

## RESEARCH, NARRATIVE, AND REPRESENTATION: A POSTNARRATIVE APPROACH<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Narrativism or representationalism is founded on the idea that historical narratives and representations are 1) true and indivisible wholes, whereof 2) the truth needs to be maintained, although a narrativist or representationalist whole cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed, and wherein 3) the past is represented in a figurative sense. These fundamental aspects of narrativism have had a positive impact on historiography, but they are also the three reasons why narrativism has neglected historical research and argumentation. To remedy these problems postnarrativism has been evoked. It opts for presentation instead of representation, cutting through all the links between the past and the historiographical product. The product is not a narrative or a representation but a thesis, a proposal to see the past in a special way. The only element postnarrativism wants to retain of narrativism is colligation because it has an argumentative structure based on epistemic values. Postnarrativism leads to knowledge, built on the practice of warranted assertions instead of truth.

My postnarrativism chooses a middle course between a strong narrativism and what I would like to call a “weak,” presentational postnarrativism. I agree with postnarrativists that more attention must be paid to argumentation and research. Moreover, I consider time a neglected issue in narrativism. Nevertheless, I don’t want to give up the three above-mentioned fundamental aspects of it. In my view the assumption of truth with regard to (figurative) representation needs to be maintained, but in a pragmatic, provisional form: a historical narrative or representation can be considered as true as long as it has not been replaced by a better one. Retaining truth and holism, but wanting more room for investigation and argumentation, requires that narrativism’s role in historical research and history-writing be revised. This implies the replacement of the usual research phase by a preparation phase, wherein, next to research, space must be reserved for so-called writing activities. Preparation means the conversion of a germinal narrative or representation into an accomplished whole. Holism occurs in two representational forms: a narrative and a representation. In both forms, research concepts and the associated temporalities become visible under the surface of the narrativist or representational superstructure.

*Keywords:* narrative, representation, narrativism, representationalism, postnarrativism, postrepresentationalism, retroactive alignment, continuing entities, ideal types

In his “Six Theses on Narrativist Philosophy,” published in 1994, Frank Ankersmit could write, “with a few exceptions (W. H. Walsh, H. V. White, L. O. Mink), current philosophy of history is interested exclusively in historical

1. I would like to express my gratitude to Frank Ankersmit, Chiel van den Akker, Stephen Turner, and Ethan Kleinberg for their comments on a previous version of this paper.

research.”<sup>2</sup> Now, twenty-five years later, the reverse is true. There exists an extended literature about historical narrative, while research seems hardly an issue worthy of theoretical attention. Walsh, White, Mink, and Ankersmit have made narrativism into an inescapable issue in the philosophy of history.

This statement is important because we seem to be stepping on the threshold of a postnarrative or postrepresentationalist era. In the introduction to a forum discussion in *History and Theory* (2015) with the meaningful title “After Narrativism,” Zoltán Boldizsár Simon and Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen argue that “narrativism has reached its peak and that the philosophy of history is gradually moving toward a broadly understood postnarrativist stage. . . .”<sup>3</sup> Three contributions to this forum, those of Anton Froeyman, Simon, and Martin Nosál, assume that in narrativism an incompatibility exists between experience and language, which implies that the past plays no role in any historiographical construction whatsoever, seeing postnarrativism as a philosophy of history that seeks to restore the relationship between them.<sup>4</sup> Thus their solution is to reconcile historical narrative and historical experience.<sup>5</sup> Two others, by Eugen Zelenák and Kuukkanen, focus on the epistemological question whether we need to retain in historiography a relationship between representations of the past and the past itself.<sup>6</sup> Both claim that representation maintains such a relationship, which they want to discard. According to Zelenák and Kuukkanen, historiography needs to present theses about the past, in which correspondence with the past has no role at all. To them a thesis is nothing other than an argumentation to see the past in a special way. Be that as it may, their solution contradicts, in my view, the reconciliation of the former three contributions to the forum discussion.

