ROBERT MATTHIAS ERDBEER
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KLAUS STIERSTORFER
(Hg./Eds.)

Literarische Form
Literary Form

Theorien – Dynamiken – Kulturen.
Beiträge zur literarischen Modellforschung

Theories – Dynamics – Cultures.
Perspectives on Literary Modelling

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ROBERT MATTHIAS ERDBEER, FLORIAN KLÄGER,
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Introduction

Across Philologies.
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1   A Quest for Form

As Adorno observed in 1970, form is "the quintessence of […] co-
herence in artworks" but has nonetheless long been a "blind spot"
in aesthetics.[1] In the wake of the late twentieth-century 'theory
wars', the discipline of literary studies has begun to re-consider the
specificities of literature and literary form vis-à-vis other media and
modes of signification. The rise and popularity of schools or move-
ments such as 'the New Formalism', or 'the New Aestheticism', or
'Philosophy of Literature', can count as evidence for this emergent
trend. The aim of such departures is to re-focus attention on 'the
literary' within literature. It has created a fresh interest in the idea
of form, not only in the field and disciplines of literary studies, but
in media studies, in the history of science and some culturally con-
scious subdivisions of technology and applied sciences, too.[2] This

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[1]   Theodor W. Adorno: *Aesthetic Theory* [1970], London 2004, p. 141.
[2]   Some recent contributions include Caroline Levine: *Forms. Whole,
    Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*, Princeton 2015; Dieter Burdorf: *Poetik der
    Form. Eine Begriffs- und Problemgeschichte*, Stuttgart / Weimar 2001;
    Michael Bies et al. (eds.): *Gattungs-Wissen. Wissenspoetologie und lite-
    rarische Form*, Göttingen 2012; Werner Michler: *Kulturen der Gattung.
    Poetik im Kontext, 1750–1950*, Göttingen 2015; Garin Dowd et al. (eds.):
    Genre matters. Essays in Theory and Criticism, Bristol 2006; Gunhild

'consciousness of form', new or recovered, aims to address two counter-trends in literary studies, two prevalent strategies that both account for the extension *and* reduction of 'the literary' in and outside fiction. On the one hand, literary forms and modes became a part of *discourse history* (the 'cultural turn'). By carefully directing our attention towards the hidden or concealed 'poetics' of non-fictional and extra-literary discourse, critics have revealed the modal and figurative foundations of the 'factual'. In doing so, they gradually enhanced the status of poetic structures and devices, modes and strategies within the realm of facts. Ironically, however, this cultural pragmatization of aesthetic forms and modes surrendered what had been a distinct feature of aesthetic discourse for decades, if not centuries: its notion of autonomy, its status as an independent player, as a 'meta-language' and laboratory of 'worlds apart'. If facts have gained the aura (or the blemish) of fiction, literature appeared as just another discourse, as a matter of fact. On the other hand, the cultural technique of *narrative* – once limited to verbal cases of emplotted agency – has recently become a universal, covering all sorts of verbal, literary, visual, performative and ludic actions, fictional as well as factitious, blurring boundaries of medial and functional difference (the 'narrative turn').

This happened for a reason. Both developments acknowledge and react to a dramatic change in cultural production and perception that is gradually thinning the fine line between what is perceived as real and actual, and what is deemed imaginary, virtual or fictional. And yet: should the advent of virtual realitites, reality enhancements, docufictions and 'alternative facts' not rather call for a revival of the differentiation between these two modes of operation – for the sake of understanding their collaboration and the strategies that their

Berg (ed.): *Wissenstexturen. Literarische Gattungen als Organisationsformen des Wissens*, Frankfurt am Main 2014; Thomas Klinkert: *Epistemologische Fiktionen. Zur Interferenz von Literatur und Wissenschaft seit der Aufklärung*, Berlin / New York 2010. Also see our forthcoming volume, Robert Matthias Erdbeer / Florian Kläger / Klaus Stierstorfer (eds.): *Form* (= Grundthemen der Literaturwissenschaft), Berlin / Boston 2018.

mergers provide? Where everything is plotted or narrated, or appears to be a part of a grand unifying cultural matrix, the distinctive functions of the forms of fiction and poetic diction lose their hermeneutic value and explanatory power.

