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Foregrounding

Abstract: One major research area in the empirical study of literature pertains to the role of foregrounding (i. e., stylistic deviations and parallelism) in the reading process. The associated phenomena are arguably key to understanding what distinguishes literary reading and essential for the investigation of its impact on readers' interpretation and aesthetic appreciation. We trace the origins of the concept back to Aristotle and follow various theoretical elaborations in the works of twentieth-century literary scholars and linguists, right up to the moment when developments took an empirical turn. We will see that the original scholarly assumptions were inspiration for an impressive amount of qualitative (e. g., think-aloud studies and in-depth interviews) and quantitative (e. g., experiments, neurocognitive studies) research. The results have deepened our insights about the way textual foregrounding affects readers' experiences and how these experiences may be associated with carry-over effects (e. g., critical thinking abilities). Besides the state of the art in all the relevant lines of research, we offer readers a comprehensive overview of the many remaining problems that require further (perhaps interdisciplinary) study.

Introduction

It is neither unique content, particular themes or motives, special types of events, extraordinary characters, nor a select set of thoughts and emotions that distinguishes literature from other genres. Rather, *how* these are represented, as summarized in the term *foregrounding*, that does so. The term generally refers to:

> a form of textual patterning which is motivated specifically for literary-aesthetic purposes. Capable of working at any level, foregrounding typically involves a stylistic distortion of some sort, either through an aspect of the text which deviates from a linguistic norm or, alternatively, where an aspect of the text is brought to the fore through repetition or parallelism. (Simpson, 2014, p. 50)

Research on how these features affect readers is one of the most fruitful topics in the interdisciplinary field of literary scholarship and the social sciences. Of

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all concepts in literary theory, foregrounding is the most frequently tested – often with compelling empirical corroboration.

The prominent position of foregrounding is, first, partly due to the precise hypotheses that theorists have generated about the effects of specific devices. Second, the flourishing of the empirical study of foregrounding seems inspired by a realization that textual features can only become foregrounded when readers perceive them to be distinct in relation to some background. This means that *without* readers there is no foregrounding and, consequently, when studying foregrounding, it is expedient to engage actual readers at some point. The third reason foregrounding research is such a large and continuously expanding field is that its concerns are central to what might be considered the value of literature. Some conceptualizations of foregrounding help to account for the impact reading literary texts has on individual readers, as well as on society more generally. Foregrounding deals with issues like aesthetic appreciation, affective responses, cognitive processes, and the profound sense of life that literary reading may impart.

This chapter invites scholars and scientists of various disciplines to collaborate on future research projects. The purpose is to illustrate how a combination of two or more disciplinary ontologies might generate transdisciplinary advances. One such ontology is the study of stylistic features, for which we reserve the term *textual foregrounding* (cf. Bálint et al. 2016). This field is rich in hypotheses that can feed into experimental research. In the ontology of a second group of studies, a central concept is *perceived foregrounding*: do readers actually notice instances of deviation or parallelism? In a third approach, researchers concentrate on how perceived foregrounding is *experienced* by readers. Having noticed some deviation, readers might simply dismiss it, or it might start to play a part in their response to the text. Fourth, one could focus on *foregrounding effects*, that is, durable changes in readers that set in after their reading experiences. Experience and effects seem hard to distinguish, because we could argue that a certain experience (e. g., confusion, feeling puzzled, intrigued, moved) is the effect of a particular type of textual foregrounding (e. g., an unusual metaphor or perspective). And those experiences may lead to certain long-term or carry-over effects. However, here the term "effects" is reserved for the latter. Below (in a section on *Practical Foregrounding Effects*) we will discuss changes (e. g., increased levels of critical thinking) that may be *rooted in* experiences during or right after reading a literary text (e. g., a feeling of defamiliarization) but can be distinguished from those experiences.

Knowledge on all four of these ontological levels is essential to understanding what makes literature truly literary. Consonance of these four will move us closer to the core of literary phenomena, what they are for, and what they bring

to readers' lives. To reach that core, interdisciplinary collaborations, building on an impressive amount of extant work, are needed. With this aim in mind, we will first describe the theoretical roots and varieties of the term foregrounding, after which we will review the available research and suggest how collaborative efforts might continue this work.

A primary challenge is to grapple with diversity. First, it is necessary to address various conceptions of what foregrounding actually is. The variety in these conceptions suggests that there are *several* theories of foregrounding. For instance, some theorists emphasize the role of deviation, while others stress parallelism as the working component of foregrounding. Moreover, empirically grounded theories have gone beyond the formulations of Shklovsky, Mukařovský, and Jakobson. Originally, claims pertained to a relation between textual foregrounding (deviation, parallelism) and an experience in the reader referred to as defamiliarization and appreciation. However, empirical work has extended (rather than replaced) these notions to include the impact of foregrounding on self-perceptual change and empathy.

Second, it is necessary to consider the "background" to what is perceived as "foreground" (see Jacobs, 2016, and Hakemulder, 2020). To understand foregrounding requires readers to be at least tacitly aware of a background. However, the way theorists and researchers understand background varies greatly. Some focus on external deviations, contrasted with background outside the text, like the rules and maxims of everyday language, norms set by society, or regularities in a genre or medium. Others concentrate on internal deviations from regularities within a text.

Third, it is important to address the variety of experiences that are hypothesized to be caused by exposure to foregrounding – and their operationalizations. In each of these operationalizations, in each translation of an abstract concept to measurable units, something is lost. Some researchers concentrate on reported strikingness, importance, and discussion value (van Peer, 1986) and others on surprise (Hoorn, 1997). Still others assess reported reading difficulty, perplexity, or confusion (Castiglione, 2017, 2019; Harash, 2020; Fayn et al., 2019), or perhaps a reported feeling of knowing (cf. Kuiken & Douglas, 2017). An important subcategory consists of aesthetic experiences, with some researchers focusing on immediate appraisals, while others concentrate on aesthetic evaluation arising after elaboration (cf. Graf & Landwehr, 2015). In addition to these complexities, there is the diversity of empirical methods used to study foregrounding, each with its own ontology, its own epistemology, and its own potential and limitations.

To reflect this complexity, we will need to simplify our presentation by addressing studies in two subfields: one emphasizing the relation between fore-

grounding and aesthetic pleasure, mainly (but not exclusively) the domain of neurocognitive studies; the second concentrating on the relation between foregrounding and self-perceptual change, a topic that is mainly (but not exclusively) the domain of qualitative studies.

The Cutting Edge of Literature

The current complex and multifaceted conception of foregrounding can be traced back to Aristotle's *Poetics* (1984). When discussing textual organization, he delivers a verdict on everyday language: "The excellence of diction is for it to be at once clear and not mean. The clearest indeed is that made up of the ordinary words for things, but it is mean" (1458a17; p. 2333). "Mean" should be understood as banal, trite, bland, mundane. What the text *should* do, however, is explained further: "On the other hand the diction becomes distinguished and non-prosaic by the use of unfamiliar terms, i. e. strange words, metaphors, lengthened forms, and everything that deviates from the ordinary modes of speech" (1458a20). Aristotle is talking about foregrounding here (and he should be forgiven for not using the term).