Presenting theses about the past also implies abandoning holism with regard to the narrative or representation. In this article I will argue that the past is represented in the narrative/representation and that both are indivisible wholes with an argumentative infrastructure. I think that Zelenák and Kuukkanen create an unnecessary contrast between argumentation and representation. As such, I will argue that postnarrativism/postrepresentationalism needs to retain the idea that the narrative and representation indeed represent the past in a truthful way and that each has to maintain its holism, but that research and argumentation can no longer be neglected. This is why I want to defend the existence of an infrastructure of arguments behind the narrative superstructure, which implies more attention to historical research. Moreover, narrativism/representationalism has ignored

2. In Frank Ankersmit, *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 35, thesis 2.2.1.

3. Zoltán Boldizsár Simon and Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen, “Introduction: Assessing Narrativism,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 2 (2015), 153-161, esp. 154.

4. Anton Froeyman, “Never the Twain Shall Meet? How Narrativism and Experience Can Be Reconciled by Dialogical Ethics,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 2 (2015), 162-177; Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, “The Expression of Historical Experience,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 2 (2015), 178-194; Martin Nosál, “The Gadamerian Approach to the Relation between Experience and Language,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 2 (2015), 195-208.

5. Simon and Kuukkanen, “Introduction,” 156-157.

6. Eugen Zelenák, “Two Versions of a Constructivist View of Historical Work,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 2 (2015), 209-225; Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen, “Why We Need to Move from Truth-functionality to Performativity in Historiography,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 2 (2015), 226-243.

time as an important aspect of the narrative whole. Kuukkanen is right in pointing to the fact “that history books typically imply an underlying time-dimension.”<sup>7</sup> He is also right that time does not mean chronology.<sup>8</sup>

#### POSTNARRATIVISM, A REJECTION OF NARRATIVISM?

Before I continue my argument about postnarrativism, first I will clarify the concepts of narrative, narrativism, representation, and representationalism as I use them in this article. Historiography shows itself in narratives and representations. Narratives are featured by diachronical movements epitomized in a plot; representations are synchronic constructions in the form of an image. Ricoeur is the defender of a narrativist approach to historiography; Ankersmit is a representationalist.<sup>9</sup> Ricoeur, for instance, makes a plot of Braudel’s Mediterranean study by making Spain and Turkey the protagonists of the Mediterranean system.<sup>10</sup> He makes them into quasi-personages who can act and sometimes undergo rises and falls. Ankersmit sees Burckhardt and Huizinga as representational historians because they don’t tell a story but deliver an image of (parts of) the past: Burckhardt sees the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries in Italy as a renaissance of antiquity, and Huizinga perceives the same ages in Burgundy and the Netherlands as an autumn.<sup>11</sup> Ankersmit considers historical representations as metaphorical. The terms “narrativism” and “representationalism” foreground both the fictional elements of historiography, sometimes in the form of metaphorical representations (White, Mink, and Ankersmit), sometimes in the form of a narrative with a kind of storyline or plot (Ricoeur and White). To avoid complicated constructions like narrative/representation and narrativism/representationalism, I will use narrative and narrativism as an all-encompassing concept for both forms. If only the synchronic, metaphorical structure of a work of history is meant, I will refer to this as “representation.”

Kuukkanen in his *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography* objects to White’s statement that “narrativity is an essential attribute of ‘history proper.’”<sup>12</sup> Zelenák objects to White’s narrativity as well as to Ankersmit’s representationalism.<sup>13</sup> Kuukkanen and Zelenák trouble the contradiction in narrativism that historiography is fictional as well as true. This is why both of them almost completely reject a narrative view of historiography and want history to be a discipline *presenting* theses about the past. Presentation, not representation, is their catchword. They argue, in the footsteps of Paul Roth, that *representations* presuppose that

7. Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography* (Basingstoke UK and New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2015), 94.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Although Ankersmit includes narrativism in his representationalism, for now I distinguish between the two.

10. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), I, 209-212.

11. Frank Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 166-168 (Burckhardt) and 134-135 (Huizinga).

12. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, 73.

13. Zelenák, “Two Versions of a Constructivist View” and Kuukkanen, “Why We Need to Move from Truth-functionality to Performativity in Historiography.”

in acquiring knowledge one must follow what the world dictates.<sup>14</sup> Narrativists indeed differ from presentationalists in their desire to maintain a connection between the past and its representation. But they see that relationship not as a corresponding but as a metaphorical one. “Metaphorical” does not mean fictional, because narrativists retain the difference between historiography and fiction. Narrativists base the historiographical representation more on an experience of the past than on empiricism or “dictates of the world.” I will discuss this below with the help of the contributions to the forum by Froeyman, Simon, and Nosál.