This is why we share the belief that a renewal – or a rediscovery – of literary form as a historical and theoretical concept is timely. We concede that such a quest implies the resurrection, and the challenge, of an embattled tradition, or, and even more disturbingly: of a multitude of form-traditions in a maze of national philologies and their encounters with contemporary extra-literary notions of form. These various traditions, in another twist of paradox, established 'form' as the most durable and vital agency in literary history and, at the same time, mark the point of intersection where literature and theory of literature meet. We understand, however, that the processes of literary fabrication and communication, once addressed as 'languages of form' or 'morphogenesis' *(Gestaltbildung)*,[3] demand a meta-language that allows us to access them in the terms of current literary theory and in accordance with the cultural developments in which these forms participated and continue to participate. It follows that this quest for form is not a call to disentangle literature from other cultural productions, nor is it a strategy to sue for or to re-establish fictional autonomy. Quite to the contrary, the essays in this volume show a deep contextual desire to lay bare the heteronomous, transgressive powers, qualities and functions that reside in literary forms and testify to their ability of modelling the world – together and in competition with their non-aesthetic counterparts. These essays are, in fact, a claim for the 'poetics' in the 'Poetics of Culture', for its operational and interactive mode.

This volume, therefore, aims at two related aspects: at a true comparative analysis of *form as a historical discourse* and, by reassessing influential theoretical discussions, at the consideration of a novel *theory of literary form*. This aim will be addressed from a threefold perspective: by delineating theories (foundations), dynamics (transfor-

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[3]   See Oskar Walzel: *Gehalt und Gestalt im Kunstwerk des Dichters*, Berlin 1923.

mations), and cultures (exchanges) that construe (and are construed by) literary forms.

In order to obtain a meta-language with regard to the already 'secondary' language of our objects, to their 'languages of form',[4] we will refer to a key proposition that is currently being developed: *a theory of models* as a means to navigate production and reception processes across a great variety of disciplines. We believe that such a theory together with its methods will be apt to reconfigure 'literature' as a dynamic, reciprocal and competitive relationship between aesthetic forms and models in particular procedures (of the sciences, technology, philosophy of science, and ontology).[5] A theory of *literary* modelling will gain substantial input from the contributions to this volume – with regard to future theories of form as well as to the

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[4]   According to Juri Lotman's famous note, claiming that poetic language is a 'secondary modelling system' in comparison with ordinary language, whose models have primary status.

[5]   Bernd Mahr: *Modellieren. Beobachtungen und Gedanken zur Geschichte des Modellbegriffs*, in: *Bild, Schrift, Zahl*, ed. by Sybille Krämer and Horst Bredekamp, München 2003, pp. 59–86; id.: *On the Epistemology of Models*, in: *Rethinking Epistemology*, vol. 1, ed. by Günter Abel and James Conant, Berlin / Boston 2012, pp. 301–352; id.: *Das Wissen im Modell* (2004), Web, <http://www.flp.tu-berlin.de/fileadmin/fg53/KIT-Reports/r150.pdf>, 21 February 2017; Bernhard Dotzler / Sigrid Weigel (eds.): *"fülle der combination". Literaturforschung und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, München 2005; Friedrich Balke / Bernhard Siegert / Joseph Vogl (eds.): *Modelle und Modellierung*, München 2015. From the perspective of literary theory cf. Darin Tenev's contribution to this volume; see also Robert Matthias Erdbeer: *Poetik der Modelle*, in: *Textpraxis* 11 (2015), Web, <http://www.uni-muenster.de/Textpraxis/robert-matthias-erdbeer-poetik-der-modelle>, pp. 1–35, and Michael Bies, *Das Modell als Vermittler von Struktur und Ereignis. Mechanische, statistische und verkleinerte Modelle bei Claude Lévi-Strauss*, in: *Forum interdisziplinäre Begriffsgeschichte* 5 (2016), pp. 43–54, Web, <http://www.zfl-berlin.org/forum-begriffsgeschichte.html>; for an instructive case study see Karin Krauthausen: *Der unmögliche 'Teste' und der mögliche 'Léonard'. Zu Paul Valérys Modellierung (in) der Literatur*, in: Balke et al.: *Modelle und Modellierung*, pp. 57–72.

theoretical discussions that have always been an issue in the vibrant history of disputes and experiments about this unruly phenomenon called literary form.

