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A Cognitive Poetic Approach to Paratext: Horace Walpole's Prefaces to *The Castle of Otranto. A Gothic Story*

Abstract

Based on an analysis of two Prefaces to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto. A Gothic Story*, the paper offers a cognitive poetics view of *paratext*, a literary device defined by Genette as "a threshold of interpretation". Viewed as a symptom of the author's presence "with-in" and "with-out" text, paratextual information is held to play an important role in text interpretation. It is claimed that a literary work's interpretation is a result of the speaker/author – hearer/reader meaning negotiation which takes place in the Current Discourse Space (Langacker 2008) and involves intersubjectification, a cognitive process referred to by Langacker as "apprehension of other minds" (Langacker 2007).

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to address, in the context of paratext research, the question of the author's importance in literary reading and interpretation of narrative texts. An attempt is made to bring both the author and the reader¹ into literary analysis. The analysis is based on *intersubjectification*, a cognitive construal process, which, as we shall claim, takes place in the Current Discourse Space in the sense of Langacker (2008). During the process, the negotiation of meaning is held between the two participants of the literary discourse: the speaker/author and the hearer/reader. This paper makes an attempt to show, on the basis of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto. A Gothic Story* (1765), in what way paratexts (*sensu* Genette) — in this case, the two Prefaces to Walpole's novel (attached to the first [1764] and to the second [1765] edition) — establish the author-reader rapport, influencing thereby the reader's response to the text prefaced.

2. Author-function in literary reading. An overview

The question concerning the role of the author in literary interpretation is by no means new; it has, over time, been addressed by literary scholars of different theoretical persuasions. The issue has been discussed, among others, by Roland Barthes, who in 1968 famously proclaimed “the death of the author”, and by Michel Foucault, who in 1969 asked the equally famous question: “What is an author?” and thereby reducing the author to a mere textual construct. As observed by Sean Burke, “The death of the author” marks “a departure of belief in authority, presence, intention, omniscience and creativity” (Burke 2008: 21)². Barthes's “pronouncement” of the death of the author³ involved the replacement of the “authorial perspective by that of the reader as [...] producer of texts”

¹ The status of the author and the reader in a literary text has been addressed by numerous scholars. The discussion concerning this issue, however, is beyond the scope of this study and it will not be pursued here.

² The author as “biographical subject” “was dismissed” also by such theoreticians as Paul de Man, who, as Burke posits, “rejected author-centred criticism [...] affirming that there is no stable subject of writing in any guise, be it transcendental or empirical” (2008: 2).

³ However, as Burke aptly concludes in the introductory chapter of his book, “the concept of the author is never more alive than when pronounced dead” (2008: 7).

(Burke 2008: 20), thereby strengthening the reader's role in the construction of meaning (cf. Kardela and Kędra-Kardela 2014). As a result, the text is treated as "no longer reduced to a «single message»", but "is opened to an unlimited variety of interpretations" (Burke 2008:41)⁴.

Despite the total rejection of the author by Barthes, and the recognition of the second half of the twentieth century as "the age of the reader"⁵ (Burzyńska 2006: 175–176; trans. A.K.K.), a number of attempts have been made recently to include the real author in literary analysis. The responsibility for text-based meaning construction, it is claimed, must be shared by authors and readers. Hence, in the last decades the importance of the author as someone whose creative intention should be taken into consideration in the process of a literary work's interpretation has been recognised by literary critics. Thus, Janina Abramowska claims that, contrary to her earlier views, there is a need nowadays to approach literature from the author's perspective. In her paper, *Jednak autor, [And yet it is the author — A.K.K.]*, she insists that the author-related criticism (1996: 61; see also Shönert 2009), which has been held in disregard for some time, should be brought back in a new form. This "new form" — an author-oriented analysis of some sort — requires new analytical tools. For Abramowska (1996: 60–62), there is no point in trying to discover, on the basis of a literary work, the "biographical truth" about the author; rather, the question should be asked: What kind of information encoded by the author in the text can the reader decode and what impact does this have on the reading?

Needless to say, the author-oriented approach does not deny the importance of the reader. On the contrary — faced with a literary text, the reader "constructs" its meaning and arrives at interpretation which is likely to respect (to some degree) the author's perspective. In this way, to use cognitive terminology, the author-reader / speaker-hearer interaction is brought into the literary analysis which goes beyond the narrative communication model as proposed by Chatman (1989) and others (cf. Onega and Landa 1996: 3–12).

