastive comparison' with the 'textual (inter-) action potentials' of the media narrative, as analyzed by NTA (see below 3.2), (3) 'thematic field analysis of the *personal references' story*' (from the interviewee's statements on personal associations and memories triggered by the media narrative), (4) from 1, 2 and 3: 'reconstruction of the *life history aspects* of the interviewee's media experience', (5) 'contrastive comparison with the *life history*', as reconstructed from the BNI, (6) 'contrastive comparison with the subjective *media story* of the person, (7) integrative synopsis with the person's 'psychodynamic principle(s)' and 'challenge(s) of personality development' (also from the BNI).

Hence, LIR in the first of its two basic methodological research dimensions – qualitative-empirical research – has employed narratological analysis (1) to an individual's account of her/is life-story (BNI) and (2) to her/is account of a key media experience (MEI) and reconstructed from this an instance of psycho-biographically driven, (develop)mental 'media interaction'. The case study in its entirety gives a picture of how the interviewee has mentally appropriated the media narrative, and whether and how s/he has – possibly in a largely unwitting manner – used it as a tool for working on and further developing her/is psychodynamic mechanisms of coping in light of her/is 'biographical challenge(s)'. From there inferences on the person's general patterns of biographical and developmental (media) interaction may be drawn. And from having worked in this way with several individuals form a particular social sector or age group will put us into a position from where we may formulate a certain number of types of persons – and types of real-world and media interaction – which typically constitute the social sector at hand. For, qualitative research does not build generalizations numerically or statistically but typologically, defining which kinds of types characterize the biographically molded media interaction – of, let's say, young citizen who are prone to violent behavior and political/religious extremism (see below) – and how these types function in interactional terms.

Hence, qualitative research while "reconstructing an individual case [is] always aiming at [arriving at generalisable] statements" (Rosenthal 62). Its objective is to illuminate "development types" and the complex rules of the typical "genetic processes" in a certain societal sector – and not so much attempt to propose mono-causal "cause-and-effect" statements. Rather this kind of research is about

more thoroughly understanding the "laws of social becoming" without which scholarship may not be able to produce effective strategies of social intervention – and thus exert societal responsibility.

3.2 Narratological text analysis of the literary/ media narrative

The second of LIR's two basic methodological research dimensions is: psychologically informed narratological fiction text analysis (NTA) of the literary and/or media narratives, which the interviewees have chosen (at the end of the BNI). NTA responds to LIR's ambition to integrate empirical reader/ author research and fiction text exegesis in one inter-action theoretical approach. NTA in a way comes out of the research experience that, when people talk about their experiences with fictional literary/ media narratives and about their personal life-history in one single interview context, then *the fictional* and *the factual* – as well as social/ psychological research and literary scholarship – which have thus far been kept largely separate, are eventually entering into an inextricable interrelation.

This is not to say, however, that there are not significant modal differences between a *fictional text* conveyed in a technical medium and a *factual narrative* conveyed in a face-to-face interview. For, with text analysis LIR's guiding research questions turn from the readers/authors to the media narratives – from *person* to *text*, and also from *factual oral* to *fictional textual* narrative. Surely, both types of narratives represent modes of personal self-expression, which is why they are not entirely incommensurable – and autonomous – phenomena theoretically, as literary theory sometimes tends to assume; and this also is, why the LIR-approach decidedly encompasses both in its base concept of 'mental media (inter-) action'. And yet, in methodological respects it does not appear advisable nor does it seem operational – at least at this point of methodological development – to treat fiction texts exactly the same way as narrative interview transcripts. (However, it hasn't been systematically tried out yet to employ sequential transcript analysis by abductive hypotheses formation to literary texts [HW xx]).