At the same time, Aristotle warns against over-use of these unfamiliar words, and points to the necessity to weave them into a general fabric of usual terms:

> A certain admixture, accordingly, of unfamiliar terms is necessary. These, the strange word, the metaphor, the ornamental equivalent, etc., will save the language from seeming mean and prosaic, while the ordinary words in it will secure the requisite clearness. What helps most, however, to render the diction at once clear and non-prosaic is the use of the lengthened, curtained and altered forms of words. Their deviation from the ordinary words will, by making the language unlike that in general use, give it a non-prosaic appearance; and their having much in common with the words in general use will give it the quality of clearness. (1458a31; p. 2333–4)

Aristotle was not merely concerned with the construction principles of tragedy and epics, but also with the repercussions of such principles, when he writes: "Such incidents have the greatest effect on the mind when they occur unexpectedly" (1452a3; p. 2323). Astonishingly, he provides an outline of how to carry out empirical tests of his ideas: "To realize the difference one should take an epic verse and see how it reads when the normal words are introduced. The same should be done too with the strange word, the metaphor, and the rest; for one has only to put the ordinary words in their place to see the truth of what we

are saying" (1458b15; p. 1334). Twenty-three centuries later that notion is invoked again in empirical studies of literature (see the section entitled *Using Text Manipulations*.)

Russian Formalism

Aristotle's attempt to grasp the machinery by which literature is generated and how it forges its effects may be both fundamental and enlightening, but it remains unsystematic and even rather vague. Since this chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive historical overview, it will pass over relevant contributions in the nineteenth century, such as Wordsworth's and Coleridge's (see Miall & Kuiken, 1994b), to focus on a group of twentieth-century scholars that came to be known as the Russian Formalists. Against the unfalsifiable, sometimes erratic, claims of their contemporaries, they aspired to a systematic and rigorous study of literature. They had as their central aims the delimitation of literature in terms of "literariness" ("*literaturnost"*) or how literary texts are *made*. Here Aristotle's notion of "poetic" comes to mind; his word derives from the verb ποιεῖν, meaning "to make".

This concentration on the production of literary texts prompted them to ask what made literature "literature." The fact that, in most cases, it is possible to distinguish unproblematically between literary and non-literary texts meant for them that the former must have distinctive characteristics, which they labelled "literariness." Among a multitude of concrete analyses demonstrating this quality, one is regularly cited in this respect: Viktor Shklovsky's (1917) essay *Iskusstvo kak priem*, usually translated as "Art as Technique," or better as "Art as Device," for it is the notion of *priyom*, device, that is central to his argument (Berlina, 2015). Literary authors use such devices to make their texts differ from everyday language. In his essay, Shklovsky develops the notion of *ostranenie*, a neologism in Russian, which can be rendered as "making strange." In English it is usually translated as "defamiliarization."

Later, Roman Jakobson developed his own perspective on literature and poetics, proposing a functionalist theory of language that singled out the *poetic function*. His famous article "Linguistics and Poetics" (Jakobson, 1960) provides a broad formulation of this principle. Especially through the device of parallelism, literary texts call attention to themselves and, again in line with Aristotle's dictum, how they are made. In this sense, literary texts are constantly in the "act" of *laying bare* their own structural principles.

In Russian Formalism, there are two separate groups of devices: deviation and parallelism. These two strands were analysed, by and large, independently

of each other, even without recognizing that they both may bring about literariness. One will have to wait for translations in western languages, mainly in the 1960s, and especially in British Stylistics, for the two strands to be connected systematically. The work of Geoffrey Leech (1969) was embryonic in this respect.

Under ideological pressure from the Soviet authorities, Russian Formalism came to an end in 1930, symbolically through Shklovsky's cunning confession: "A Monument to Scientific Error." His ideas did not die, however, but moved on, mainly in the person of Roman Jakobson, who had fled to Prague, where he joined a group that later came to be called the Czech Structuralists.

Czech Structuralism

It is easier to outline the aims, methods, and results of the "Cercle linguistique de Prague," because they were more unified and less heterogeneous than their Russian counterparts. The Prague Structuralists built upon the work of the Formalists and extended it. Major figures belonging to the group were Bohuslav Havranek, Roman Jakobson, Nikolai Trubetzkoy, and René Wellek. For the conceptualization of foregrounding, the work of Jan Mukařovský (a close friend of Jakobson) is especially significant. In fact, the English term is a translation of the Czech term *aktualisáce*, developed by Mukařovský. He was also the driving force among the Prague Structuralists (see Garvin, 1964).

New in Mukařovský's approach was that he tried to incorporate insights from De Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* into his aesthetic theory, thus shaping the groundwork for a *functional* theory. Following Karl Bühler's *Sprachtheorie* (Language theory), which operates with three basic functions (the referential, expressive and appellative functions), Mukařovský adds a fourth, the aesthetic function, which is not limited to artworks but is ubiquitous in language use, and acts as an engine in language innovation. The 600 odd words invented by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*, which have since become part of everyday common language, may come to mind (e. g., "avouched," "defeated," "rant"). When it comes to literary texts, the aesthetic function is dominant and demands attention to itself, while in ordinary everyday communication the three other functions are basically external to language. This means that poetic texts are conceived not only in terms of their linguistic properties, but also and predominantly in terms of their *function*, which lies in their aesthetic effect. This effect hinges on the fact that attention is primarily drawn to the linguistic sign itself and not to the extra-textual communication, as in the functions of everyday language. Poets therefore strive toward optimal foregrounding, which, however,

can only be achieved in relation to the "background," here defined as the rules and maxims of everyday language, but also the literary variety of the standard language (but see also Hakemulder, 2020, for the possible variety in conceptualizations of background). This *relational* quality, strongly emphasized by Mukarovksy, is one of two forces sustaining optimal foregrounding. The other force is its *systematic* character. Random deviations from language rules will not support the aesthetic function; only unified foregrounded components that point in the same direction will. That is when readers may be touched by the novelty of the expression (Doležel, 1995; Galan, 1988).

In summary, after Aristotle, Shklovsky may be credited with having conceived the first systematic framework for the use of deviation in art. In his famous 1917 essay, he formulated an anthropological theory of art as a recipe for escaping the life-preserving habituation that – although necessary for survival – simultaneously impairs genuinely reflective and emotional involvement. Habituation kills our cognitive and emotional involvement in life, because by its very nature, it erases any form of reflection and affect. *Deviation* may come in different forms, for instance in flouting norms and rules of language use (such as Dylan Thomas's *A Grief Ago*), but also in an unusual narrative perspective (as in Tolstoy's *Kholstomer*, a story told by a horse), or in turning social conventions upside down (illustrated well by Thomas More's *Utopia*). There is good evidence that deviations of this kind are ubiquitous in literature, perhaps because they provide a counter-point to the monotony and predictability of everyday life. Deviations are entertaining because entrenched categories of thinking, feeling, and acting are being excoriated, allowing the exploration of hitherto unthinkable worlds and relations. However, deviations are at the same time disruptive, flying in the face of much that we know, and thus they are a kind of aggression against our daily concepts and concerns. Deviation exerts a symbolic violence on us and how we see ourselves.