2   Literary Modelling

A model, as an artefact, combines the functions of an object and a concept; it is used for representing (preconceiving) a reality and for developing a future application. It can reduce complexity (most obviously for the sake of comprehensibility) but also focus and enhance it (for experimental settings, testing purposes, and new designs). As such, it is a mediator and a trigger of 'formation' and of transformation; it consists of forms, but also de- and reconstructs them in the modelling procedures within which it operates, through transformational acts. Thus, it may be instructive to investigate these modelling performances, the sources, applications and re-entries that create what has been termed 'dynamic form'. To us, however, literary modelling is also valuable as a means of overcoming (if not undermining) and of understanding the variety of meanings, usages and fierce discussions that occluded (and continue to occlude) the notion of aesthetic form. Regarding these intricacies of form and function, we devote this volume to an 'interphilological' objective: to the meeting and exchange of national literatures and their highly individual traditions of form.[6]

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[6]   Moreover, we perceive this venture as a tentative approach towards a theory (and practice) of transdisciplinary modelling. For, with regard to interdisciplinary exchange in general, what concepts could be deemed more suitable to bridging the resistant gap between the 'two cultures' than those of model and form? A first attempt in this direction is the Münster research project "Literary Modelling and Energy Transition. Development and Application of a Transdisciplinary Theory of Models", a joint collaboration with the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and the Helmholtz Association, supported by the Volkswagen Foundation funding line "Off the Beaten Track".

Convinced of the heuristic value and potential of approaching literary form from this perspective, we propose four theses on the relationship between model and form:

1. *Types*. Models are perceived as means for gaining access to complex processes or objects by reducing their complexity; they function as representations of an original source, in short: as 'models *of* x'. In doing so, they always aim at a specific application, e.g. at the regulation, serial production or enhancement of a given source – they function as 'models *for* y'.[7] These applications can be either reproductive (stabilizing or 'mimetic') or creative ('deconstructive' or experimental), insofar as they enable the formation and development *(Entwurf)* of novel objects or devices. Thus, heuristically speaking, literary form can be located on a scale between two types of modelling: *representational models* with a mimetic design, and *conceptual models* with an experimental design. *Generic literary models*, in particular, can operate as representations ('copies'), emulations *(Überbietungen)* or transformations (innovations) which again can turn into a norm for future modelling. *Thus, literary modelling produces functional types*.

2. *Pragmatics*. If modelling is seen as a creative process of producing, stabilizing and destroying forms by coupling and uncoupling their elements,[8] it can unfold its formative potential in a twofold manner: In a factual environment, it can provide the concepts and devices for pragmatic agency, not least through the creation and the transfer of new terminologies, heuristic metaphors, or 'styles of thought'.[9] Within a fictional environment, exempt from the pragmatic pressure of applicability, aesthetic modelling can focus on the modelling procedures themselves. It can address their openings and closures, and the transformations between stable and dynamic forms. *Thus, as an epistemic strategy in fiction as in*

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[7]   Cf. Bernd Mahr: *Modelle und ihre Befragbarkeit. Grundlagen einer allgemeinen Modelltheorie*, in: *EWE* 26 (2015), pp. 329–342.

[8]   Cf. Niklas Luhmann: *Art as a Social System* [1995], Stanford 2000.

[9]   Cf. Erdbeer: *Poetik der Modelle* (note 5), *passim*, esp. pp. 11–22.

fact, aesthetic modelling creates an operational knowledge *that transforms traditional orders of knowledge and of agency, and puts it to the test*.

3. *Modality*. In managing 'reality', these modelling procedures can facilitate, but also limit and restrict, contingency (chance) as well as emergence (innovation). The restriction of emergence and contingency is likely to produce redundancy, whereas facilitation leads to difference. A testing ground both for the range of application and the interplay of fact and fiction, literary modelling creates a 'modal environment' with its respective possibility space. *As part of this environment, all literary forms receive what may be termed a 'modal spin'*.

4. *Context*. Aesthetic forms are the result of modelling with model objects,[10] either actual or virtual. These model objects play a vital part in the respective application of a model, as they guide and influence (and sometimes undermine) the model agency through their specific *'Eigensinn'* and *'Eigenform'*. These individual capacities or features limit or extend an object's range of agency, transformability and impact. Nonetheless, *such model objects, like all model agents and procedures, are embedded in a 'model situation', the historical, discursive or generic context within which they operate and which they actively change*.