The reasons for this methodological cautiousness are that the interview seems in a more immediate way embedded in a co-narrative situation of 'interpersonal interaction' in the usual sense of the word; also, it more directly refers to a concept of shared reality experience. Therefore, having an aesthetic/ fictional 'text' at hand which is cast in a technical medium and directed at a larger impersonal audience, it seems that we may not as easily speak of analyzing 'interaction' (of author and reader). And yet, the LIR approach – intending to integrate empirical reader/ author research and fiction text exegesis – requires to facilitate a method of analysing literary and media narratives which is as (inter-) actionally oriented as is the empirical research. Therefore, LIR suggests the following solution to this ostensible theoretical predicament: Since analysing a text may not directly

reconstruct empirical interpersonal interaction proper, what narratological fiction text analysis may instead do is: identify the 'textual (inter-) action potentials' which are inherent in a particular fiction narrative due to its content and form and due to the socio-cultural context of the audience it appeals to (HW 2006e, l, 2008s).

NTA is thus designed to reconstruct potentials of psychological impact which the narrative may plausibly be expected to exert on readers. In methodical respect NTA builds on an approach which in its first phase draws from the fields of (A) linguistics/ pragmatics and narratology and in its second phase (B) of psychodynamic clinical psychology. NTA has recently been developed in a methodological interface of literary and clinical research (Stein/Jesch et al. xx).

(A) From text- and discourse-linguistics and narratology NTA obtains methodological guidelines, which allow to assess (1) the 'informational choice and completeness' of a narrative text and (2) the 'incoherencies' therein. The 'informational choice and completeness', in which the author/'composition subject' of a fictional narrative arranges and depicts the characters and actions of her/is story-world is – quite straightforwardly – assessed along the basic sequential phases of human action: i.e. with regard to (a) the subjectively perceived 'causal situation' of the character (before any action), (b) the character's build-up of 'personal motivation' and 'specific intention to act' in response to the causal situation, (c) the concrete 'implementation' of this intention in form of concrete action, and (d) the 'effects' of the action both intended and unintended (Jesch/ Stein et al xx). It seems fair to assume that any reader striving to follow and understand an account of events and actions in a story-world will spontaneously and unwittingly look for the most complete information possible with regard to these four phases, and that s/he will immediately attempt to reconstruct them according to her/is personal and biographically molded perception of the information given in the narrative. Hence, in a narrative, any character's action may, firstly, be systematically described in terms of the completeness and choice, in which the elements of cause/ intention/ action/ effects are represented.

Secondly, the text may be methodically looked at with regard to phenomena of 'narrative incoherence', whereby 'incoherence' is understood to represent a verifiable deviation from an expectable order of occurrences and actions within a narrative. 'Expectable' and 'verifiable' such 'order' or 'deviation' is with reference (a) to the *internal* logic of the narrative as well as (b) to its *external* logic. Instances of *internal* incoherence are methodically identified in three distinct dimensions of coherence: (i) in the order of space and time in a narrative, along the linguistic relations of "first"/"then" and "there"/"there also", (ii) in the order of correlations and conditions in the narrated world, along the linguistic relation of "if/then", and (iii) in the order of cause and effect,

of intention and result, as well as of finality, along the linguistic relations of "because", "in order to", "to the effect that". Instances of *external* incoherence are identified with reference to the cultural frames/ patterns and the general world knowledge of the historic period and socio-cultural sphere, in which the author and her/is readers operate. Here incoherencies/ deviations are verifiable by reference to other wide-spread cultural narratives or representations of world knowledge of the time, which serve as frame of expectable order and which indicate a logic of occurrence and action which significantly deviates from the logic of the narrative at hand.

Literary and media narratives take their quite specific 'informational choices' as to the degree of completeness and the kind of internal/external coherence in which the events/ actions are presented. More precisely speaking: These choices, of course, are taken by the text's 'composing subject' (i.e. the author in the moment/s of creating the narrative to be read by readers, about whom s/he has certain [un-]conscious preconceptions). And the way they are taken, of course, does have consequences for the narrative's potential impact – i.e. its 'textual (inter-) action potentials'.

(B) The second phase of NTA which follows the text-linguistic assessment is: to formulate hypotheses and come to conclusions about how and in what way the specific phenomena of textual incoherence and/or (in-)completeness may 'potentially impact' on the readers (which to certain extents implicates the question of how they may potentially be caused/motivated on the side of the text's 'composing subject' [i.e. the author in the moment/s of text production]).