Parallelism is sometimes also seen as a form of deviation. It refers to any kind of full or partial repetition. Typical instances of parallelism are meter, rhyme, alliteration, chiasm, and symmetrical syntax. It is rare (and mostly accidental) to find rhyme in everyday spontaneous speech, and, in that sense, this feature can be termed "deviant" from the usual standards of language. Although this is conceptually correct, this view is also misleading, for its function is quite different from the deviational aspect outlined earlier. In a sense, it is even its opposite: its repetitive character lets the reader anticipate what is coming, thereby exerting a soothing influence. Parallelism lays down a pattern of expectations, the fulfilment of which is often harmonious and pleasing.

The Empirical Turn

All these developments, from Aristotle to Mukařovský and British Stylistics, still remained enclosed in a *textual* approach, often making claims about the effects of particular literary devices without, however, checking the validity of such claims. This changed dramatically in the attempt to verify empirically some of the claims made by foregrounding theories. Van Peer (1986) offered a first attempt to establish the psychological validity of some operationalized variables derived from the writing of the Formalists, Structuralists, and British stylisticians. Not only did his study demonstrate that three parameters derived from foregrounding theories (strikingness, importance, discussion value) were reliably rated, he also showed how claims in literary studies could be subjected to empirical scrutiny. Soon this effort was followed by more sophisticated approaches, notably by Miall and Kuiken (1994a).

Importantly, that foregrounding also causes slowed reading and induces feeling was shown by Miall and Kuiken (1994b) and Sopčák (2007). A description of how deviation creates a new perspective on familiar things (refamiliarization) was offered in a study by Fialho (2007), demonstrating the refamiliarizing strategies readers use and the role of feelings in this process. For further elucidation of the concept of foregrounding, see Leech (1969), van Peer and Hakemulder (2006), van Peer et al. (2007), Douthwaite (2000), and Emmott and Alexander (2016). For further evidence of empirical evaluation of foregrounding theory, see also Hakemulder (2004), Hakemulder and van Peer (2016), Miall and Kuiken (1994b), van Peer et al. (2007), Zyngier et al. (2007), and van Peer and Nousi (2006).

Enriched Insights through Empirical Research

This section will summarize some of the results obtained in research to date, with a focus on attention and aesthetic pleasure, on self-perceptual change, and on experimental text manipulations, including the rereading paradigm.

Foregrounding and Aesthetic Pleasure

Ideally, the empirical study of literature combines insights about textual foregrounding with rigorous methods to examine its impact on perceived foregrounding and experienced foregrounding. Neuroscientific developments have

contributed to our knowledge of foregrounding, with a specific focus on the effects of deviation on attention, affect, and aesthetic pleasure. Following early brain-electrical and peripheral-physiological research investigating foregrounding effects in literary texts (Auracher, 2007; Hoorn, 1997; for review, see Jacobs, 2015b; see also Miall, 2009), more laborious neuroimaging studies were begun. A highly inter-disciplinary group of scientists from the "Languages of Emotion" research cluster of FU Berlin reported the first neuroimaging study on foregrounding with verbal materials (Bohrn et al., 2012). Foregrounded German proverb variants like "Who cares wins" (so called "anti-proverbs"; Nicklas & Jacobs, 2016) were contrasted with the originals ("Who dares wins") and control stimuli ("Who risks wins"). The purpose was to investigate (a) how background and foreground features can be combined in a single sentence; (b) why it is useful to analyze foregrounding effects in relation to their relevant background; and (c) why the foreground construct should be treated as a complex, continuous multidimensional variable.

"Due to their multiple rhetoric features, all proverbs can be considered foreground elements of language if seen against a background of non-rhetorical, non-figurative control sentences" (Jacobs, 2015b, p. 11). Thus, while the memory of the original proverb provides familiar background information, the one-letter/word change ("cares") of the *anti-proverb* variants was intended to evoke a foregrounding effect. The authors hypothesized that the tension thus created and the resulting affective and aesthetic reactions should vary with the degree of familiarity of the proverb and the degree of novelty, deviation, incongruity, or originality of the altered word or version. With regard to creativity and poetic experiences in figurative language reception and production, this tension is related to what is perhaps the most basic skill underlying the enjoyment of artful language: the ability to discover a (hidden) relationship between one object or pattern and another one in idioms, proverbs, puns, metaphors, or verses, an ability Koestler (1964) called *bisociative thinking*. Defamiliarization can be conceptualized as an effective way of guiding attention, but the degree of readers' affective-aesthetic involvement in this study depended on the type of foregrounding-induced defamiliarization. Enhanced activation in affect-related brain regions (e. g., medial orbitofrontal cortex, ventral striatum) was found only if defamiliarization altered the content – not the surface form or wording – of the original proverb, likely reflecting the rewarding aspect of successful, more effortful semantic integration (a kind of "Aha" experience; cf. Topolinski & Reber, 2010). In contrast, defamiliarization on the level of wording was associated with attention processes and error monitoring.

Only a few other neuroimaging studies seem to be directly related to foregrounding-induced defamiliarization. Bohrn et al. (2013) examined the intricate

relationship between familiarity and foreground using the German proverbs from the previous study and again found stimulus-correlated activity in the brain's "hedonic centre" (i. e., the ventral striatum) indicating the rewarding nature of sentences that are aesthetically pleasing (i. e., foregrounded proverbs) and, hence, suggestive of foregrounding experiences. More generally, these results indicate that some spontaneous aesthetic evaluation takes place during reading, even if not required by the task. The Bohrn et al. results are compatible with the notion that anti-proverbs evoke two contrasting responses that have to be related (the familiar proverb and the novel word) via a greater semantic integration effort. This "bisociative effort" has been studied more extensively with noun-noun compounds (NNCs) that in German allow the creation of countless neologisms – a special case of foregrounded language – by coupling for example noun pairs varying along several theoretical dimensions such as familiarity, literality-metaphoricity (Forgács et al., 2012), or valence (Kuhlmann et al., 2016). Neuroimaging experiments examining the processing of novel NNCs like DUFTGESANG (fragrance-chant) suggest that they require additional semantic integration effort, as indicated by increased left inferior frontal gyrus activity.