In her discussion of Wimsatt and Beardsley's views (1954), on "true and objective way of criticism", Eefje Claassen points out in her *Author representations in literary reading* that, according to these critics, extratextual factors, such as the author's identity or the circumstances are of limited importance in determining the text's meaning (Claassen 2012: 7). Claassen's own approach is different: in her empirical study of the author representations in literary reading, she claims that "the readers' assumptions about the author's identity, attitude and communicative intentions" should be taken into account (Claassen 2012: 3). "Text-external" and "text-internal information" should be used to construct "an image of an *empirical* author" (Claassen 2012: 221–222; emphasis original). Text-external information includes biographical facts; text-internal information is limited to what can be found in the text and this information enables the reader to draw inferences and construct the

⁴ According to Burke, the fact that Barthes, Foucault and Derrida "removed the author" should not, in his words, be "seen as a strategy, a means but [...] a primary claim in itself" (2008: 15). New Critical and Russian Formalist approaches removed the author "in order to establish a coherent field of critical study" (Burke 2008: 15).

⁵ The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of reader-oriented schools of literary analysis. As aptly put by Leitch (2010), "the rise of reader-oriented criticism manifested itself more or less forcefully in numerous and varied critical projects, including those carried out by literary phenomenology, hermeneutics, structuralism, deconstruction, and feminism". The reader-oriented criticism spread both in America and in Europe.

implied author (Claassen 2012: 222)⁶. The image of an empirical author is shaped on the basis of extratextual information combined with intratextual signals (for example, intertextual references in the text may be treated as indicative of the author's literary competence). One of the areas where the author's presence "visibly" manifests itself and cannot be denied is no doubt a *paratext*, the concept discussed in Section 3 of this paper.

"During the reading of literary fiction", Claassen claims, "author is very much alive, and is indeed relevant to interpretation" (Claassen 2012: 4). By adopting a cognitive perspective, Claassen stresses the importance of author-inferences "during the process of reading" (2012: 4). Empirical authors, she argues, "invite" readers into interaction, in "a game of make-believe" (Claassen 2012: 225) in which an "agreement between an author and his readership" is made that the work is fictional in character. Authors, she claims, may use different "tricks" to affect the readers, provoke their reactions to the literary work and ultimately influence possible interpretations.

Seen in this light, a cognitive approach includes the author in literary considerations, offering a new perspective on text-reading. The new perspective crucially rests on the idea of *intersubjectification*⁷, a cognitive process during which the two participants of a literary work's discourse: the speaker/author and the hearer/reader are held to negotiate the meaning of the discourse. Defined by Zlatev et al. (2008) "as the sharing of experiential content (e.g., feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and linguistic meanings) among a plurality of subjects" (2008: 1), the concept of *intersubjectivity* can now be applied to literary analysis. In this paper we use this concept in conjunction with Ronald Langacker's conceptions of the *Current Discourse Space* (Langacker 2008: 460) and the *speaker-hearer "mind integration"* (cf. Langacker 2007) based on Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) theory of conceptual integration.

It is important to bear in mind that, as Claassen observes, "readers' cognitive processing of narrative fiction", involves not only analysis of the text but also relies on "readers' assumptions about an author [...], about his or her identity, communicative intentions, and attitude" and the role they "play during the reading process" (2012: 50). Arguing along these lines, we shall claim that the author's preface or postscript can indeed be treated; (i) as a source of the reader's assumptions about the author, and, (ii) as an important factor in meaning-negotiation process and a set of "instructions" for the interpretation of a (literary) text. We will also argue that paratexts involve the reader in the author — reader interaction by stimulating intersubjective communication.

3. Genette's theory of paratexts

Genette defines paratexts as verbal productions, "that surround [...] and extend [a text], [...] in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its «reception» and consumption in the form [...] of a book" (1997: 1; emphasis original). Paratexts are «thresholds», the

⁶ All in all, Claassen distinguishes "five types of author construction" in a literary work (2012: 223–25).