On this – more challenging – second level of inquiry one needs to muster scientific assistance from those fields which are most knowledgeable about issues of mental impact (as well as of mental cause/motivation): clinical and psychodynamic psychology. Here too, the OPD psychodynamic manual is the first reference of orientation followed by other more specific psychological resources (see above xx). Analogously the guiding questions here is: Are there psychodynamic phenomena – as defined by the OPD and other sources – which parallel the textual phenomena reconstructed thus far and do these parallels produce further and more in-depth hypotheses about the interactional dynamic within the story world and of the narrative itself vis-a-vis the reader. As with transcript analysis, these interdisciplinary resources may, however, only be introduced by way of a strictly abductive – and not a deductive – mode of hypothesis-building. And they may only be brought in late and in a separate methodical step of the reconstruction procedure, after the text-linguistic analysis has been completed – and left uncompromised by any premature and off the cuff psychological hypotheses. NTA's end-product then is: the reconstruction of the literary/ media narrative's 'textual (inter-) action potentials' – in other words: conclusions about what sorts of

impact the narrative may plausibly be expected to have on readers in general, notwithstanding the subjectivity of individual reading acts.

NTA thus goes well beyond any philological (narratological) text interpretation, in that it does not limit itself to form-descriptive, historic or even structuralist perspectives and, in any event, to hermeneutical exegesis of a text's supposed 'meaning(s)'. Rather it studies fiction narratives as products of mental and communicative acts of (inter-) action which – however (un)consciously – intend to relate to and impact on their readers. aaa While literary studies generally hold that impact is mostly a factor of the readers' subjective – and idiosyncratic – views and thus cannot be dealt with on the level of text, LIR takes a different position: It deems it more appropriate and scientifically productive to assume, that, while empirical readers, of course, do read in highly subjective and intentional manners, they also always are in touch with the text and their readings are not entirely idiosyncratic. Moreover, the text, in turn, may also be reconstructed as a subjective and intentional act, the author's act of fiction writing.

Hence, NTA is a straightforward method of reconstructively analyzing literary interaction from the phenomenal perspective of the text. Contrary to hermeneutical exegesis, however, NTA is methodically formalized to an extent that it may bear up to the scrutiny of inter-subjective validation: Also, the two-step analytic procedure is buttressed by sources both from text-linguistics and from psychology – which defines its interdisciplinary position. In this respect it is most remarkable, that the NTA method of analyzing fictional (literary) narratives unwittingly responds to questions, which most recent empirical research about the co-narrative processes of psychotherapy has formulated as one of its "major challenges" for future methodological endeavors: "to further develop methods for describing, exploring, and measuring narrative coherence and incoherence" (Angus/McLeod 373).

3.3 The integration of reader and text analysis

Eventually bringing together reader and text analysis is key to all LIR project. Any such integration, however, may not compromise the specific methodical modus operandi applied in 3.1 and 3.2 (as has sometimes occurred when hypotheses on reader-responds and observations about the text were prematurely lumped together). No text analysis may definitely anticipate what impact the text will have on any individual reader, and no single reader-response case study may definitely explain how a text works inter-actionally. Rather, LIR's final step of integration aims at reconstructing the 'actual variant of reader-text-interaction' in this particular case. It clarifies which of the narrative's 'textual interaction potentials' an individual reader has actually responded to – and how. In other words: it

draws conclusion as to the issues and processes of biographical/mental identity work, in which both the *reader* and the *text* have been implicated.

The key scientific gains of LIR's final integrative step thus are: (1) It reconstructs empirical constellations/ variants of aesthetic interaction contributes to overcoming the compartmentalization of literary and media studies – which are largely divided in *text exegesis* versus *reader research*. This, particularly, will be the case if 'matching constellations of author-text-reader interaction' are reconstructed (in which a reader case study refers to a media narrative, the author of which consents to taking part in author research). When these constellations are then sought for in areas which harbour particular social challenges it becomes evident how the LIR approach may contribute to increasing the societal relevance of research conducted by the humanities. (2) It creates valuable inter-methodological synergies and feed-back options between reader- and text-research. aaa For instance, fiction text analysis (NTA), i.e. the reconstruction of a media narrative's 'textual inter-action potentials' is likely to prompt new kinds of hypotheses for sequential transcript analysis (see above in 3.1 the 'MEI hypotheses memo'). Vice versa, the reconstructive case study may produce new and promising analytic questions which might not yet have been observed in the NTA. (This synergy, however, is not systematically used in the LIR-approach.)