Hsu et al. (2015) looked at how the brains of readers of passages from the "Harry Potter" book series process supra-natural contents – a special type of foregrounding. Descriptions of magical events violate world-knowledge, catch the attention of readers, and bring about the novelty and emotional richness associated with the affective and aesthetic pleasure often characteristic of literary reading. Based on the *Neurocognitive Poetics Model* of literary reading (NCPM, Jacobs, 2015a), the authors proposed that the violation of world knowledge contained in supra-natural events increases the cognitive demand of world knowledge integration, and that related novelty, unexpectedness, and uncertainty activates the salience/emotion network in the brain. The background-foreground hypothesis of the model claims that any text offers a mixture of background elements (e. g., familiar words, themes, scenes) and foreground elements (e. g., defamiliarizing stylistic devices) which activate separate routes (immersion vs. aesthetic appreciation) characterized by differing neurocognitive processes (i. e., implicit vs. explicit processing) and reading behavior (i. e., fluent vs. disfluent reading; for a recent review see Jacobs & Willems, 2018).

Neurocognitive research clearly has the potential to increase our understanding of foregrounding. It has focused attention on aesthetic pleasure and offers instruments to test very precise text-based hypotheses. It is important to note that *researchers* interpret brain activities as evidence of what readers think and experience. It is possible to bridge this gap by asking readers to complete readily available questionnaires (e. g., Schindler et al., 2017) or by conducting qualitative research (e. g., in-depth interviews, Bálint et al. 2016).

Foregrounding and Self-Perceptual Change

One approach to foregrounding that extends original conceptions of the function of foregrounding focuses on how reading experiences involve the self. One approach that is particularly suitable to investigate these processes is qualitative research, both through think-aloud and in-depth interviews.

In their ground-breaking work, Miall and Kuiken (1999) argue that responses to literary texts combine verbal, emotional, and cognitive elements that may account for the distinctiveness of the literary experience. In some of their studies, the researchers elicited experiential accounts by inviting explicative reflection on foregrounding as reading experiences unfolded (see Sikora et al., 2011, and Fialho, 2012). By offering a hybrid of qualitative and quantitative procedures ("Numerically-Aided Phenomenology," Kuiken & Miall, 2001), they identified different forms of reading experiences.

In an overview of this work, Kuiken et al. (2004) distinguished two forms of self-implication in literary reading: one functioning like simile, in that the mapping between readers' memories and aspects of the text hinges on a similarity between the two and where explicit and symmetrical comparisons occur (e. g., "I am like character X"); and another functioning like metaphor, in that readers *metaphorically* identify themselves with some aspect of the text, with a blurring of boundaries between self and other (i. e., the text). As in metaphor, the relation between reader and character during this mode of reading is asymmetrical: reading as though "I am (character X)" has quite a different force than reading as though "(character X) is me" (cf. Cohen, 1999). This second form of engagement is a pivotal feature of what the researchers called "expressive enactment." Trying to locate whether and how "expressive enactment" occurs during literary reading, Sikora et al. (2011) found that self-perceptual change occurs through a succession of evocative moments. "Expressive enactment" contrasted with five other modes of reading, namely "ironic allegoresis," "aesthetic feeling," "autobiographical assimilation," "autobiographical diversion," and "nonengagement." Their findings primarily demonstrate that it is in the recurrence of affective themes (which can be conceived as a form of *parallelism* on the semantic and thematic level) in response to the *deviations* that a deepening modification in readers' sense of self occurs.

Looking specifically into how changes in the sense of self and others occur as the reading experience unfolds, Fialho (2012) showed that "self-modifying reading" is not a monolithic phenomenon. She articulated two types of experiences: one mediated by the setting and another mediated by characters. Each of these two types seems to entail a different dimension of self. Common to these

two types is a temporal aspect that seems to be essential to the nature of self-modifying reading. Modification of affective themes was also a pivotal feature of both of these types of experience. In this sense, and through a linguistic analysis of how readers worded their reading experiences, this work shows how *parallelism* occurs at the semantic, thematic, and linguistic levels (drawing from Hoey's, 1991, notion of complex repetition). It is through this interplay between *parallelism* in readers' discourse and responses to *deviations* in the text that "transformation" in readers' experiences of the self unfolds. Further studies have enabled the description of subjective experiences of transformative reading and exploration of the moments in which changes in self- and self-other constructs occur (Fialho, 2018, 2019). Such a form of phenomenological investigation has enabled the design of a theoretical-empirical model of transformative reading, based on how readers express their experiences of reading (Fialho, in preparation; Fialho et al., in preparation).

It can be argued that such studies of the explicative reflections to foregrounding reveal varieties in the interplay between *deviation* and *parallelism*, thus articulating different modes of foregrounding experiences. By placing foregrounding, as the hallmark of literariness, at the center of self-perceptual change, they have provided evidence supporting the dehabituation theory of literature (Miall, 2006).

Another line of investigation of the experience of deviation was initiated by Bálint et al. (2016). In their study, they identified several strategies in response to deviation in absorbing narratives, both written and cinematic. Such response strategies may be described through three underlying dimensions: absorption, agency, and valence. Their findings suggest that perceived deviation, rather than obstructing absorption, is associated with intense and meaningful engagement with narratives. They also demonstrate that foregrounding and absorption are not mutually exclusive, but, in fact, can co-occur.

In conclusion, qualitative research has been a valuable tool for generating insights about foregrounding experiences, in particular related to effects on self-perception. In addition, qualitative research can help us to formulate hypotheses for quantitative research, enabling examination of the generalizability of the results (e. g., Kuiken & Douglas, 2018). Future research on foregrounding and self-implication might also involve the use of implicit measures (cf. Gabriel & Young, 2011). The next section will examine other experimental procedures to test hypotheses about readers' responses to particular aspects of textual foregrounding.

Text-based Hypotheses Tested in Reading Experiments

Various theoretical claims about the relation between textual foregrounding and readers' experiences can be elegantly investigated with well-established methods, with the advantage of yielding generalizable conclusions. Experimentation enables evaluation of hypotheses about how textual foregrounding affects perceived foregrounding (i. e., do readers *notice* deviations, Emmott et al., 2007), aesthetic pleasure (e. g., Dixon et al., 1993), self-concept (e. g., Hakemulder, 2004), and other foregrounding effects (e. g., Koopman, 2016).

Using Text Manipulations. The basis for all speculations about foregrounding is the text itself. Relying upon reliable criteria for text manipulation is an essential requirement for experimental research on foregrounding (just as Aristotle suggested). Compared to more ecologically valid alternatives (i. e., the selection of original texts that differ in some specifiable ways, the use of different editions of the same text, and the use of authors' manuscripts), text manipulation has some obvious advantages: first, it leaves the researcher free to choose independent variables that are of theoretical interest; second, it ensures more control over confounding variables (Dixon & Bortolussi, 2008, p. 79).

Manipulation practices vary along two parameters: (a) the extent of the differences across versions, ranging from local and involving one feature (e. g., punctuation: Carrol et al., 2015) to extensive and involving multiple linguistic levels, as is more common in studies of foregrounding (e. g., Kuzmičová et al., 2017; Kuijpers & Hakemulder, 2018); and (b) the degree of explicitness with which the procedures for change are set out, which enables replication of the studies under consideration.