Presentationalists reject the correspondence theory of truth and want to replace truth with warranted assertion, based on intersubjective arguments.<sup>15</sup> Narrativists also reject the correspondence theory of truth, but they accept a pragmatic definition of it, which entails that the truth of a representation can be accepted as long as there is no better option. This definition implies that the narrative rests on arguments, otherwise it cannot be replaced by a better one. Argumentation is no real problem for narrativism, because it is already locked up in colligation. In fact, a colligation means nothing other than that (a part of) the past is seen as a coherent whole, whereby it is regarded as a (figurative) representation of that past. Such a whole must consist of as large a number of factual statements as possible, which apply to as large a part of the past as possible, without losing their specificity. The number of factual statements, the applicability and the specificity of a colligation can be compared with other colligations and thus a lesser can be exchanged for a better one. As a consequence, we need to suppose behind the narrativist surface an argumentative infrastructure. Below I will show that such an infrastructure shines through the surface of the narrative or representation.

Without truth and argumentation we come to a rather dangerous postmodern narrativism, whereof Alun Munslow and Keith Jenkins are the most important representatives. Their view is put into words by Munslow: “It is the function of the reader to determine for herself or himself why some views of the past are plausible, satisfactory and convincing and others are not.”<sup>16</sup> I reject this, as does Kuukkanen, because it implies an extreme relativism, losing any kind of cognitive judgment.<sup>17</sup> Kuukkanen’s main thesis against postmodern narrativism is that historiography is built on an argumentative structure, which enables an intersubjective justification of historiography.<sup>18</sup> I agree, but nevertheless I don’t think that all narrativism should therefore be thrown overboard.

The thesis-approach to historiography implies the disapproval of holism.<sup>19</sup> Zelenák and especially Kuukkanen assume that colligation is useful for historiography, but they don’t accept its products as indivisible wholes. Kuukkanen’s idea is that not all factual elements in a history book are necessary for the understanding of the main historical thesis and that “not all the statements in a work of history are meaning-constituting.”<sup>20</sup> That is his reason to opt for theses instead of

14. Zelenák, “Two Versions of a Constructivist View,” 221.

15. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, 156-157.

16. A. Munslow, *Narrative and History* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 116.

17. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, 152.

18. *Ibid.*, 155-162.

19. *Ibid.*, 66.

20. *Ibid.*, 82 and 80.

narratives. I prefer the latter to the former, which has consequences for my view on factual statements. Below I will argue that by necessity all factual statements contribute to the meaning of a narrative.<sup>21</sup>

Kuukkanen opposes a central issue of narrativism, namely that the individual statements of a narrative are nondetachable from the whole. He does not want to see a work of history as a closed whole, which he assumes to impose an “iron-cage model on historiography.”<sup>22</sup> According to him it “mischaracterizes the nature of knowledge production in historiography.” Knowledge is a form of “reasoning,” forming “conclusions, inferences and judgements.”<sup>23</sup> A work of history results in a thesis, which is a proposal to see the past in a certain way, without any relation with the past itself. A thesis about the past is not a narrative about or a picture from the past. As a consequence, he also rejects the distinction between an infrastructure and a superstructure in the narrative. He accepts only the infrastructure and argues that history-writing is nonnarrative, referring to American cliometrics, social-science history, and the French Annales School.<sup>24</sup>

Kuukkanen displays some affinity with postmodern narrativism in his rejection of a connection between the historical thesis and historical reality. He comes close to Munslow and Jenkins in declining a relationship between history-writing and the past. All three are convinced that the historian does not represent, but only presents a past. The difference is that Kuukkanen rejects the extreme relativism of the two English historians. He maintains that reasoning is intersubjective and can have an “epistemic authority.” It is the authority that originates in what Robert Brandom has called the game of giving and asking for reasons. Fair play in that game compels a rational being to accept the assertions in a work of history. That is why Kuukkanen wants to exchange truth for “epistemic authority.”<sup>25</sup>

To what extent can Zeleňák’s and Kuukkanen’s thesis-approach be called postnarrativism? Both want to retain the narrative concept of colligation as important, because it has the same epistemic values (exemplification, coherence, consistency, comprehensiveness, and specificity) as theses.<sup>26</sup> Yet I consider it to be a weak form of postnarrativism because they see colligation not as creating an indivisible whole, whereof the content can be considered to be true. Hereafter I will argue that holistic relationships are essential for narrativism. For me, post-narrativism acknowledges narrativist achievements and adds something that is neglected by it. Kuukkanen is right in his idea that an argumentative infrastructure is important for historiography. But he is throwing away the baby with the bathwater by depriving historiography of its narrative superstructure.