Viewed in these terms, all literary forms 'result' from processes of modelling, as a reality (of facts, perceptions or ideas) is 'formatted', 'translated' into an aesthetic shape. Moreover, literary forms engage in constituting types and strategies of modelling through which reality is made available for reconfiguration and interpretation: they create the models for (our dealings with) reality. And what is more, these models can acquire 'model character' in a decidedly normative sense: as rules and guidelines for (a new perception of) reality. Hence, forms of discourse organize the models of a certain knowledge, agency, or structure and prepare them for aesthetic usage, while contemporary discourse is pre-modelled and re-modelled in aesthetic

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[10] Cf. Mahr: *Das Wissen im Modell* (note 5).

forms.[11] It is from this perspective that the essays of this volume approach their subject, literary forms, from a variety of languages and centuries, and investigate their aesthetic modelling.

3   Towards a History of Literary Form

This volume, based on contributions to the 2015 conference of the Münster DFG Research Training Group *Literary Form. History and Culture of Aesthetic Modelling*, charts a number of directions which the reconsideration of form in literary studies has been taking and might fruitfully pursue further. The papers collected here build upon recent inquiries into the relationship between form and modelling and contribute to (re-)establishing 'form' as a key concept of contemporary literary studies. They explore the poetics and the history of form through case studies from a wide range of cultures, periods, and discourses. Contributors examine well-established binaries like 'chaos vs. form', 'form vs. matter', 'content vs. form', as well as their dynamic counterparts in concepts like morphology and 'inner form', or form as operational self-reference. Moreover, they distinguish the idea of literary form from various competing concepts (such as structure, pattern, or *Gebilde*) in the interest of terminological clarity. These reconsiderations all participate in the same project of a 'poetics of culture' broadly conceived. As pointed out above, they fall into three larger categories that may usefully be classified as historical and systematic studies (1) of *theories of form* (addressing influential and dissenting concepts); (2) of *dynamics of form* (referring to generic transformation); and (3) of *cultures of form* (concerning transfers and exchanges between cultures, disciplines, and media).

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[11] For this mutual interdependence cf. Stephen Greenblatt: *Towards a Poetics of Culture* [1990], in: *The Greenblatt Reader*, ed. by Michael Payne, Malden 2005, pp. 18–29.

3.1   Theories of Form

Theories of form have played a crucial part in literary theory ever since antiquity, but they can also be encountered outside of 'criticism proper', e.g., in the auto-critical (self-referential, meta-textual, and meta-fictional) dimension of individual works. In literary theory and practice, though, this concept of poetic form has always been highly protean. Forms have been discussed in terms of structures, patterns, functions, and devices, but also as "media of emergence",[12] differentiating observations,[13] or "heuristic models for the self-reflection of a literary practice" that refers to the specific "self-unfolding of a literary consciousness".[14] If forms appear as 'mobile', 'travelling', 'fluid', or 'dynamic', these characteristic features of experiment result from their dynamic modelling. From this perspective, forms are always charged by modelling processes, whereas modelling processes only operate in frames of representation and adaption, i.e. via forms. This dialectic may procure three types of formal modelling (or modelling with forms):

a) *forming* (via structure, patterns, and semantic opening and closure);
b) *formatting* (as disciplining, normalizing, rewriting or overwriting), and
c) *formalization* (by semiotic systems of abstraction and reduction).

Charting the historical developments of theories of form, questions like the following arise: How could theories of form from various discursive, cultural, and intertextual environments collaborate and influence each other? How can interferences be singled out and their effects gauged? How can diachronic and transnational approaches to these theories of form gain insight in discursive transformation (something that Foucault himself refused to investigate)? And furthermore, to what extent is such a theory of literary models still com-

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[12]   Martin Seel: *Ästhetik des Erscheinens*, München 2000.
[13]   Dirk Baecker: *Kulturkalkül*, Berlin 2014.
[14]   Otto Knörrich: *Formen der Literatur in Einzeldarstellungen*, Stuttgart 1991.

patible with more 'conventional' or well-established theories of form, and what may be the heuristic potential of differences between them? How can theories of form – descriptive, prescriptive, or otherwise – be conceived of as (strategic) 'models of' and 'models for' aesthetic innovation and poetic creativity? And what are the conditions that allow a theory of literary form to make aesthetic judgements by ascribing 'model status' to a literary *œuvre* or a group of texts? Or how can they acquire such a status themselves?