(3) LIR's final integration of reader- and text-research also facilitates new modes of presenting cultural studies' knowledge to the wider public. A novel form of publishing is envisioned, in which the text analysis of a certain literary and/or media narrative is immediately accompanied by and integrated with reader-interaction analyses of two or more readings and also, possibly, by the respective author-interaction case study. Thus, different empirical variants of mental media (inter-)action – within the complex constellation of an author-text-reader relationship – become recognizable in a multi-focus perspective. Such a form of publication may contribute to significantly expanding the modes of what is considered 'cultural discourse'. It will, at any rate help, to avoid two problematic traditions in mainstream culture and literature teaching: to either impose fixed, academically acclaimed interpretations of literary works or/and introduce abstract and mostly descriptive techniques of text analysis which remain largely detached of the students' personal reading experience. fff

4. LIR-program's exemplary research projects

While there are many thinkable ways in which Literary and Media Interaction Research might be broken down into worthwhile individual research projects, I will in the following try to give outlines of four individual projects which are interrelated in their general research objectives and appeal to the impetus of the LIR-program in an exemplary fashion. Furthermore, two additional projects are

outlined indicating further research options of LIR. One accompanying intention here is to underline how the LIR-program is capable of engaging questions of high societal importance and may effectively contribute to finding seminal answers to the challenges of contemporary multi-ethnic information societies. All LIR projects pursue a dual overarching strategy: (A) They have the *scientific* and *methodological* objective of studying processes of 'aesthetic, literary, and media interaction' in different empirical contexts, and (B) the *strategic* and *institutional* objective of expanding the interdisciplinary scope of the academic disciplines which are occupied with the study of literature and other cultural productions. All projects significantly advance and specify the basic LIR approach by (i) expanding the research question and focussing on a specific research population or a new dimension of media interaction, and (ii) by producing methodological innovations, which are pivotal for exploring these dimensions.

4.1 The A1-project in a way attempts to go into the opposite direction. It is called "Media-Experience-in-Therapy" and specifies the LIR-program's basic approach in an entirely different way: A1 recruits interview partners, who are or have been in psychotherapy and recall having had significant media experiences as issues in their therapy sessions. This project picks up on the general experience of clinical psycho-therapists who have often realized that there sometimes are sessions or even phases in psychotherapy, in which the client, in lieu of bringing up real-life occurrences, focuses on a reading or media experiences and is occupied with them in an intensely emotional way. Therefore, if ones general interest is, how reading and the media may correlate with the – therapeutic – build-up of essential personality skills, as emotional intelligence and psycho-affective stress resilience, it quite apparently suggest itself to turn to empirical incidences, in which literary or media experiences have spontaneously emerged in contexts of psychotherapy.

In analogy to LIR's general research perspective here the question is: How do individuals in psychotherapy sessions, while being personally engaged with a media narrative, in fact also work on coming to terms with challenging biographical issues from their personal life, issues which most likely coincide or interrelate with what caused the person to seek therapy in the first place? It is assumed that these biographical issues are "co-present" (G.Rosenthal), i.e. "co-narratively" and semi-consciously associated with the plot of the media narrative, and thus interrelate or interfere with the inter-actional processes of therapy and personal growth. (In addition to the standard LIR-setting – of biographical and media experience interviewing – expert-interviews with the therapists are conducted, concerning the psycho-dynamic assessment, the therapy process, and developmental challenge of the client.) Moreover, follow-up conclusions are expected both (i) about how these insights in the media-experience based processes of therapy might be used pedagogically in culture and media teaching and (ii) about how clinical psychology and psychotherapy itself might profit

(since these fields have not yet paid much attention to the question of how to deal with or even consciously apply media experiences in the therapy process).