Ahead of what I will argue below, I think that by social dialogue a historical experience can crystallize in what Hans-Georg Gadamer has called an *Abbild*. In my view, the *Abbild* in history-writing is something in the head of the historian,

21. In this context it is important whether representational wholes can have an argumentative infrastructure. I think they can, because representations originate in special preparation structures. See below.

22. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, 88.

23. *Ibid.*, 87.

24. *Ibid.*, 88.

25. *Ibid.*, 137-147.

26. *Ibid.*, 156.

caused by something in the past, without having any similarity or comparability with it.<sup>27</sup> As such it differs from Gadamer's aesthetics, where the *Abbild* refers to something with which it can be compared in reality: an *Urbild*.<sup>28</sup> My *Abbild* can be a germinal narrative or a metaphor, an incentive to a complete narrative or representation. It can subsequently be articulated by means of arguments, developing it into a complete story or representation (*Darstellung*) about the past.<sup>29</sup> Compared to the *Abbild*, the *Darstellung* has "increased in being."<sup>30</sup> The narrative or representation is the result, but the dialogue creates the infrastructure of argumentations.<sup>31</sup> The dialogue can be in the form of a discussion, but can also originate in reading.

Summarizing, I can say that Kuukkanen rejects essential elements of narrativism and replaces it with a thesis-approach to history-writing. In my view, that is a weak form of postnarrativism. To me postnarrativism means maintaining narrativism, but giving more attention to argumentation and research. My postnarrativism includes two observations: 1) there are not only concepts of narrative and representation, but behind them also concepts of research, and 2) the experience of time plays an important role in the representation. Hereafter, first I will give the reasons for my agreement with narrativism and then I will argue why my approach can still be called postnarrative.

#### NARRATIVE AND REPRESENTATION AS COGNITIVE INSTRUMENTS

In his "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," Louis Mink perceives narrative and metaphor as means to cognition. As such the historical narrative is not only a result, but also a mode of historical understanding. According to Mink, although they are linguistic elements used in fiction, narrative and metaphor make an ensemble of interrelationships comprehensible.<sup>32</sup> Each narrative is a unique whole composed of many possible interrelations. As such it is a cognitive instrument, in relation to which the research procedure is redundant.<sup>33</sup> I disagree with the neglect of research, but I agree that narrative is a cognitive tool.

For me it is important how historical narrative and representation, being fictional instruments, can still be assumed to be cognitive. Knowledge needs to be true, but can fictional instruments produce true knowledge? Mink gives an uncertain answer to this question. He states that history has a truth-claim, which fiction lacks, and defines narrative as "the form in which we make comprehensible the many successive interrelationships that are comprised by a career."<sup>34</sup> I

27. Nosál, "The Gadamerian Approach," 204-208.

28. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Waarheid en Methode* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014), 138-140.

29. Nosál, "The Gadamerian Approach," 198. See also, for arguments about what Gadamer has called the Platonic-Socratic method of asking questions, *ibid.*, 348-352.

30. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *De actualiteit van het schone* (Amsterdam, Meppel: Boom, 1993), 66.

31. Froeyman, "Never the Twain Shall Meet?," 172.

32. Louis Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument" in *The History and Narrative Reader*, ed. G. Roberts (London: Routledge, 2001), 213.

33. *Ibid.*, 215. "Only causation can be valued as a criterion of relevance."