⁷ The concept of intersubjectivity in a narrative text has been discussed at length by M. Rembowska-Pluciennik. She defines intersubjectivity as "one specific mode of working human consciousness. [...] [I]ntersubjectivity is our constant awareness of other human subjects present in the field of our perception and conscious experience". Intersubjectivity, she continues, "does not mean a *real and full access* to someone's thoughts, emotions, sensations, but it is an operative system of human consciousness" (2012: 58; emphasis original, trans. A.K.K.). For a discussion, see Rembowska-Pluciennik 2009 and 2012a.

literary and printerly conventions that mediate between the world of publishing and the world of the text” (Macksey 1997: XVII). “The paratext”, Genette posits, “is neither on the interior nor on the exterior: it is both” (quoted in Macksey 1997: XVII).

Paratexts can be classified according to several criteria, (“spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional” [Genette 1997: 4]), as well as by the identity of the paratext’s author. From the point of view of this criterion, Genette distinguishes three types of prefaces:

- i) authorial (or autographic) — when the preface is written by the author of the text prefaced;
- ii) actorial — when “the alleged author of the preface” is a character in the story;
- iii) allographic — when the author of the preface is neither the actual author of the literary text nor a character in the work of fiction prefaced.

Based on the identity of the figure the preface is attributed to, prefaces can be divided into *authentic*, *fictive* and *apocryphal*. *Authentic* prefaces are authored by real persons. *Fictive* ones are attributed to imaginary authors, *apocryphal* prefaces, in turn, belong to those whose real identity is questioned by some paratextual details (Genette 1997: 178–179).

Additionally, Genette divides paratexts into two groups: *peritexts* and *epitexts*. While *peritexts* are printed, “within the book”, *epitexts* include “any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating [...] freely in virtually limitless social space. The location of the epitext is therefore anywhere outside the book” (Genette 1997: 344). In this paper, the analysis is limited to the study of prefaces to, *The Castle of Otranto* as peritexts immediately available to the reader who approaches Walpole’s text.

A preface, or a postscript, influences the reader by establishing a “common ground” with the author (alleged or real) within which an analysis of a literary text is performed, based on the reader’s knowledge about the author, her/his intentions combined with the reader’s frames of knowledge. “These frames”, Claassen maintains, “include culturally agreed upon moral and ethical standards, linguistic conventions, social norms *et cetera*, and they depend on the reader’s knowledge and experience” (Claassen 2012: 53)⁸. In addition to that, one should depend on “*literary* frames of reference, such as general literary conventions, conventions and models of literary genres, intertextual frames of reference [...], as well as biographical information or information about the socio-historical context in which the text was written” (Claassen 2012: 53; emphasis added). No doubt, the preface or postscript can be a source of this kind of information. Paratexts / peritexts — titles, prefaces, postscripts, etc. can be treated as context-building elements which, provided by the author, are intended to influence the reader’s reception of a given work.

⁸ The problem of „literary” norms — such as the norms of literary genres has been discussed by Michał Głowiński in his study *Gatunki literackie* (“Literary genres”), where he treats literary genres as an “intersubjectively existing system of rules, recommendations, customs which govern a particular kind of discourse,” determining its creation and reception” (1998: 48–49; trans. A.K.K.).

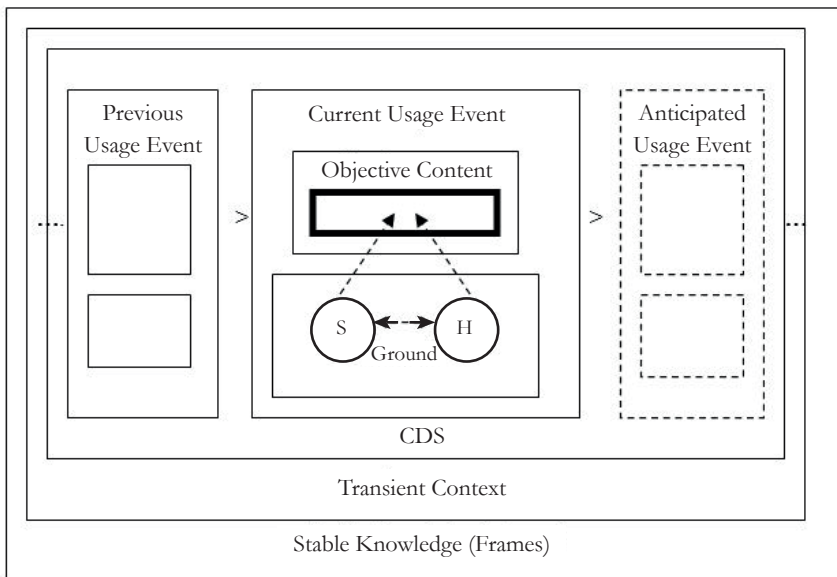
4. Current Discourse Space

Now, we will attempt to account for the author-reader interaction involved in literary text reading in terms of cognitive poetics. To this end, we shall use Langacker's idea of the *Current Discourse Space* (2008), combining it with his conception of the "apprehension of other minds" (Langacker 2007: 183) (see also Keđra-Kardela [in print]), for an analysis of the role the preface and postscript play in a literary work).