The A1-project ("Media-Experience-in-Therapy") focuses on the area of psychotherapy, which generally (not necessarily) leans towards processes of personal growth, skill development, and stress resilience. It, thus, highlights the importance, which clinical research on psycho-trauma has for the integral LIR-program (HW 2008n, o), and, in addition, it underlines the significance of qualitative psychotherapy research; also: the importance of working in a multi-disciplinary team, which includes both literary scholars and experienced professionals from clinical psychology/ psychotherapy.

4.2 The A2-project "Author Research" adds the perspective of the author which is an essential element of 'literary interaction' in the 'mediated author-text-reader relationship' as defined by the LIR-approach. In epistemological and methodological terms, author-interaction research is analogous to reader-interaction research. The guiding question here is: How did the author of a text/ media narrative interact – in mental and psycho-biographical terms – with her/is text while composing it? How did the author's life history, her/is social and family contexts and personal dispositions come into play? How did composing the narrative relate to the particular sort of mental identity work, which the author – as anybody else – constantly and unwittingly performs in her/is every-day life and during writing, and by which s/he consciously and/or unconsciously attempts to deal with particular personal challenges from her/is biographical and societal experience? And thus: How did the writing interaction with the own narrative relate to the psychodynamic coping and defense mechanisms of the author as a person? The A2's research design is congruous, too. However, following the biographical interview, an 'author's media experience interview' (A-MEI) has to be developed in analogy to the reader's media experience interview (MEI).

Author research, however, faces particular difficulties: It will not be easy to win precisely those – possibly quite renowned – authors/ producers to participate, whose fiction texts were chosen by the interviewees (of A1 or A2). Concerns about their public persona might make authors hesitate. In this case the readers' individual choice of a personally significant narrative – even though being an essential methodological element of LIR – will have to be suspended. However, author research may very well be pursued in its own right without being interlaced with reader research. Alternatively, authors may be addressed first to participate, and then these authors' texts are given to readers, of whom a full-scale reader case study already exists (from A1, A2, or other LIR projects). However, whenever feasible the project strives to find and study matching constellations of author-text-reader interaction, i.e. focus on an author whose text has been picked as personally significant in a reader

case study. Thus, an 'author case study', a 'text analysis', and a 'reader case study' will be independently worked on; and then based on the results an empirical 'constellation of author-text-reader interaction' is reconstructed.

Thinking of mainstream literary studies for a moment makes one thing quite evident: LIR's three-dimensional approach of literary and media research (encompassing the readers, the text, and the author) may constitute an appropriate answer to literary studies' widespread inclination to tacitly entertain thoughts both about an *author's putative textual intentions* and a *text's alleged impact* on the readers – and yet: not really acknowledge these thoughts, let alone systematically examine them as concretely formulated hypotheses.

4.3 The B1-project is called "Humanities' Professionals" and directly concentrates on LIR's above formulated strategic objective: to advance interdisciplinarity in the humanities. Complementary to promoting methodological innovations by way of the LIR-projects' actual work (A1 to A3), the B1-project engages in qualitative-empirical meta-research on the humanities themselves, particularly on German speaking literature and culture studies – and on their inner grammar of professional habitus und disciplinary traditions.

Contrary to the other LIR-projects, the B1-project starts from and examines a set assumption: B1 assumes that the humanities institutions' guiding inter-actional principles comprise elements, which effectively avoid interdisciplinary advance and methodological innovation and thus limit the humanities' impact on scholarship as well as the applicability of the work they produce – in the immensely important societal sector of culture, literature and the media (HW 2006e, 2008f). Especially those advances, it is assumed, are avoided, which would make the humanities more accessible for reconstructive and (inter-) action theoretical approaches, and above all for psychological questions (HW 2007d). The B1 project picks up on the general experience that – notwithstanding all rhetoric of interdisciplinarity and abundant compromise formations – anti-psychological attitudes of various kinds are easily found in the humanities. Furthermore, the B1-project assumes that investigating humanities representatives' literary/media interaction via the LIR's psycho-biographical approach, may not only clarify, in as much the guiding assumptions are correct or misleading. It may also suggest reasons and avenues of intervention. Thus, if an interviewee's statements indicate a professional habitus, which displays distinctly felt – and, maybe, yet intricately scrupulous and conflictuous – anti-interdisciplinary impulses, the LIR-approach may be able to reconstruct what gave rise to them – i.e. what is their "principle of genesis" (Rosenthal xx) – both in the institutional and psycho-biographical prehistory of the person.