34. *Ibid.*, 214. The term "career" is casually introduced by Mink. The only meaning it can have is an entity evolving in a diachronic process. Is this a first indication of a procedure-element in the historical narrative? Below I will answer this question.

agree with Mink that the story is a useful way toward historical understanding.<sup>35</sup> This is even the case where he inventories two ambiguities with regard to the historical narrative.<sup>36</sup>

First, an opacity of the historical narrative is that as a narrative it is the product of individual imagination, but as history it claims to be true. The truth-claim regards the historical narrative as a whole, not the individual statements in it. Unlike the individual statements, the whole of the narrative comprises a combination of relationships that cannot be subjected to confirmation or disconfirmation. Even worse, there is no procedure of argument or authentication on which the truth-claim of the narrative as a whole can be based.<sup>37</sup> Still Mink argues: "The claim of a narrative history is that its *structure* is a contribution to knowledge, not just a literary artifice for the presentation of a series of factual descriptions."<sup>38</sup> Here Mink seems in advance to object to White's thesis that the composition of a historical narrative is "making stories out of mere chronicles."

The second vagueness regards the question whether there can be more than one description of the "same event." Mink answers: "'Events' (or more precisely, descriptions of events) are not the raw material of which narratives are constructed; rather an event is an abstraction from a narrative."<sup>39</sup> We can find such abstract events in a chronicle, which needs to be sharply distinguished from a historical narrative. Only in a particular narrative construction is the event's appropriate description generated. Here we have the nondetachability of singular statements of the narrative they are part of.<sup>40</sup>

Mink observes these ambiguities, but does not really solve them. Chiel van den Akker in his "Mink's Riddle of Narrative Truth" tries to do so, especially with regard to the first one.<sup>41</sup> Van den Akker also perceives the whole of the narrative as a "combination of interrelations" whereof the truth cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed as can be done with the corresponding singular statements. Nevertheless, he claims it to be true in pragmatic terms: "the narrative is the best *guide* present at hand for as long as it is not displaced by another narrative."<sup>42</sup>

Van den Akker also follows Mink in his view that the historical narrative is not a literary device, but a way of thinking. Like Mink, he does not see the combination of interrelations of a historical narrative as a composition or as an emplotment out of a chronicle.<sup>43</sup> The combination of interrelations represents a real

35. *Ibid.*, 213.

36. There is a third one, but it is unimportant for the purposes of this article.

37. Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," 218-219.

38. Louis Mink, "The Divergence of History and Sociology in Recent Philosophy of History," in *Historical Understanding*, ed. Brian Fay, Eugene O. Golob, and Richard T. Vann (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 163-181, esp. 168; see also Chiel van den Akker, "Mink's Riddle of Narrative Truth," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 7, no. 3 (2013), 354.

39. Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," 220.

40. "An event may take five seconds or five months, but in either case whether it is one event or many depends not on a definition of 'event' but on a particular narrative construction which generates the event's appropriate description" (*ibid.*). See also Stephen Turner, "Collingwood and Weber vs. Mink: History after the Cognitive Turn," *Journal for the Philosophy of History* 5, no. 2 (2011), 230-260.

41. Van den Akker, "Mink's Riddle of Narrative Truth," 346-370, esp. 367.

42. *Ibid.*, 369; Van den Akker's italics.

43. Van den Akker also uses the term "ensemble" for what he calls "the combination of interrelations."

combination in past reality and is claimed to be true.<sup>44</sup> Therefore the historical narrative cannot be identified with its plot, because a plot belongs to its fictional, not to its actual, historical side.

He even goes further than Mink by asking the question how the whole of a historical narrative can be achieved without literary composition. To him it is not composed, but it *results* from *retroactive alignment*. “Retroactive alignment” means that “past events acquire historical significance by being related to later events.”<sup>45</sup> This alignment forms the past in the historical narrative, because the past itself is not *given* or *determined*. Van den Akker follows Mink here again, stating “that the significance of the past is determinate only by virtue of our own disciplined imagination.”<sup>46</sup> Mink thus presupposes an indeterminate past, which turns out to be determinate only in narrative retrospect. In following David Weberman, Van den Akker calls this the *ontological force* of narrative.<sup>47</sup> As such, retroactive alignment is not only a way to create coherence in the historical narrative, it is also a truth-maker.

According to Van den Akker, historical narratives, being a result of retroactive alignment, are not literary artifices, but *cognitive instruments* to *illustrate* or *exemplify* social change.<sup>48</sup> They do so, however only relative to a particular narrative; the historical thesis exemplified in it is relative to that narrative. Here again we have Mink’s famous rule of the nondetachability of historical thesis or conclusions. “What exemplifies [aspects of the past referred to in the narrative] and what is exemplified [the historical thesis] mutually depends on each other. Therefore there is no such thing as a general historical thesis which is exemplified in different narratives.”<sup>49</sup> So there is a narrow connection between a historical thesis and the specific representation in which it is exemplified.

