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Panel proposal
International Conference on Narrative 2019
University of Navarra, Pamplona (Spain), June 6-8, 2019

1. Description of the topic of the panel and of each panelist's contribution

The concept of *small stories* was introduced into the scientific discussion by Michael Bamberg and Alexandra Georgakopoulou. It refers to “a gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future and hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell” (Georgakopoulou 2006: 122). These narrative activities are under-represented or are not even considered as narratives by traditional narrative analysis as inherited from William Labov's work. The aim of *small stories research* is to shift the attention from self-narratives, typically long, teller-led, of past and single non-shared events, to the short and fragmented narratives which can be found in everyday interactional environments and particularly on social networks. *Small stories* differ from *big stories* in their content, poorly developed and apparently trivial, but also in their structure: they do not always fulfill the identified criteria for narrative, they can relate, not to past events, but to ongoing events or events situated in the near future, they usually contain a minimal action or “complication,” they are co-constructed by participants. The panel will try to show the heuristic value of the *small stories* paradigm (including the opposition between *small stories* and *big stories*) in corpora quite different from those studied by Bamberg and Georgakopoulou: in a corpus of literary narratives (taken from the *Historias de París* by Mario Benedetti); in a corpus of literary and audiovisual narratives (borrowed from Valérie Mrejen's work); in a set of restitutions of inner speech (gathered within the research project “Monologuer”). It may also tackle the difficulties arising from its practical implementation.

In the first paper, “Dialogue, Small Stories, and Exile Identities in Mario Benedetti's *Historias de París*,” Sylvie Patron will study *small stories* in three short stories by the Uruguyan writer Mario Benedetti, which deal with exile, whether economic or political, in the Paris of the 60s and 70s. She will evoke briefly the problems raised by the implementation of the *small stories* paradigm within the study of literary narratives and she will suggest a potential solution likely to be evaluated in the chosen corpus. She will show that in Benedetti's short stories equivalents do exist for the types of *small stories* identified by Georgakopoulou (“breaking news,” “projections,” “shared stories,” etc.). She will then return to the opposition between *big stories* and *small stories* as it is actualized in the corpus. In the last sections, she will propose an analysis of Benedetti's short stories in the light of the *small stories* paradigm and she will try to emphasize the actual literary use made by the author of the ordinary, daily, natural form of the *small stories*.

The second paper is titled “Valérie Mréjen: Small Stories Out of Order.” Valérie Mréjen is a French interdisciplinary artist. She has made numerous short fictional films, some documentary films, and is also known for the series of the *Filmed portraits*. She has also written several autobiographical books, consisting of fragments. In her paper, Cécile De Bary will focus mainly on the book *Eau sauvage* and on several video films, adding some insights into other works by Mréjen. In this corpus, when *small stories* are “stories-in-interaction” (Georgakopoulou), this interaction does not function properly: *small stories* are just vain, repeated without any purpose. Then, when short stories are written, in *Eau sauvage*, they are presented out of context, without a narratee to answer the narrator. Out of their normal use, put in an artistic or a written context, *small stories* become more or less “out of order.”

Stéphanie Smadja is directing an interdisciplinary research project on inner speech (“Monologuer,” University of Paris Diderot). In her paper, titled “Inner Speech and Small Stories,” she will take as her point of departure the fact that recently, the ability and difficulties to understand stories have been very much studied from psychological, cognitive and neuroscientific perspectives, mainly within the framework of the theory of mind. Some researchers have focused on the creation of stories, which seems to be typical of the brain functions as well as of the inner speech functions. Do we create *big stories* or *small stories* in our everyday life inner speech? Is the notion of *small stories* relevant to the analysis of inner speech? If so, what are the functions of *small stories* in that context?

2. Title of the panel and of the individual papers

“Small Stories Research Across Disciplines”

Sylvie Patron, “Dialogue, Small Stories, and Exile Identities in Mario Benedetti’s *Historias de París*”

Cécile de Bary, “Valérie Mréjen: Small Stories Out of Order”

Stéphanie Smadja, “Inner Speech and Small Stories”

3. Name, institutional affiliation, email address, and brief statements about the person’s work and publications

Cécile DE BARY

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Cécile De Bary is Lecturer (*maître de conférences*) at the University of Paris Diderot. She has published *Une nouvelle pratique littéraire en France. Le groupe Oulipo de 1960 à nos jours* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2014) and many articles on George Perec, the Oulipo, twentieth and twenty-first century novel. She has edited the issue no. 9 of the *Cahiers Georges Perec* and an issue of *Itinéraires* devoted to Fiction today. She is co-director with Alain Schaffner of the seminar *Approches de l’Oulipo*. The proceedings of the conference *L’Oulipo et les Savoirs* is forthcoming in the journal *Formules*.

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Sylvie Patron is a Lecturer and Research Supervisor (*maître de conférences habilitée à diriger des recherches*) at the University of Paris Diderot. She has published *Le Narrateur. Introduction à la théorie narrative* (Armand Colin, 2009), reprinted as *Le Narrateur. Un problème de théorie narrative* (Lambert-Lucas, 2016), and *La Mort du narrateur et autres essais* (2015). She has also edited or co-edited *Théorie, analyse, interprétation des récits/Theory, analysis, interpretation of narratives* (Peter Lang, 2011), *Life and Narrative: The Risks and Responsibilities of Storying Experience* (Oxford UP, 2017), and *Introduction à la narratologie postclassique. Les nouvelles directions de la recherche sur le récit* (Septentrion, 2018). In 2019, she will be First Vice-President of the ISSN.

Stéphanie SMADJA
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Stéphanie Smadja is Lecturer (*maître de conférences*) at the University of Paris Diderot, where she teaches stylistics and French linguistics. Her main research fields are: monologue and inner speech, prose (19th-20th centuries), style, the twenties, adjectives in literature, syntactic discontinuity. Since 2010, she has been leader of the Monologue Research Program (Diderot Innovation Price, 2016, presidential award in Italia, 2018). She has published *La "Nouvelle Prose française." Étude sur la prose narrative au début des années 1920* (Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2013); *Cent ans de prose française 1850-1950: Invention et évolution d'une catégorie esthétique* (Garnier, 2018). *La Parole intérieure. Qu'est-ce que se parler veut dire ?* and *La Parole intérieure en prison* (with Catherine Paulin) are forthcoming (Hermann).