To illustrate the far-reaching and yet profound interrelation between theories of form and the internal and external circumstances under which they arise, one might recall the works of Erich Auerbach and Ernst Robert Curtius. Both authors sought to propagate a theory of form by using a specific literary model – *topos* in the case of Curtius,[15] *figura* in Auerbach's writings –,[16] in order to create a history of formal continuity in European literature. Remarkably, both works were produced in exile. Their holistic concepts were designed both to revitalize and to refashion (i.e., to 're-model') form as a *remedium* against the policies of form in Nazi ideology. Thus, form itself became a model not just for poetic theory, but for a post-nationalist, pan-European identity.[17] – According to this concept of 'embedded theory', embedded in a model situation of heuristic relevance, the contributions collected in this section trace various historical attempts at theorizing form.

Thus, **Michael Niehaus**, in his essay *Gebilde – Format* draws attention to the poorly theorized term *Gebilde*, which in German is employed to designate something prior to formal definitions. Thus, *Gebilde* cannot have a specific form but is an entity whose form is yet to be discovered. Niehaus argues that the term *Format* can function as

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[15] Cf. Ernst Robert Curtius: *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* [1948], New York 1953.

[16] Cf. Erich Auerbach: *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* [1953], Princeton 2003.

[17] Cornelia Blasberg: *Verloren und rekonstruiert: 'Europa' in den Exilschriften von Erich Auerbach und Ernst Robert Curtius*, in: *Europa gibt es doch ...: Krisendiskurse im Blick der Literatur*, ed. by Florian Kläger and Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, Paderborn 2016, pp. 185–201.

an antonymic concept to *Gebilde*, as it seems to designate something rigidly defined through its (outward) form, thus producing a contrastive analysis with highly original insight. He repeatedly refers to André Jolles's classic study of simple forms (*Einfache Formen*), which then takes centre-stage in **Eva Axer**'s *Die 'morphologische Aufgabe' in der Literaturwissenschaft. Zum Verhältnis von Form und Zeit in André Jolles' "Einfache Formen"*. In analyzing the historical and epistemological conditions of this influential text that only recently became canonical, Axer's reading tries to clarify the possibilities and limitations of the 'morphological task'. From the perspective of sociology of science and of literary theory she highlights the specific tension field of fictionality and function in which Jolles' concept of the 'plastic dynamism' of 'small forms' evolved. In *Die Generizität der Form. Geschichte und System in Fredric Jamesons dialektischer Gattungstheorie*, **Paul Keckeis** probes the innovative potential of Fredric Jameson's literary and cultural theories. He emphasizes how form is central in Jameson's overall theoretical architecture and explores the strategies in which his dialectics becomes fruitful for literary theory in particular, providing powerful new insight into the ways forms shape and reflexively reshape their own interpretations. In his essay *Modes of Fiction, Models of Fiction* **Darin Tenev** envisages the status of language in fiction from the perspective of a theory of literary modelling. In a thorough reassessment of Speech Act Theory and Possible World Semantics, Tenev stresses the internal model agency of literature, its 'indexicality' and 'transformability', in contrast and collaboration with the readings it provokes.

3.2   Dynamics of Form

Viewed in the context of literary history, form can also be regarded as a strategic device by which historical discourses reflect on, fashion, and regulate their own modelling procedures. Thus, form-processing is, has always been and probably will always be supremely relevant for the production of *genres*.[18] The bold attempt to reconcile the no-

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[18]   Cf. John Frow: *Genre*, London 2006.

tion of dynamics with a concept that appears as the epitome of akinesia and durability, with form, remains a daring project; yet it is perhaps most thoroughly exemplified by observations in the genre paradigm. For, paradoxically, 'stasis' or generic closure is just as much a product of dynamic modelling as is generic change. An operational device for classifying literary forms and models, genre has long played a key role in the fashioning of theories of form, but also challenged them through its profusion and contingency. Heuristically, form and genre can be clearly distinguished: Any genre type is the result of formal modelling, whereas not all aesthetic forms acquire the status of genre. To gain generic credibility a set of forms has to prevail in an elective and normative process, in a process that identifies an *Idealtypus* and turns it into a 'model'. However, underneath this normative procedure that produces models, prototypes and even archetypes, resides a formal dynamics that is constantly reflecting on the status of its modelling. In general, dynamic form-processing can be specified as a reflective procedure on at least five levels:

a) on the level of *self-referentiality*, by modelling the interaction of its own components;
b) on the level of *intertextuality*, by modelling external literary processes and models;
c) on the level of *interdiscursivity*, by modelling remote and extraliterary processes and models;
d) on the level of *contextual referentiality*, by modelling its model existence *(Modellsein)*, the model situation (context) and the modelling components;
e) on the level of *literary theory*, by exerting a modelling impact on the academic field of literary studies.