The Current Discourse Space (CDS), which contains "the current discourse itself", described by Langacker as, a "common basis for [discourse] interpretation", includes, "everything presumed to be shared by the speaker and hearer as the basis for communication at a given moment" (Langacker 2008: 466). The discourse contains "a series of interactive events, in each of which the speaker exerts some influence on an actual or imagined interlocutor" (Langacker 2008: 460). The CDS includes background knowledge (represented in the diagram below as *Stable Knowledge* box), which, when CDS develops, is modified as each new utterance is processed. In Langacker's parlance, "[t]he linguistic context [...] has both stable and transient aspects. Chief among the former is knowledge of the language being used, as well as its sociocultural status" (2008: 465). The different changing contexts establish the transient part of the CDS (Transient Context box in the diagram). The speaker-hearer / author-reader interaction, which influences the interpretation of a literary work, depends, it seems, on the current literary communication context.

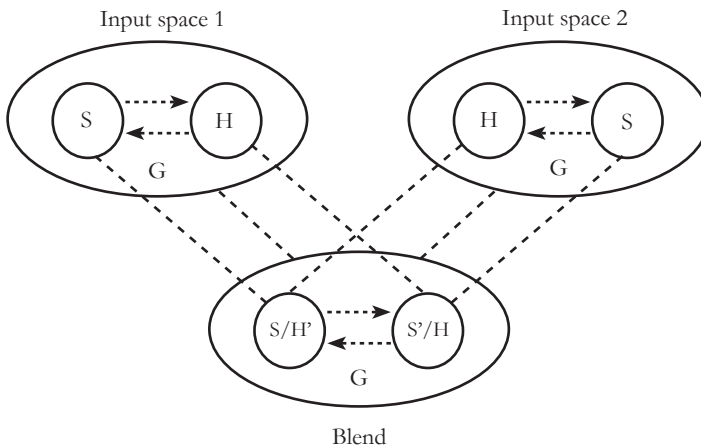
The CDS can be presented diagrammatically as follows (Langacker 2008: 466).

Fig. 1. The Current Discourse Space



The arrow joining S and H within the Current Usage Event frame in Fig. 1 symbolizes the *intersubjective* quality of the speaker-hearer interaction. In this interaction both the speaker and the hearer focus on the “profiled entity”, i.e. a particular segment of the objective content (here: literary text) represented as a rectangle drawn in bold lines. The speaker — hearer interaction can be viewed in terms of the “apprehension of other minds” (intersubjectification or mind-reading) as illustrated diagrammatically in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2. The “apprehension of other minds” (Langacker 2007: 182; adapted)



The diagram represents the so-called, “canonical speech-event scenario”. As explained by Langacker,

[o]ne facet of the canonical speech event scenario is that the interlocutors alternate in the roles of speaker and hearer. The realization that this is so involves the conception of two speech events, in each of which S says something to H and H listens to S. [...] [T]he grounds in successive speech events function as input spaces for a blend (Fauconnier and Turner 2002). The speaker in one event plays the role of hearer in the next, and conversely. Consequently, the blended space — representing the canonical speech event scenario — shows each interlocutor as having a dual role: the current speaker (S) is also a potential hearer (H'), while the current hearer (H) is also a potential speaker (S'). (2007: 182)

Bearing the above in mind, let us assume now that a literary text — “instructs the reader” *how* to interpret a literary work through “meaning-negotiation”, between the speaker/author and the hearer/reader. This can be viewed precisely, in terms of “apprehension of other minds” *sensu* Langacker (cf. Fig. 2). When an interpretation of a language structure takes place in a context, additional aspects of linguistic meaning are provided. In the case of a literary work, we would like to argue, those additional aspects of meaning are offered, among others, by paratexts, including peritexts, i.e. titles, subtitles, prefaces, postscripts etc. In particular, when engaged in verbal interaction, the addressee, drawing on the paratextual information, sets up with the author the common interpretational ground — represented as the central segment (the big rectangle) of the Current Usage Event.

