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Fictions Not Real?

> ‘In the framework of a reflection about literary narrative, we will provisionally leave aside the relevance of “fiction” in communication through media other than natural languages. The reduction of “referentiality” to an empirical or scientific notion of the real is highly detrimental to a historical apprehension of both narrativity and the fluctuating ontological status of the objects involved in events. If we understand fictionality as polyreference to two or more universes characterized by incompatible features, such as sacred and profane, real and imaginary, virtual and actual, or concrete and conceptual, etc., panfictionality theory does not run against the ethical “Auschwitz test.” It is not liable to accusations of negationism, as Lavocat is prone to hint.³⁶ Nevertheless, we have to accept that, where narrative is concerned, **the principle of panfictionality generates the risk of substituting pseudo-cognitive events to material events, the story of the discovery of a “hidden truth” to the story of what happened or probably happened.** Since narrative meaning is not a natural given but cooperatively constructed, negotiated, narrative truth is not a given; it can only be established through an argumentative dialog.

The future remaining generally more hidden, less knowable than the past, grand predictive narratives (apocalyptic, millenarist, or on the contrary, eutopian, idealistic projections) are a privileged terrain for preferring the neatness of a narrative Gestalt to the incoherence produced by lawless chance. ‘

— *Narrative Theory* By Didier Coste

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