This five-level-dynamism leads to a series of questions: How do genres gain, store, exercise, and lose their epistemic credit? How do lower-level form devices register historical discourses and the production of knowledge? How do they acquire and pass on 'generic knowledge' with regard to both the competence required to (pre-)recognize, evaluate and (re-)apply a genre and the content (infor-

mation) that a genre type communicates? What is the role of self-referentiality and auto-criticism for the transformation of genres?[19] Finally, how can the double standard of generic agency be analyzed – its active function as an agent and that passive "participation without belonging" in which Derrida once recognized 'the law of genre'?[20] What is genre's place between an immanent 'generic knowledge' (or generic competence), explicit, yet dynamic "genre cultures",[21] and the meta-genres regulating literary history and theory?

Through a wide-ranging discussion of Latin literature of the high Middle Ages, **Christel Meier** highlights, in *Formexperiment und Gattungsbewusstsein in der lateinischen Literatur des Hochmittelalters*, what she calls 'contrastive imitations' (*Kontrastimitationen*). Medieval authors can be seen to employ formal dynamics to a surprising degree as they seem to enter into a competition with generic prototypes which they imitate at the same time as they strive to surpass them. This can result in composite forms that may seem motley or crude to the modern reader by comparison to the classical ideal of generic purity. However, as Meier shows, 'monstrous' forms yoking verse and prose, widely disparate subjects, or diverging narrative patterns, were much appreciated by contemporary readers for their 'exponential imitation' of older forms. The chapter establishes a compelling connection between medieval ideas of exemplary lives and the multiple generic forms in which they are modelled.

In a magisterial discussion of Jonathan Swift's 'sabotage of genre', *'Forming' Destruction or, the Sabotage of Genre in Jonathan Swift's Poetry*, **Hermann Josef Real** shows how in the hands of the eighteenth century's foremost satirist, parodic reference to estab-

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[19] Cf. Janine Hauthal et al.: *Metaisierung in Literatur und anderen Medien. Begriffsklärungen, Typologien, Funktionspotentiale und Forschungsdesiderate*, in: *Metaisierung in Literatur und anderen Medien – Theoretische Grundlagen – Historische Perspektiven – Metagattungen – Funktionen*, ed. by Janine Hauthal et al., Berlin / New York 2007, pp. 1–21, esp. p. 11.

[20] Jacques Derrida: *The Law of Genre*, in: *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980), pp. 55–81, quot. at p. 59.

[21] Cf. Michler: *Kulturen der Gattung* (note 2).

lished forms, poetic and otherwise, was made in the service of paradox. While authors like Alexander Pope still modelled their poetic careers after the classical *rota virgilii*, Swift aims to provoke his audience through a challenge to critical and aesthetic consensus. Anatomizing Swift's assault on the prevailing 'rage for order' through his own 'rage for chaos', Real demonstrates the deflation, inversion, and refashioning, respectively, of poetic, medical, and epistemological models in Swift's *A Description of the Morning*, *A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed*, and *The Beasts' Confession*.

In his essay *Form und Norm. Verhalten und Ästhetik bei Adalbert Stifter*, **Werner Michler** discovers, in Stifter's later works, an insistence on form that vividly contrasts with the advancing regression of strict, or 'realist', formal devices. Michler convincingly shows how the explicit correlation of form and norm – perceived by Stifter as a way of saving a tradition, by his critics as a failure of poetic style –, can paradoxically generate a formal framework for such literary texts which resist, and even destroy, formal traditions and the traditions of form. Examining *Temporality and Sonnet Form in Auden's "In Time of War"*, **Douglas Brown** analyses how the poet self-consciously employs this supremely conventionalized, rigid form in the otherwise (apparently) amorphous context of *Journey to a War*. The sonnet allows Auden to situate himself vis-à-vis the ideological and literary environment and becomes, in Brown's reading, "an epochal model for ethical, existential, historical, and religious dimensions of human experience". A comparison with Baudelaire's sonneteering practice throws into relief Auden's explorations of how temporality and subjectivity may be given shape through allusion, intertextual reflexivity, and self-conscious generic deconstruction. In his essay, *The 'Exploded Form': Characteristics of the Atypical, Indefinable, Inimitable. A case study on Ion D. Sîrbu's posthumous novel* "A Farewell to Europe!", **Eugen Radu Wohl** not only rediscovers one of the most intriguing writers from the 'inner emigration' period in Communist Romania, he also offers a reading of 'exploded forms' as autofictional manoeuvres 'against biography'.