In consideration of this analysis, a literary text, along with the title and the preface, can be viewed then as a series of usage events whose interpretation is determined by the context. Seen in this light, the role of the peritext is to modify the interpretation of the text as it is related to by providing additional contextual information, including, for example, the circumstances in which a work was created, the justification for the author's different choices. In the case of a preface provided by the author, the latter may try to influence the reader's response with a view to achieving "proper reading". Thus, the author's preface prepares the reader for the encounter with the text. The situation may seem to be more complex when we deal with two authorial prefaces, as is the case in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. What follows is an attempt to interpret Walpole's Prefaces in terms of Langacker's concept of, Current Discourse Space.

5. Analysis: Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*. A Gothic Story

Walpole's novel is a good example of a text which, by means of paratexts — or, more accurately, by means of peritexts — "visibly" involves the reader into an interaction with the author, who, through his choices, manipulates the reader's response to the work of fiction.

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto. A Gothic Story* (1765), first published in 1764 as, *The Castle of Otranto. A Story*, was a literary work which, when it appeared, challenged the existing literary conventions. That, Walpole was fully aware of, as was stated in his, 1765 Preface. Written against the current fashion and literary tradition, as "a literary experiment", the novel was likely to provoke widespread criticism and this was what Walpole feared⁹. Commenting on this, W.S. Lewis writes in the Introduction to *Otranto*: "Fearful of ridicule, he [Walpole] published it as a translation" (Lewis 1990: viii). Indeed, in the 1764 edition, Walpole did not reveal his name, and the story was attributed to Onuphrio Muralto, its alleged Italian author whose name appeared on the title page of the first edition (but not of the second). Ultimately, the story was presented to readers as a translation: "*Translated by William Marshal, Gent. From the Original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas at Otranto*". Clearly, this way of introducing the novel to its readers was an effort on Walpole's part to avert inevitable criticism. The title page, informed the reader that the story did not originate in England, but in Italy, and should not therefore

⁹ Nick Groom, in his Introduction to *Otranto* argues that "[t]he appearance of *The Castle of Otranto* on 24 December 1764 is best understood not as the first rudimentary attempt in a new genre or as a genesis of the Gothic literary tradition in English, but rather as the climax of eighteenth-century discussion and debate about the Goths and 'Gothick'. Three distinct strands are tangled together here. First, the Goths' place in ancient history and their characteristic society and art; secondly, their contributions to political thought through Gothic polity or the Gothic system of government and its subsequent influence on the British constitution; and thirdly the culture of the Middle Ages and its effect on contemporary eighteenth-century taste. It is within these contexts that Walpole's novel takes its place within literary history; indeed, seen thus, it becomes clear that *The Castle of Otranto* was not only innovative, but succeeded in shifting an entire paradigm. In the context of eighteenth-century Gothic Walpole's novel was a game-changer: that was why it was so important — and why eighteenth-century readers read it in astonished awe" (Groom 2014: IX–X). Thus, *The Castle of Otranto. A Gothic Story* was an important voice in the eighteenth-century "debate" on the Gothic, resulting in the rehabilitation and re-interpretation of the term. Bishop Richard Hurd with *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) and Bishop Thomas Percy, who published in 1765 *Reliques of Ancient Poetry Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of Our Earlier Poets*, together with Horace Walpole, were among the main enthusiasts of the Middle Ages and contributors to the Gothic Revival (cf. eg. Groom: 2012: 65–74).

be judged according to contemporary English standards. The information printed on the title page was supposed to establish Walpole's interaction with his readers, and thus elicit their (favourable) response to the novel.

Apart from the explanatory title, Walpole provided his readers of the year 1764 with a Preface, where he presented further "details" concerning the origin of the story and its content, and the circumstances of its printing. It was printed "at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529" (Walpole 1990: 3), and was discovered "in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England" (Walpole 1990: 3). The story, the alleged translator argues, is an old one: its events most probably took place "between 1095, the era of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards" (Walpole 1990: 3). The Preface introduced the story as intriguing enough to be read with interest, and not too improbable by English literary canons. The presence of, "[m]iracles, visions, necromancy, dreams and other preternatural events" is given justification: to be "faithful to the *manners* of the times", in which the story was written, the author had to introduce them (Walpole 1990: 4). By making such statements, Walpole tries to guide the reader and influence her/his attitude to his "experimental" story, and prevent its being dismissed before the reader has the chance to start reading¹⁰.