The extent of textual changes depends at least on the nature of the research aim and a (usually implicit) estimate of the scale of the changes needed to affect readers' behaviour. Such an estimate, in turn, rests on assumptions about participants' level of attention and sensitivity to textual features. Empirical studies of foregrounding tend to modify texts substantially because that seems required by researchers' theoretical starting points (e. g., van Peer, 1986; Douthwaite, 2000; Leech, 2008). Some theorists argue that foregrounding occurs at all linguistic levels and that its perception depends upon contrast with standard usage: deviation requires a norm against which it can be measured. This implies that making small changes at one linguistic level may not be enough to vary the degree of foregrounding substantially. Thus, a holistic approach is usually preferred, although the line between localized changes and principled paraphrasing can get blurred.

An example of this holistic tendency is found in Kuzmičová et al. (2017). They had a professional writer modify a text by Katherine Mansfield by: (a) removing figurative expressions (*planted there [in a room]* → *sat there*); (b) increasing semantic specificity to tone down aesthetic indeterminacy (*it had been there* → *it had been hanging there*); (c) replacing formal/archaic words or constructions with informal/contemporary ones (*he liked to have it admired* → *he liked when people admired it*); and (d) replacing hypotaxis with parataxis, that is, simplifying the syntax. The procedure was explicitly stated, with changes coded and exemplified. The outcome was a new fictional text that, while lower in foregrounding, conveyed the same theme and situation as the original (see also Kuijpers & Hakemulder, 2018).

Holistic and non-incremental text changes as those reviewed so far are clearly more exposed than others to "complexity confounds" (Dixon & Bortolussi, 2008, pp. 79–81). To circumvent this risk, some studies manipulate single, local, and linguistically well-defined features. This approach is known as the "text change detection" method and leads to the creation of almost identical texts. In a study by Emmott et al. (2007), for instance, the versions varied with regard to (a) presence/absence of cleft constructions (e. g., *I can see that you are tired* vs. *what I see is that you are tired*); (b) the use of low frequency words; and (c) italicisation. In contrast to assessing the effects of foregrounding holistically, these studies are designed in a vein more relevant for empirical stylistics than empirical aesthetics.

A synthesis of these two tendencies (the holistic and the analytical) is offered by the method of step-by-step modification, in which increasingly neutral versions of a text are created by altering one localized feature at a time. In van Peer et al. (2007), incremental neutralization was carried out on a single line of Portuguese poetry. In English translation, the line reads *I feel cold tears of disbelief being shed on my resting place*; by the fifth and last modification, the line read *I cry bitter tears of sadness on my bed* (p. 202).

Step-by-step modifications applied to full poems is a key part of a design executed by Menninghaus et al. (2018), who were able to document empirically a particular dimension of phonetic patterning – poetic melody. A table (2018, p. 5) provides a synoptic view of the incremental modifications from the original version to the least foregrounded. The original poems were both rhymed and metered; the modified versions lacked rhyme or meter, or both. The least foregrounded versions renounced all kinds of parallelistic features, including alliteration, while still reading as poems (p. 4).

Blohm et al. (2018) focused on deviation rather than parallelism. The authors tested poeticity and grammaticality judgments on a set of sixteen lines (or syntactically complete couplets) displaying three types of grammatical devia-

tion: (a) syntactic inversion (e. g., *came nearward* vs. *nearward came*); (b) morphological variants of canonical words (e. g., *thou* vs. *you*); (c) prenominal vs. post-nominal genitive (e. g., *my beloved parents' house* vs. *the house of my beloved parents*). In this case, changes were made synchronically across the three deviation types. Yet the underlying logic is the same: neutralizing deviation to see whether and how it affects aesthetic judgment.

A paradigm that is closely related to text manipulation but which ensures higher ecological validity has been introduced by Carrol et al. (2015). They examined readerly sensitivity to textual changes – measured using both eye tracking and verbal reports – in different editions of two classics: Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*. Manipulations were then already "out there," having been previously carried out by editors based on extant manuscripts. The extracts selected comprised (a) "substantive" changes (word selection and word order); (b) "accidental" changes (punctuation); or (c) both.

In summary, the manipulation of textual features can help to determine the effect of individual textual features. However, it works less well for longer texts, is problematic for ecological validity, and may introduce confounding variables. Mukařovský, for instance, argues for the integrity and "indivisibility" of a work of art (1964a, p. 45; 1964b, p. 66), suggesting that the manipulation of one feature will disrupt the entire structure and balance of the work. The results presented in van Peer's (1986) *Stylistics and Psychology* seem to justify Mukařovský's concern (p. 160).

An alternative to text manipulation that has received little attention to date, is working with an author's manuscripts (typescripts), in contrast with the published text. In this approach, different versions of the same passage are selected as they were written at different stages in the production process, and differences in readers' responses to these different versions of the "same" passages are then assessed. This allows measurement of the influence of identified literary features on readers, without resorting to text manipulation (Sopčák, 2007).

The Rereading Paradigm. A procedure that is sometimes used in conjunction with text manipulation requires participants to read a text, evaluate it on some measures of appreciation, read it again and evaluate it on the same measures. This approach is based on the notion of aesthetic appraisal as something that emerges after some elaboration. Also, it combines interest in textual foregrounding with perceived foregrounding and foregrounding experience. The research discussed here examines effects on aesthetic pleasure, but a wider array of potential responses is possible.

There is a fundamental two-sidedness to most definitions of foregrounding. On the one hand, foregrounding is anchored in textual evidence: "a form of tex-

tual patterning" (Simpson, 2014, p. 50); "a set of techniques" (Douthwaite, 2000, p. 3). On the other hand, foregrounding is conceptualised as an experience, a way to recover "the sensation of life" (Shklovsky, 1917/1965, p. 12), a stimulus prompting affective "refamiliarization/re-contextualization," that is, a post-processing re-evaluation of the novel experience afforded by foregrounding itself (Miall & Kuiken, 1994b; Fialho, 2007). In Fialho (2007) refamiliarizing/re-contextualizing strategies involve the reader's transition across various mental and emotional states such as uncertainty, anxiety, satisfaction, and joy. As the reading unfolds, such states are identified based on the data incrementally elicited from the reader, with a particular focus on: (a) the content of verbal protocols (e. g., "I am lost" signals a state of anxiety); (b) their prosodic features (e. g., tone, pace, number of pauses); and (c) para-linguistic reactions (e. g., smile and laughter). Rereading appears crucial to both the textual variations and experiential effects of foregrounding. From a textual standpoint, there is some evidence that sensitivity to stylistic techniques increases on rereading (Dixon et al., 1993). This tallies with the finding that cognitive resources on first reading are recruited to comprehend texts propositionally, whereas, on second reading, more qualitative aspects of situation model construction are accessed (Millis et al., 1998). It might well be that the pressure of sense-making as a default reading mode favours the "what" over the "how" – unless foregrounding is unusually conspicuous. From an affective/experiential standpoint, rereading is associated with the pleasure afforded by literature: enjoyment and appreciation have indeed emerged as leading motivations for rereading (Harrison & Nuttall, 2018, p. 183). The prestige traditionally granted to literature owes a lot to rereading too, with the classics having been anecdotally defined as "those books about which you usually hear people saying 'I am rereading…' never 'I am reading'" (Calvino, 1999, p. 3).