In *Cut-ups as Form and Device in Contemporary Culture*, **Daria Baryshnikova** examines the prose of Pavel Ulitin and William S.

Burroughs as a particular kind of experimental narrative composed with the help of the cut-up technique. In a critical assessment of the influential debate on 'natural and unnatural narratology' the chapter explores the transformations of cut-up forms in different socio-cultural contexts. Focusing on interpretations of narrative conceptualization of writing experiences as reflected in the texts of Ulitin and Burroughs, Baryshnikova shows the duality of cut-ups and the stream of consciousness techniques that allowed the authors to bridge the binaries of poetry / prose and voice / language. **Vera Mütherig** explores, in her intermedial case study *"Vorläufig definitiv?" Der Remix als Form akustischer Literatur*, how the genre type of literary remix in audiobooks evolves into a literary model with the potential of shaping a new genre. Analyzing the remix version of Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften (The Man without Qualities)*, she also demonstrates the differentiation processes that distinguish the remix from more traditional genres, such as the collage, by transmedial references, notably to musical conventions.

3.3   Cultures of Form

Against the background of historical and recent theories of literary form, and of the volatility and temporality of formal structures and devices, the third section situates the topic of this volume in an even wider context; by analysing transfers of poetic forms from one discursive formation to another. In fact, whenever the purpose and potential of aesthetic objects is at stake, when they challenge (or are challenged by) political, ideological, religious, social, legal, economic, or scientific discourse, form becomes an epicentre of discursive dispute. As much as it appears to be an easy target of all kinds of ideology and cultural assessment, it can also function as an instrument or agent to enforce its claims. As forms acquire, lose or recover epistemological potential or symbolic valence, they connect with other cultural domains. They offer insight into their specific 'cultural poetics', in their processes of cultural self-fashioning. This is, of course, not only true for the study of past cultures. In illustrating to their students the past relevance of literary,

and especially generic founding models such as tragedy, or elegy, or fable, teachers can do worse than point to modern genres often marked as trivial: to zombie movies, gangsta rap, reality TV shows, or video games. In fact, the 'hip' contemporary blending of generic types in entertainment media and social networks allows us to observe – in real-time – the emergence, coding, and codification of a whole new set of forms. Here we witness, as we did in other cases of generic, medial or epistemic change,[22] the formal closure of a viral semantics, and the semanticisation of form. It should be promising, then, to explore such changes in the meaning and significance of long-established forms that happen in the context of new media and cultures, e.g. with regard to novel strategies of authorship and (fictional) participation, i.e. *formal agency*.[23] What, we might ask, may be the cultural (aesthetic or religious, epistemic, economic, or political) considerations governing these models, rules and regulations that provide the strange emergences and transformations of forms? Is there a 'counter-culture' of 'intractable models'? A form-related 'alternative science'? An ethics of poetic form?

In a thorough study of the epistemic qualities of formal dynamism, **Christian Haß** seeks to identify the strategies of Varro in the wider framework of a poetology of knowledge. In *Geerdetes Denken (Teil 1): (Agri)Kultur als Episteme und Formverfahren bei*

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[22] Cf., for example, the case of the early English novel recently described in Gerd Bayer: *Novel Horizons. The Genre Making of Restoration Fiction*, Manchester 2016.

[23] Cf., for instance, on comic books, Daniel Stein: *Superhero Comics and the Authorizing Functions of the Comic Book Paratext*, in: *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels*, ed. by Daniel Stein and Jan-Noël Thon, Berlin / Boston 2013, pp. 155–189; on showrunners of television series, Jason Mittell: *Authorship*, in: *Complex TV. The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (2011), Web, <http://mcpress.media-commons.org/complextelevision/authorship/>; and on television fan-fiction, Suzanne Scott: *Who's Steering the Mothership? The Role of the Fanboy Auteur in Transmedia Storytelling*, in: *The Routledge Participatory Cultures Handbook*, ed. by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Henderson, New York 2012, pp. 43–52.