Hence, the B1-project studies how humanities representatives mentally interact with literary texts and fictional media narratives, which they identify as having been or still being of high *personal* and/or *professional* significance to them. How do these texts/narratives relate to the person's (professional) biographies? How do they relate to the kind of mental work, which anyone constantly and unwittingly performs in her/is every-day life and professional work, and by which s/he consciously and/or unconsciously deals with particular biographical and societal challenges of personal development? Subsequently the question is: Is there a perceived difference between a *private* and a *professional* mode of text interaction? Do these two modes, and – if yes – how do they interrelate? In other words: How is it that becoming a member of a humanities' institution and engaging in *professional* forms of text interaction (in exegesis and teaching) has affected, shaped and changed the individual's *private* media interaction and psycho-biographical identity work? Or vice versa: In what way has the individual as private reader been psycho-biographically predisposed to become a literary studies' professional? And above all: How is it that issues of interdisciplinarity are implicated both on the level of *private* and *professional* literary interaction? Are anti-interdisciplinary attitudes an essential part of these ways of media interaction?

The epistemological position of B1 in the integral LIR-program is to study literary and media interaction in the very institutional sector which is professionally engaged with it, i.e. literary studies scholarship and teaching. For, this sector of professional work – and its particular '(de-)formations professionnelles – may be expected to have influence on mainstream high school teaching of and public discourses about reading and media interaction. Basically having a question of institutional psychology at hand here, requires to explore appropriate adjustments of methodology and research design: Aside of the standard LIR methods – 'narrative-biographical' and 'media experience interviews' – other methods may be applicable, as reconstructive document-analysis (both of hermeneutical text interpretations produced by the interviewee and of other sorts of institutional documents), or else: qualitative group-discussion interviews, which focus on the institution's self-concept, the professional habitus of the individuals, and their personal hopes/ qualms about going beyond the methodological traditions of the discipline and engaging in more interdisciplinary work. aaa The design should allow to reconstruct in-depth the psycho-biographical grammar of the interviewee's build-up of *professional habitus* in the course of her/is institutional career – and this habitus' consequences for the modes of personal and professional reading/ media interaction (HW 2008p).

4.4 The additional project A4.a, "Germany, Japan and World War II" explores more specific options of the LIR-approach. A4 expands and specifies the scope of LIR simultaneously into two further directions, pertaining to (a) issues of intercultural and trans-cultural media interaction and to

(b) the function of media interaction in what social psychology has described as 'transgenerational transmission' of symptoms caused by big humanitarian disasters and large scale societal cataclysms as, for instance, the World Wars, and which later on may be transmitted from the traumatized parents to their children. The focus of the A4-project is on Japan and Germany because these two nations, in spite of their different cultural traditions, do share the particular historical characteristics of having been both a major international aggressor before and during the war and then having suffered large-scale destruction and loss themselves at the end of the war (HW 2004f, 2008c).

The A4-setting explores a more text-focussed variant of LIR's standard design, in that it prioritizes the dimension of the media narrative. Two texts – one of Japanese and one of German literature – are picked, which were identified by 'psychologically informed narratological fiction text analysis' (NTA) as explicitly and/or implicitly dealing with long term, 'transgenerational' effects caused by World War II experience and having then been transmitted via two or three generations onto contemporary life (HW 2003e, 2004f, 2008c). Individual readers from Japanese and German background, who have undergone the standard LIR-setting, are confronted with these texts – in lieu of what normally is the self-chosen media narrative.