Disguised as William Marshall, Gent., the assumed translator of the medieval manuscript, Walpole presents himself also as a reader of the story he prefaced: "It is natural for a translator to be prejudiced in favour of his adopted work. More impartial readers may not be so much struck with the beauties of this piece *as I was*. Yet I am not blind to my author's defects" (Walpole 1990: 5; emphasis added). By referring to "more impartial readers", he establishes "common ground" with the (potential) eighteenth-century reader of *The Castle of Otranto*, whose reaction to the story he can predict and influence: "[W]ith all its faults, I have no doubt but the English reader will be pleased with a sight of this [i.e. the monk's; — A.K.K.] performance. The piety that reigns throughout, the lessons of virtue that are inculcated, and the rigid purity of sentiments, exempt this work from the censure to which romances are but too liable" (Walpole 1990: 5). As a, "literary critic", he appreciates the work since the rules of drama, as he puts it, "are almost observed throughout the conduct of the piece. The characters are well drawn, and still better maintained" (Walpole 1990: 4). He also comments critically on the moral value of the story, drawing thereby the reader's attention to it: "I could wish he [i.e. the author — A.K.K.] had grounded his plan on a more useful moral than this; that *the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation*" (Walpole 1990: 5; emphasis original). This, "fictional", evaluation of the story, is intended to encourage the reader to get acquainted with *The Castle of Otranto*, and to read it by assuming a perspective similar to that adopted by the author of the Preface.

It can be argued, that the author in each literary work anticipates a particular kind of reader. In the case of Walpole's novel, the reader may have been suspicious of a literary work rooted in the medieval context at the time when the Middle Ages were referred to as the Dark Ages. Hence, in the 1764 Preface, the alleged translator introduces the work as one which is worth reading. Walpole tricks the reader of his novel into believing that the story told in his book was an old one, which was likely to boost the reader's interest,

¹⁰ Actually, by providing the fictional details concerning the creation and publication of *Otranto*, in its mystification created by Walpole, the Preface itself becomes, in a way, a part of the story told in the novel.

and induce a belief in the tale's authenticity. In this respect, Walpole seems to cater for the eighteenth-century reader's expectations that a story ought to be "taken from life", a common practice in novel writing at that time. A sceptical reader would be more likely to get engaged in a story, "taken from life", than one whose fictionality was too conspicuous. By adding an air of authenticity to the story, the alleged translator and author of the Preface, confirms its artistic value (Harris 2000). The authenticity of the story is reinforced in the 1764 Preface by the pronouncement: "I cannot but believe that the groundwork of the story is *founded on truth*. The scene is undoubtedly laid in some *real castle*" (Walpole 1990: 5; emphasis added). As argued in the Preface, meticulous about the details in the description of the castle, (it is quite possible, that "the author had some certain building in his eye"; Walpole 1990: 6), the author creates a realistic picture of the setting. By commenting on this aspect of the story he authenticates it, and encourages the reader to approach it without prejudice against the Middle Ages, the times in which the story is set.

Interpreted in Langackerian terms, the Transient Context for the story is broadened and developed in the Preface. As a result, the interpretation of the story is going to be performed not only in terms of the reader's stable knowledge (including e.g. the knowledge of the times, literary conventions etc), but also in terms of the context provided by Walpole, who acts as the alleged translator and as a reviewer of this particular story. The broadening of the context, as developed in the Preface can be presented by a modified model of the CDS as follows.

