VISITING LECTURE BY MARIA MÄKELÄ

The Rhetoric of Experientiality, 1600–2000s

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The rise of the novel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has often been conceptualized as the rise of the fictional mind. Cognitive narrative theorists have studied the exchange between the evolution of fictional techniques for representing consciousness and the developments in non-literary, including scientific discourses of mind (e.g., Herman [ed.] 2011, The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English). I argue that the recent cognitive emphasis in the diachronic study of fictional minds has overshadowed the rhetorical functions of consciousness representation, which are, nevertheless, pivotal in studying the dialectic between fiction and non-fiction, and real and imagined minds. In my talk, I will illustrate some historical changes in these rhetorical functions, by moving from the early modern courtly chronicle to eighteenth-century sentimental and nineteenth-century realist novel, and further to twentieth-century avantgarde and twenty-first-century revisionist historical fiction. While arguing for a theoretical and analytical move toward rhetoric in fictional mind construction, I nevertheless draw my conceptual framework from a pioneering cognitive-narratological theory, Monika Fludernik's (1996) 'natural' narratology. Its key concept experientiality encompasses not only the experiencing human mind as the representational and enactive anchor in narrative, but also the evaluation of experience, a narrative component that often pinpoints the historically situated rhetoric of consciousness representation.

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