#### THE TRUTH OF NARRATIVE WHOLES

Van den Akker has a very elegant solution to the truth-problem of the narrative as a whole. In the conclusion of his article, he redefines confirmation and disconfirmation. The usual meaning of them is representational in the empiricist sense, following the traditional empirical habit of comparing bits of experience with bits of language. Following Willard Van Orman Quine, he wants to get rid of the traditional distinction between empirical truth and analytical truth. Quine means by empirical truth a truth justified by appeal to facts or to a synthesis of facts,<sup>50</sup> whereas analytical truth is independent of facts, founded only on deduction of true premises.<sup>51</sup> With regard to the truth of singular statements, whereof the narrative consists, it is impossible to determine the meaning of a particular

44. *Ibid.*, 353.

45. *Ibid.*, 355.

46. Van den Akker, “Mink’s Riddle of Narrative Truth,” 360. See also Mink, “Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument,” 218-219.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, 356.

49. *Ibid.*, 358.

50. Here we have Kuukkanen’s theses.

51. Alex Orenstein, *W. V. Quine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 75-80.



statement “independently from its (actual or potential) relation to antecedent and subsequent statements.”<sup>52</sup> Van den Akker reasons:

The crucial insight is that the meaning of utterances, that is, statements uttered, inscribed or read, are understood in terms of what follows from them. Taking confirmation and disconfirmation to be inferential practices, then, is to see the confirmation of a statement as having the statement function as premises and conclusions of correct inferences, and the disconfirmation of a statement as not being able to perform such inferences.<sup>53</sup>

He concludes from this that verification can be thrown overboard. I agree with Van den Akker only where he takes confirmation and disconfirmation to be inferential practices.<sup>54</sup> Confirmation then has the function of making statements premises or conclusions of correct inferences. Disconfirmation cannot perform such a function.<sup>55</sup> I do not agree with Van den Akker that any form of verification can be thrown overboard, because we have to investigate whether certain factual statements are indeed factual, in the sense that they refer to events in (past) reality.<sup>56</sup>

We need verification as the factual articulation of a vague, initial story or image, which comes about at the start of historical research. This is important because in that initial story or representation, it is impossible to make a distinction between an analytical and an empirical approach to historical reality. Experience and language here come as one. That is why I don't make a distinction between historical research and history-writing, though there can be phases in which research or writing dominate. These phases I would like to call respectively the preparation and the writing phase. During the preparation phase narrative concepts already come to the fore, and by analyzing the writing phase, we see research concepts shining through the written text. Van den Akker also does not want to distinguish between a research and a writing phase, which is in agreement with his dismissal of empirical and analytical truth.<sup>57</sup> But does he realize it?

#### THE UNEASY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NARRATIVISM AND RESEARCH

Narrativism is concerned mainly with the nature of the relationship between representation and past reality and not with the question how a possible relationship between the two comes about. This field of research is neglected on purpose, because writing is the main aim of narrativism. Mink and Van den Akker have several arguments for giving priority to writing above research. First, they see the distinction between the research phase and the composition phase as leading to the idea that history-writing is the presentation of research results. Research and writing then would have the same function as in the sciences. The only difference may be that in history the research results are presented in a literary manner. Second,

52. Van den Akker, “Mink’s Riddle of Narrative Truth,” 368. See also Robert Brandom, *Making it Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 622.

53. Van den Akker, “Mink’s Riddle of Narrative Truth,” 368.

54. Partly because confirmation and disconfirmation also pertain to the correspondence between statements of facts and the events they refer to.