Since the issue at hand is of national/ collective significance, the novel method of the 'narrative group-analytic media experience interview' (NGI) (HW 2002c, f, g, 2003d, 2007c, 2008h) is employed in addition to the LIR standard setting. aaa Two groups of persons, one from a Japanese and the other from a German back-ground, have group-interview sessions on both the Japanese and the German text. The objective is both an intercultural comparison of Japanese and German patterns of interacting with this historical topic and a trans-cultural view on how the encounter with the other culture's text goes. Here, the additional theoretical and practical resources of group-analysis and group-psychotherapy research are called upon (Tschuschke xx). In addition, the 'family biography interview' will be explored in some selected instances since this is the most suitable – albeit laborious – tool to cover transgenerational effects. (The A4 design is, of course, applicable to other countries and societies whose national history is – maybe in different ways – characterized by the World War, as for instance China and Poland.)

4.5 The additional project A5.a – "Examples of Canonical Literature" – also uses the text-focussed version of LIR's standard design (as A4 does). Also it, in a way, represents a complementary aspect to the B1 project: A5.a-project picks canonical texts of German literary history from the different federal Lander's high school reading lists and conducts both narratological text analysis and qualitative reader research with high school students. A design will be developed in which the individual students' encounters with the text is intensified, so that it becomes more

evident what kind of personal – and psycho-biographical – issues contemporary adolescents have while reading canonical texts from 18th, 19th, and 20th century. Individual and group-interviewing is employed. The case studies will make these canonical cultural heritage texts appear in their most contemporary light. They, therefore, may be expected to give valuable guidance as to what the teaching of these texts implicates today and how it can best be done, in order for the double effect of culture and literature to be achieved: (1) to convey knowledge about cultural and literary history and (2) to support the development of the above mentioned essential personality skills as emotional and analytic intelligence, psycho-affective self-management and communicative capacities – in other words: of what used to be called 'aesthetic education' (Schiller, Lessing).

5. Conclusion

Issues of teaching bring us back to the over-all purpose and strategic target, which LIR's integrative approach of qualitative-empirical and narratological research on literature and media is aiming at: to assist the humanities to overcome any probable anti-interdisciplinary reservations and become more accessible for cross-sectional and multi-method collaboration with empirical and psychological research – and thus also become more 'applicable' for questions of immediate societal relevance. For that reason, the research program of LIR is to be complemented by a post-graduate training program on 'Psychologically Informed Culture Teaching'. This training program is designed to be offered to teachers and instructors of literature/ language, culture and media, who come from different sorts of schools and institutions and wish to become more successful in their teaching and pedagogic work in terms of inducing personal skill development with their students. The methods are drawn and adapted from qualitative research, counselling, and (group) psychotherapy (HW 2002c, f, g, 2003d, 2007c).

Proceeding this way – in research, training, and teaching – might be advisable not only in scholarly but also in strategic respects, since opening up new interdisciplinary dimensions and areas of applicability would undoubtedly strengthen the humanities' position within the increasingly competitive sphere of international higher-education services (which will surely take on more speed as a result of the international GATT contracts issued by the WTO). For, offering not only 'canonical cultural knowledge' and 'philosophical thoughtfulness' but also at the same time supply the students with current psychological expertise and provide an opportunity to – while doing culture studies – develop key competencies and personality skills, such as communicative and emotional intelligence, means to answer to a much wider and more complex range of educational demands.

However, the spectrum of institutional policy making within which these strategic targets of a new narratological interdisciplinarity are to be placed today extends between two poles: (1) The humanities' traditional self-concept as it has recently been re-articulated by the above discussed German government initiative to announce a "Year of the Humanities" in 2007 and which still seems hesitant to engage in cross-sectional collaboration with psychology and other interaction theoretical fields and accept "immediate societal usefulness" as one of its strategic targets. (2) On the other hand there is a more advanced concept of humanities which has recently been articulated in the context of the EU's 7th frame program and its section „Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities" (SSH) (also 2007). Here, it is expressively emphasized that fields like „literature" and „philosophy" should work together with „social sciences" and „psychology", "establish new interdisciplinary approaches" and pursue "high-risk" "unconventional" questions, which may eventually contribute to tackling societal challenges on an European scale. Having the rich and enormously important treasure of cultural artefacts at their disposal as the humanities' undisputed object matter, the chances that this target may be successfully achieved are quite high, indeed.