In their ground-breaking study, Dixon et al. (1993) used a rereading paradigm that has been replicated – with minor adjustments – more recently (Hakemulder, 2004; Zyngier et al., 2007; van Peer & Chesnokova, 2018; Kuijpers & Hakemulder, 2018). In this paradigm, as mentioned above, readers are presented (a) with two or more unaltered texts/extracts, one of which does *not* belong to canonical literature and acts therefore as a control (Dixon et al., 1993; Zyngier et al., 2007; van Peer & Chesnokova, 2018); or (b) with two versions of the same text, one high and one low in foregrounding (Dixon et al., 1993; Hakemulder, 2004; Kuijpers & Hakemulder, 2018). Readers then evaluate these versions after first and second reading using rating scales that assess appreciation. The second reading typically takes place immediately after the first, although time intervals of up to a week have also been tested (van Peer & Chesnokova, 2018; Kuijpers & Hakemulder, 2018).

Overall, these studies do not offer strong support for the hypothesis that the effects of foregrounding increase on rereading. While the hypothesis was confirmed in Dixon et al. (1993) and Hakemulder (2004) for frequent readers, recent studies provide a less clear picture: increase in appreciation correlates with comprehension independently of the literariness of the materials (Kuijpers & Hakemulder, 2018) and canonical literary texts are not evaluated higher even on a third reading (van Peer & Chesnokova, 2018). Available explanations include the possibility that the classical theory of foregrounding needs to be revised and that text manipulations should be more selective (Kuijpers & Hakemulder, 2018). Manipulation practices would indeed gain in theoretical justification were they to target the author- or genre-specific linguistic markers examined in previous stylistic research.

Two further suggestions are offered here. The first is to propose a sharp distinction between enjoyment (reader-oriented) and appreciation (text-oriented): some of the items in the available appreciation questionnaires are reader-oriented (e. g., "I thought the story was fun"), while others are text-oriented (e. g., "I thought the story was written well"). By assessing these variables separately, increases in comprehension may still affect enjoyment but not appreciation, which is the key response indicator of literariness. Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Model draws a linguistically encoded distinction between affect, judgment, and appreciation that may be illuminating in this regard.

The second suggestion is to employ additional methods to gauge participants' literary competence, because one's exposure to literary texts is likely to develop strategic re-reading habits. The typically employed Author Recognition Test (ART, Stanovich & West, 1989) is a proxy for print exposure, but print exposure is no guarantee that the authors recognised have been read. It is possible to envisage a variant of the ART test featuring canonical and fake book titles instead of real and fake authors' names. In addition, participants may be asked to estimate the average number of (fictional/literary) books they read per year, rather than the average time spent reading (as in Dixon et al., 1993). These measures, which are simple to implement, might work as a better proxy for literary competence.

A final point concerns rating scales. Yielding numerical data, rating scales lend themselves well to statistical analysis. However, they cannot fully capture the qualitative experience of rereading as would be revealed, say, by think-aloud protocols or reading diaries. A recent study by Harrison and Nuttall (2018) is a first step in the direction of inspecting qualitative evidence on rereading. They asked participants to read an extract from a dystopian novel twice – the first time without context, the second time with supporting information about plot and genre. It was found that "the second reading experience fore-

grounded schemas that were hidden" (2018, p. 189), leading to a more nuanced understanding of the text. This study shows that even "background" constructs like schemas can gain readerly prominence when prompts (e. g., guiding questions) are provided. Unfortunately, the non-experimental design of the study – a simple classroom exercise – does not allow discrimination between the influence of a second exposure to the text and that due to the provision of background information.

All in all, the relationship between textual foregrounding, rereading, and appreciation is a challenging but exciting area of research, now ripe for further developments. Perhaps future studies will attempt to integrate the rigor and quantitative output of the rereading paradigm with qualitative data afforded by readers' answers to open questions, think-aloud protocols or reading diaries in longitudinal studies.

Practical foregrounding effects

Previous sections have considered what might be called "fundamental research." However, there are potentially important practical applications of fundamental research, with consequences for the enhancement of learning processes, increasing aesthetic appreciation, altering self- and other-perception, and boosting critical thinking.

Foregrounding in Education

The implications of foregrounding have been finding ways into educational settings. For example, McIntyre (2013) examined how foregrounding can help guarantee the element of surprise. Drawing from the distinction between *internal* and *external* deviation (Levin, 1965; Short, 1996), McIntyre discussed techniques that make lectures *externally deviant* from "prototypical" formats and those that make them *internally deviant*. Examples of *external deviation* include teaching in teams instead of the conventional single-lecturer format. *Internal deviation* involves varying the mode of teaching throughout the course to maintain the effects of foregrounding. McIntyre (2003) reports an increase in learning when deviation is used in lectures. Future research in this line may involve carrying out empirical research to test the effectiveness of this approach, either by means of intervention studies or by adapting such methodologies to other courses and contexts (see also Gibbs et al., 1988; Rashid, 2001).

At the interface of language and literature, Zyngier (1994a) developed a Literary Awareness workshop to sensitize students to the effects of foregrounded patterns and to promote appreciation of the aesthetic quality in texts. Based on insights from language awareness (Carter, 1993; Sinclair, 1985) and the notion of foregrounding, Literary Awareness offers a series of hands-on experiences with different patterns such as parallelism, transitivity, personification, and phonetic iconicity (Zyngier, 1994a, 1994b). Each workshop covers five stages of the learning process: exposure, cross-linking, reference build-up, adjustment, and productivity (Viana & Zyngier, 2017; Zyngier, et al., 2007). Initially intended for English as a Foreign Language undergraduates, Literary Awareness has also been adapted to mother tongue education (L1) and secondary education and largely tested in these contexts. The program has been effective in increasing students' awareness of foregrounded patterns and sensitivity to aesthetic experience (Fialho, 2001, 2002; Viana & Zyngier, 2019; Zyngier et al., 2007; Zyngier & Viana, 2016).

In relation to the *refamiliarization/re-conceptualization* proposal (Fialho, 2007; Miall, 2006), Literary Awareness emphasises the defamiliarizing effects of linguistic devices that the reader considers foregrounded. Fialho et al. (2011) and Fialho et al. (2012) devised two sets of instructions: (a) "experiencing instructions" – where students are asked to attune to striking or evocative passages (Miall & Kuiken, 1994b) as a way into personal responses and affective resonance and (b) "interpretive instructions" – based on the more traditional tasks of literary analysis and interpretation. Experiencing reading fostered different forms of emotional resonance, self-implication, and self-reflection and enabled perception of the text as a meaningful experience. Readers focused not on what texts are about, but rather on the ways in which personal responses are foregrounded and become meaningful (Fialho, 2012; Miall, 2006; Mukařovský, 1964; Rosenblatt, 1938/1995).