Fig. 3. The Current Discourse Space and the paratext

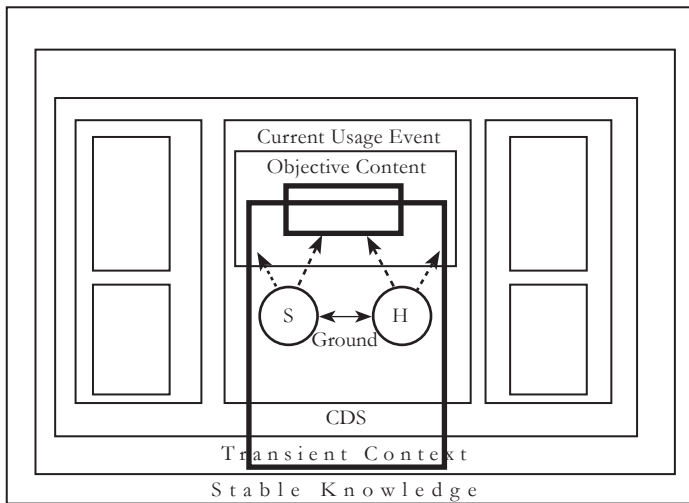


Fig. 3 shows the place of the paratext (here Walpole's Preface to the first edition) in the CDS (the rectangular box in bold in the CUE partly covering the Objective Content, and partly including its focal segment — the box in bold). The Objective Content box stands for Walpole's text. The element of the story focused on by the reader — represented as the box in bold within the Objective Content box — is subject to the speaker/author–hearer/reader (S–H) negotiation process, which leads to the interpretation of the story.

Since paratexts offer additional contextual information, they may have an impact on the author-reader meaning negotiation process as “thresholds of interpretation” (Genette 1997). (For this reason, the rectangular box representing the paratext is included to partly overlap the Transient Context box.) The interpretation involves the use of the information provided by both the text of the novel and by the paratext. Because the Ground contains “the speech event, the interlocutors [i.e. the speaker and the addressee — A.K.K.], and their immediate circumstances” (Langacker 2007: 173), the literary text proper as a speech event (the Objective Content box), becomes part of the Ground. Broken arrows indicate that the author and the reader (while “interacting” with each other in the course of mind-reading) refer to the relevant passage both in the story and in the paratext. The Transient Context box includes the reader’s context in which the story is read, and the knowledge obtained by her/him from the paratext — hence the big rectangle in bold, representing the paratext, partly covers the Ground, the Objective Content box and the Transient Context box. When interpreting a given segment of the text, the reader draws on both contextual knowledge, and on paratextual information.

Walpole’s interaction with his readers, “initiated” in the title of his novel and subsequently continued in the 1764 Preface, is further developed in the 1765 edition. He changed the subtitle, “*A Story*”, in the first edition to *A Gothic Story* in the second. At the time when the word “Gothic” carried negative associations, this addition drew the reader’s attention to the essence of the conflict reported in the narrative. As Walpole’s novel was in the eighteenth century a new form of writing, its author strove to minimize the critical assessment of it¹¹. Given that the title’s function is to “designate, to indicate subject matter, to tempt the public” (Genette 1997: 76), all these functions are performed by Walpole’s 1764 title, although “tempting the public” seems to play a bigger role in developing the relationship between the author and reader in *Otranto* than the other two functions.

When the author’s true identity remained concealed, the reader of the 1764 edition could construct her/his picture of the author based solely on what is written in the Preface and in the novel. In 1765, encouraged by the unexpected success of *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole revealed his name as the author by placing his initials — H.W. — under the sonnet dedicated “To the Right Honourable Lady Mary Coke”, added in the second edition of the novel. One other important addition to this impression was a new Preface, the “literary” one (cf. Harris 2000), in which he explained his artistic intentions and ambitions¹². First of all, he apologises to his reader for not having revealed his name in the first edition: “it is fit that he [i.e. the author — A.K.K.] should ask pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a translator” (Walpole 1990: 7), which indicates that his work might be re-read by those who were familiar with its first edition. By addressing his reader, Walpole stresses the intersubjective character of the author — reader relationship: under the impact of “[t]he favourable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public”, the author feels obliged to “explain the grounds on which he composed it” (Walpole 1990: 7). He elaborates on his purpose when writing: “to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern”

¹¹ For a discussion on the reasons for authors making changes in titles, see Genette 1997: 69.

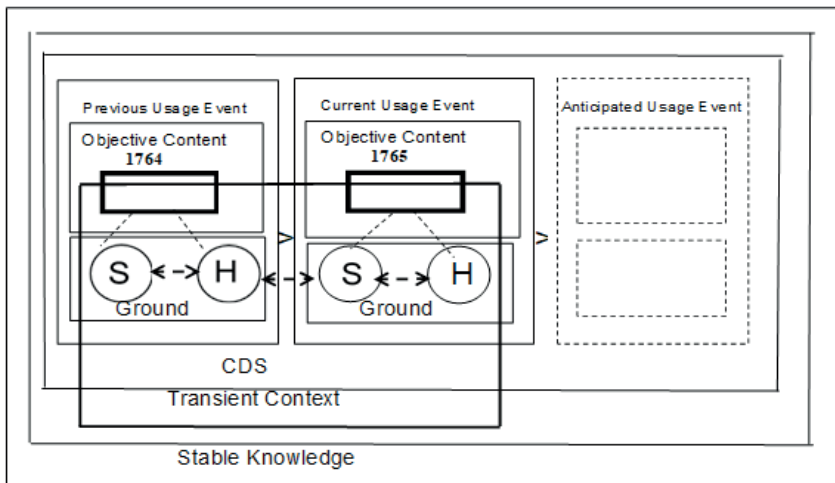
¹² Although Walpole did not sign the 1765 Preface with his name, he wrote it as “[t]he author of the following pages” (1990: 7). As mentioned above, his initials followed the sonnet placed in the book right after the second Preface, closing thereby the prefatory part of *The Castle of Otranto*.