Varro, "De Re Rustica", Haß focuses on generically active texts of the late Roman Republic, when forms and genres were still in the making. He uncovers their 'founding metonomy' *(Basismetonymie)* that would later, in the Augustan Golden Age, bring the generic innovations to full fruition. In *A Generic Worldview. The Case of the Chronotope of Litany*, **Witold Sadowski** examines a specific instance of the world-making power of genres: focusing on the genre knowledge that informs Church litany, Sadowski shows how, from the early Middle Ages onwards, the conceptual model of Neoplatonic cosmology is translated into the versification pattern of Church – and even poetic – litanies. His analysis of verses from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century in English (George Gascoigne), French (Joachim du Bellay), German (Angelus Silesius), and Italian (Serafino dell'Aquila) shows that the 'generic memory' outlasted the Middle Ages. Sadowski introduces the notion of a 'generic worldview' by reference to the concept of 'linguistic worldview', to Propp's theory of the hidden ideology inscribed in folklore genres, and to Bakhtin's philosophy of the chronotope.

Sonja Fielitz, in her chapter on *Aesthetic Modelling in the Age of Classicism. Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and the Binary of Chaos and Form*, explores the critical fortunes of Ovid's epic poem after its popularity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Her careful analysis of the neo-classical critical animus against the *Metamorphoses'* style and treatment of the epic form relates form, political ideology and scientific epistemology in an exemplary manner, arguing that the poem's 'floating world' not only contradicted the Augustan ideal of pre-ordained stability but also violated the aesthetic principle of verisimilitude. This correlation is borne out by later developments, as Ovid's work is re-habilitated when evolutionary thought gains ground. **Reto Rössler**, in *Form-/Verfahren. Kosmologie und Lehrgedicht in der Aufklärung (Sucro – Kant – Kästner)*, examines the epistemological potential accorded to the ancient genre of didactic (or scientific) poetry in the eighteenth century. In the hands of Enlightenment poets, the form's hybrid status between poetry and prose enables it to process knowledge in a particularly dynamic fashion. Rössler highlights the correspondences between the genre and con-

temporaneous ideas about the pluriform world system: As the cosmos presents a challenge to representation, the Lehrgedicht develops as a tool for speculative and hypothetical thought replicating not only the 'plurality of worlds' but also the contingency of all knowledge. At the end of the period, the form declines and its function is appropriated, as Rössler shows, by the 'world-making' genre of the novel. **Dagmar Stöferle** interprets formal innovation as a response to crises of various kinds. She identifies Romanticism as a period of transition and crisis where Modernism has many of its roots and formal innovation is particularly complex. In her contribution, *Die Form der Eheschließung als literarisches Modell (Goethe, Manzoni, Hugo)*, she illustrates this argument by readings of Goethe, Manzoni and Hugo with a focus on their aesthetic presentations of marriage rites as traditionally rigid forms that come under strain and increased reflection in the literature of the period. In her essay *Coaxing Words into Form. The Poetry of Dana Gioia,* **Roxana Elena Doncu** investigates the vibrant debate on American New Formalism in the poetical and theoretical work of one of its most influential authors. Her assessment of the ways in which the formal poetry of Gioia functions as a means for theorizing form within "a configuration that is not predetermined by either poetic intention or the specificities of language" makes a claim in favour of the ethical appeal of formal modelling.

The contributions in this volume are intended to advance an emerging discussion – a discussion that is focusing on the intriguing interplay of two important cultural techniques and their respective, volatile manifestations: aesthetic modelling and literary transformation; models and forms. In covering a period from ancient Rome to communist Romania, in bridging gaps from model theory to cut-up practice and in juxtaposing genres from 'contrastive imitations' to poetic litanies and 'genre sabotages', the essays in this volume show how form, true to the familiar phrase, has always created its content. They convincingly uncover how traditions and controversies of form have always come back with a vengeance, but also in new modulations and with innovative twists. – The editors wish to acknowledge the support of the German Research Council within

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I   Theories of Form