The tenets for how literary reading might change the reader (i. e., *refamiliarizing/re-contextualizing* strategies) have become focal to the Program of Transformative Reading (TR), based on a theoretical-empirical model (Fialho, 2018, 2019). Four essential components of TR have been articulated (Fialho et al., in preparation) and incorporated into workshops suited for both educational and business settings (Fialho, 2017). Adapted to the context of Dutch secondary education, the TR model has resulted in evidence-based "Transformative Dialogic Literature Teaching" (TDLT, Schrijvers, 2019). First, linking learning experiences to teachers' classroom practices, Schrijvers et al. (2016) found a relation between Grades 10–12 students' reports of personal and social insights in the classroom and teachers' reports of more classroom interaction and student autonomy. Then, to explore whether and how literature education may foster

adolescent students' insights into self and others, Schrijvers et al. (2019a) carried out a systematic review of experimental and quasi-experimental intervention studies, yielding a set of instructional design principles for TDLT (Schrijvers et al., in preparation). Two subsequent intervention studies were carried out to assess the effects of TDLT, indicating that, indeed, it fostered (a) students' insight into self, fictional, and real others, (b) eudaimonic reasons for reading, (c) reported use of strategies to deal with difficulties in literary texts, and (d) motivation for literature education (Schrijvers et al., 2019b; 2019c).

The teaching methodologies and empirical studies described here innovate by demonstrating how both *defamiliarizing* and *refamiliarizing/re-contextualizing* strategies might be promoted. They show how student-readers might be sensitized to foregrounding devices at the linguistic level and how they might affect adolescents' insights into self, fictional, and real others, confirming previous insights (Fialho et al., 2011; Fialho et al., 2012). They shift the emphasis from interpretation of textual features to following instructions given to readers (for similar claims, see Hakemulder et al., 2016; Mumper & Gerrig, 2017) and suggest that the linguistic manifestation of foregrounding (Fialho, 2007) might not be the sole factor responsible for shaping readers' responses. They show how foregrounding theory can affect learning experiences. Further, Koek et al. (2016), explore the overlap between literary thinking and critical thinking. They do so in the development of a curriculum that is aimed at understanding literature in a reconstructive, de-automatized manner. The results show that students improve their literary understanding. Koek et al. (2019) also conducted a qualitative follow-up study, using stimulated recall as a method. The results showed that the moments of insight reported by students coincided with disruptions in automatized consistency building, and that these disruptions were followed by student's attempts to find a new consistency.

Looking Back and Moving Forward

From the preceding review, expansion of the conceptual frameworks and methodological nuances that shape foregrounding research is amply evident. The vigor of the expansion that guides the presently prevailing foregrounding/defamiliarization framework is made clear. Given such evident vigour, perhaps the area would do well to continue its present course – with its already apparent diversification. However, the evolution of scientific paradigms seldom works that way, as Kuhn (1970), Feyerabend (1962), Polanyi (1958), and others argued forcefully. These philosophers of science demonstrated that scientific

traditions are periodically (perhaps even cyclically) transformed, sometimes in response to new empirical results (e. g., evidence that a distinctive kind of affective response occurs in response to foregrounding; see Jacobs & Willems, 2018, p. 152) but also in response to anomalous findings (e. g., failures to replicate fundamental experiments; see Hakemulder & Kuijpers, 2018). And yet, these complicating empirical results do not on their own create turning points in the evolution of an empirical domain. Such turning points ("crises," Kuhn called them) entail reconsideration of the taken-for-granted ontology within an empirical domain.

For that reason, the concluding sections to this chapter will develop three possibilities. The first suggests that this research area is already in a period of ferment (if not "crisis"), calling for reconsideration of familiar constructs, methods, and research norms. At the risk of broaching incommensurabilities between the older and newer paradigms, we offer a phenomenologically grounded reframing of the "same" basic phenomena that inspired Shklovsky and the early twentieth-century formalists. It offers a revised ontology that incorporates some of the prevailing assumptions about foregrounding research – but not all. The suggested phenomenological "turn" promises the invigoration of future research efforts without pretending to be readily reconciled with prevailing views. The risk of incommensurability will be obvious – but so is the promise of redirecting theory development, the search for alternative methodologies, and the prospect of seeing something freshly in what already seems "known" about foregrounding. As offered here, that risk includes engagement with ontologies that derive from a philosophical position that purports to be scientific in another sense than is offered by the prevailing philosophy of science.

In contrast, the next two sections provide suggestions for *further extension* of the prevailing framework – with the understanding that each proposed expansion has revolutionary potential of its own. First, we will explore extension of the foregrounding framework into the socio-political sphere. Prototypes for such extension are already being explored in education settings (see above), but even more radical extension into the broader socio-political sphere is envisioned. Second, we will briefly consider expansion of the basic methodological requirements of the foregrounding framework by describing some preliminary but suggestive developments in computational stylistics. In this case, prototypes are already being explored, especially in the context of neuroscience research but also in the dramatically expanding scope of computational humanities research (Hermann et al., this volume). Some of these developments have direct implications for prevailing conceptions of foregrounding and foregrounding effects, but almost certainly these methods will reshape research strategies – and alter the phenomena that are currently conceived as "basic."

Foregrounding and Phenomenological Reflection

Recently, empirical and theoretical efforts shaped a move toward conceptual precision in our understanding of foregrounding's effects on experiencing (as well as on aesthetic, moral, and self-reflection) by drawing on phenomenological philosophy (e. g., Chernavin & Yampolskaya, 2018; Kuiken, 2008; Kuiken et al., 2012; Sopčák, 2011, 2013; Sopčák & Kuiken, 2012). This turn toward phenomenology is motivated by more than the rich and nuanced literature this branch of philosophy has to offer; it is also an historically motivated endeavour. Arguably, due to the influence that the father of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, had on Russian Formalism and, through Roman Jakobson, on Czech Structuralism, foregrounding in its *ostranenie* and *actualisáce* variants is only imperfectly understood without a grasp of the phenomenological concepts that underlie it. Victor Erlich (1980) documented Husserl's important and direct impact on Russian Formalism at some length and mentions that his *Logical Investigations* "became virtually a Bible" (p. 62), especially to the Moscow Circle. A case in point is an early paper by Roman Jakobson, in which he applied Husserlian phenomenology to the Futurist poetry of Velimir Khlebnikov. What follows briefly demonstrates how reconnecting the phenomenological concepts that circulated among Russian Formalists with the concept of foregrounding adds depth to our understanding of the concept and shows how it has opened up new avenues for empirical studies.

As mentioned earlier, foregrounding in art interferes with the efficiency of habitual perception. Foregrounding forces readers to pause and clarify, or explicate, what a given object of experience "is like," what it brings to the fore. Because the foregrounded object resists quick and passive assimilation to existing concepts or categories, it demands active effortful sense-making. This active effort has been characterized as generative of new concepts and insights, involving a turn to our lived experience, and being accompanied by a sense of enlivenment, as well as aesthetic reflection.