(Walpole 1990: 7). Also, he says, he attempted to “adhere to common life”, very much in the manner of the eighteenth-century novel (Walpole 1990: 7). The Preface evokes then, a competent reader who is well versed in both contemporary and previous literature, including not only the works of Aristotle mentioned in the 1764 Preface, but also works of Shakespeare, from whom he borrowed the idea of combining the tragic and the comic in one work, and Voltaire’s works, on whose views concerning the serious and the humorous he comments. It is worth noting, that it was Walpole’s design for the two Prefaces to be included in subsequent editions of *Otranto*. Hence, before approaching the text of the novel proper, the reader is expected to get acquainted with the two Prefaces. As a result, her/his reading of *The Castle of Otranto* should take both of them into account. This, needless to say, makes the author — reader interaction more complex and involving.

As argued by Genette, the function of the preface as “one of the instruments of authorial control” (1997: 222), is “to get the book read” — and to instruct the reader “to get the book read properly” (Genette 1997: 197; emphasis original)¹³. This is precisely what Walpole aims at in his Prefaces: while the Preface to the first edition primarily persuades the reader to read *Otranto*, i.e. “to get the book read”, the 1765 Preface instructs the reader *how* the novel is to be read, (i.e. interpreted) in order for mutual understanding to be reached between the author, and the reader.

Given that there are two Prefaces in Walpole’s work, with the 1765 Preface commenting both on the novel, and on the Preface to the 1764 edition, in order to include both of the Prefaces in the diagram, we have to modify the CDS model along the following lines:

Fig. 4. The Current Discourse Space and the Prefaces of 1764 and 1765



¹³ For “proper reading” to take place, the reader ought to be equipped with the information which might present (i) the origin of the work; (ii) the author’s aim; (iii) the autobiographical details; (iv) the target reader, etc. This information can be provided in the paratext (Genette 1997: 209–222).

Fig. 4. shows the localization in the CDS of Walpole's two Prefaces — the Preface to the first, and to the second edition of *Otranto*. Notice that, the Previous Usage Event includes, the 1764 edition of Walpole's novel, while the Current Usage Event, the 1765 edition. As in Fig. 3., the Objective Content box represents Walpole's text, while the box inside, drawn in bold lines, stands for the segment of the novel involved in the speaker/author — hearer/reader negotiation process. The rectangle in bold represents the two Prefaces to *The Castle of Otranto*. Notice that, the rectangle overlays both the Previous and the Current Usage Event (including the Objective Contents and their focal elements); it also overlays the Transient Context, as the latter changes when the information from the Preface to the 1765 edition becomes available to the reader. With more paratextual information at hand, the speaker/author — hearer/reader interaction leads to a richer, more complex interpretation of *Otranto*.

6. Conclusion

The analysis proposed here accounts for the dynamicity of the author (text)-reader relationship in the process of literary work interpretation. This dynamic relationship owes its existence to a number of factors — both intra- and extratextual. One such extratextual factor is paratext, which exerts an influence on the interpretation of a literary text by tightening the author-reader intersubjective exchange. The ability of the CDS model to tighten this exchange is not a mere exercise in the application of a theory, however. On the contrary, by putting an emphasis on the author-reader meaning negotiation process, the theory developed here offers a new perspective on our knowledge of Walpole's literary output; it sheds new light on our existing knowledge of Walpole's historical and literary agenda by inducing the reader into asking a number of pertinent questions: What made Walpole write such an “experimental” novel? Why did he assume the position of a fictional translator in the first edition of the novel? In what kind of literary context was *The Castle of Otranto* written? What impact do the Prefaces have on the interpretation of the novel?, etc.

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