In this context, Husserl's discussion of the *natural attitude*, characterized by the ideality of language and perception, as well as the passive, habitual constitution of our objects of experience (e. g., 2001, pp. 10–13, & pp. 553–554), adds nuance and rigor to our understanding of Shklovsky's notion of automatized perception, in which "we have lost our awareness of the world [and] … resemble a violinist who has ceased to feel the bow and strings" (Shklovsky & Berlina, 2016, p. 70). In the *natural attitude*, consciousness is turned outward towards (intends) objects in the world (object pole) and naively takes their constitution for granted. Husserl sometimes referred to this as dead consciousness.

What is "dead" (not immediately given in consciousness) is the experience of the act itself in constituting the object, as well as awareness of the embodied self (ego pole) performing the act. According to Husserl, here "the ego … is 'in a stupor' in the broadest sense, and…no lived-experience in the specific sense of wakefulness is there at all and no present ego is there at all as its subject" (2001, p. 17). The parallels between Husserl's natural attitude and what in the literature on foregrounding is referred to as habituation and automatization are obvious.

By contrast, in his discussion of the *epoché*, Husserl provides a detailed description of the reflective act that recovers a "life that can be seen, felt, lived tangibly" (Shklovsky & Berlina, 2016, p. 80) and which Shklovsky suggests can be set in motion through foregrounding (*ostranenie*) in art. In the *epoché*, we "bracket" (suspend) the *natural attitude* and intend (direct our consciousness toward) the lived experience and the experiencing subjectivity. We thus reflectively "find the ego as the peculiar center of the lived-experiencing" (Husserl, 2001, p. 17). Husserl (2001) describes this move from passive to active consciousness as follows: "The moment a background lived-experience becomes present, that is, the moment the ego becomes an ego carrying out acts through it, it has, as lived experience, become completely and essentially transformed" (pp. 20–21). Presenting Husserl's systematic discussion of this self-transformation is outside of the scope of the present chapter. Suffice it to say that it is a treasure trove for conceptually clarifying such concepts as self-modification, self-altering reflection, transformation, etc., that are increasingly often presented as effects of foregrounding. Thus, clarifying foregrounding through phenomenology makes sense historically, as we have seen, as it disambiguates and provides the systematic philosophical context from within which Russian Formalists and Czech Structuralists developed their notion of foregrounding as *ostranenie* and later *actualisáce* (for a more detailed phenomenological discussion of *actualisáce*, see Sopčák, 2011).

However, a phenomenological approach to foregrounding does more than contribute to a fuller understanding of the original texts and concepts. It contributes to ongoing empirical efforts to clarify the relationship of foregrounding to aesthetic, moral, and different forms of self-reflection (as well as to different forms of absorption). For instance, Sopčák et al. (in preparation) examine the moral repercussions of the kind of response to foregrounding that involves recovering the lived experience of the lifeworld. A number of phenomenologically grounded empirical efforts have sought to differentiate such powerful and transformative, but uncommon, reading experiences from others that are more frequent and mundane. For instance, Kuiken and his colleague's (2012) psychometrically validated *Experiencing Questionnaire* distinguishes aesthetic out-

comes from explanatory outcomes and general moral outcomes (e. g., non-utilitarian respect). Also, Sopčák (2011, 2013) employed numerically aided phenomenological methods (Kuiken & Miall, 2001) to distinguish "existential reading," a form of reading that aligns with Shklovsky's function of art and Husserl's notion of the *epoché* (described above), from more mundane forms of reading, particularly as they involve reflections on mortality.

Moreover, psychometrically validated tools for empirically capturing the kind of experiential reading initiated by foregrounding (as described in Husserl's discussion of the epoché) are available (e. g., Kuiken & Douglas, 2017). A promising option for future studies of foregrounding is, for instance, to combine computationally developed foregrounding indices as independent variables, different reading processes evoked by foregrounding (phenomenological/experiential vs. explanatory/inferential) as moderators, and then a variety of reading outcomes as dependent variables (e. g., aesthetic, attitudinal, etc.). Also, integrating the distinction between these different reading responses to foregrounding into Jacobs' (2015b) neurocognitive poetics model might add additional theoretical grounding to the model and potentially a better understanding of the processes themselves.

Computational Precision

In recent efforts, researchers are attempting to predict foregrounding effects using computational models (i. e., "computational stylistics and poetics"). At the sublexical level, Aryani et al. (2013, 2018a, 2018b) model phonological iconicity and the affective sound of words that can change the aesthetic appreciation of entire poems (Aryani et al., 2016). At the lexical level, a computational model of word beauty predicts the most beautiful lines of poems, e. g., in Shakespeare's sonnets (Jacobs, 2018; Xue et al., 2019). At the supralexical level, Jacobs and Kinder (2017, 2018) offer a computational model of the aptness and literariness of poetic metaphors. Finally, there is now a computational model allowing prediction of the "hybrid hero potential" of characters in novels (Jacobs, 2019). This special type of "figure foregrounding" can now be studied in experiments testing quantitative predictions, e. g., whether readers empathic or affective-aesthetic responses ("liking," "interest") correlate with the "hybrid hero potential" of fiction characters like "Pippi Longstocking," "Gregor Samsa," or "Mary Magdalene" (see blog homepage: SentiArt.de; also https://github.com/matinho13/SentiArt.). The development of these and similar computational procedures is a remarkably fertile field for further study of foregrounding.

Fostering an Open Mind

Comparable complexity and richness is possible in the expansion of foregrounding research to examine social and political issues. The examples that Shklovsky used to illustrate the variety of defamiliarization effects prompt consideration of the socio-political relevance of the effects of foregrounding. Quoting from Tolstoy, he argued that describing things as though seen for the first time might result in a renewed awareness of these things. Such renewal, he suggests, involves a re-awakened sense of life (e. g., making his famous stone stony again). These effects may have a deep impact on our personal and social lives. Shklovsky cites a story in which events are described from the perspective of a horse. In particular, Tolstoy shows the horse's surprise about how humans talk about all sorts of things as *theirs*. Reading this story may result, says Shklovsky, in readers' renewed awareness of their conception of property. His more general claim is that art revives awareness of our life, our loved ones, even our fear of war.

Perhaps in ways that warrant exploration, foregrounding precipitates open-minded re-consideration of socio-political issues that have become fixed or automatic (cf. Djikic et al., 2009). This possibility fans out in a variety of directions that might well become the focus of socio-political empirical studies.

Conclusion

Empirical research has enhanced our understanding of what foregrounding is. Related conceptualization has benefited from neurocognitive studies, qualitative research, and reading experiments. These complexities may have hindered the formulation of a unified theory of foregrounding. On the other hand, these developments have also enriched our understanding of the workings of literature – if only by the sheer diversity of processes and outcomes proposed in extensions of the foregrounding model. The research presented here is celebration of interdisciplinarity. Foregrounding theory has been one of the most fruitful domains within the empirical study of literature.

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