55. Van den Akker, “Mink’s Riddle of Narrative Truth,” 368.

56. Van den Akker, with his “establishing the facts,” also maintains verification.

57. Van den Akker, “Mink’s Riddle of Narrative Truth,” 361.

the difference between the research phase and the composition phase involves, according to Mink and Van den Akker, a difference between content and form. They reject the idea that a chronicle of events delivers the content, which gets its form in a narrative (or representation). Such a chronicle-content would mean that the same event can be found in several narratives. Van den Akker: "We cannot say that the same event exemplifies thesis-1 in narrative-1 and thesis-2 in narrative-2, for what exemplifies cannot be separated from what is exemplified."<sup>58</sup> As a result, Van den Akker adheres to the thesis "that although each separate relation between events [figuring in a statement] is subject to confirmation and disconfirmation, the combination of interrelations is not, even so such combination of interrelations represents a real combination in past reality and is claimed to be true."<sup>59</sup> So Mink and Van den Akker defend an *a priori* approach to historical writing, wherein research is hardly an issue of interest to the historical theorist. Dismissing the difference between research and composition in the practice of history, Van den Akker sees the function of historical research only as "establishing the facts, as making up the inventory of the world by source criticism, methods of analysis and explanation."<sup>60</sup> In my view this still suggests a difference between a research phase and a writing phase in the practice of history, a difference I want to reject. However, there still will be research and writing activities, whereby research is more important than the narrativists want it to be.

GERMINAL NARRATIVES AND REPRESENTATIONS  
AT THE START OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Van den Akker must be praised for giving some attention to historical research. Most narrativists neglect it. But his utterance about establishing the facts also shows where the relationship between narrativism and research becomes odd and paradoxical. Here lies the reason for me to endorse a postnarrative approach, wherein research has a fundamentally different function than in Van den Akker's narrativist methodology. To show this, I would like to start with this statement from Collingwood:

The historian's picture of his subject, whether it be a sequence of events or a past state of things, thus appears as a web of imaginative construction stretched between certain fixed points provided by the statements of his authorities; and if these points are frequent enough and the threads spun from each to the next are constructed with due care, always by the *a priori* imagination and never by merely arbitrary fancy, the whole picture is constantly verified by appeal to these data, and runs little risk of losing touch with the reality which it represents.<sup>61</sup>

I think that Collingwood creates a similar web of inferential relationships here as intended by Van den Akker. Collingwood pays only some attention to the empirical

58. *Ibid.*, 364-365. Here again is the nondetachability of facts from the narrative they belong to.

59. *Ibid.*, 352-353.

60. *Ibid.*, 361. What are "facts" here, events? Historical events? Nonhistorical events?

61. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, rev. ed., ed. Jan van der Dussen (New York: Oxford University Press 2005), 242. See Turner, "Collingwood and Weber vs. Mink," 19. With "a sequence of events," Collingwood refers to the ingredients of a narrative; with "a past state of events" to the ingredients of a representation. As a consequence, he makes the same distinction I have made between narrative and representation.

side of it. He makes it clear that truth in the discipline of history is based on inferential relationships as well as on a “touch with reality” realized by verified data. As selected facts, the latter need to be taken into confirmed statements that are able to fulfill inferential relationships. The task of historical research is not so much the establishing of the facts, but the transformation of factual statements into premises and conclusions of a historical representation or narrative.<sup>62</sup>

By following Weberman and his “ontological force of the narrative” Van den Akker seems to prefer “the compulsion of language” above “the compulsion of experience.” Seemingly, he cannot suppress it completely, because paradoxically he reestablishes the role of empiricism by defining research as “establishing the facts.” Ankersmit wants to give both their due by stating: “So, language can be a truth maker no less than reality.” This is the trail I want to follow.<sup>63</sup>

Collingwood’s web of statements “constantly verified by appeal to data” would have prevented Van den Akker from seeing historical research only as “making up the inventory of the world and establishing the facts.” His view invokes the suspicion that he unwittingly reestablishes the old distinction between empirical and analytical truth, defining research in empiricist terms. It could even lead to the idea that historical research is a closed phase, separated from narration.<sup>64</sup>

Erasing the distinction between empirical and analytical truth does not mean that we don’t have experiences that can be transformed into language. Since Gadamer we know that understanding has an ontological structure, through which experience evokes language. We cannot even say that first there comes an experience, then comes its content and in the end its shape.<sup>65</sup> To use Ankersmit’s term: in the “compulsion” of experience, content and language come as one.<sup>66</sup> How does this work in the practice of historiography? Collingwood has given an answer to this question by paraphrasing Simmel from his *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie*:

But now comes Simmel’s problem. The historian, beginning from his documents, constructs in his own mind what professes to be a picture of the past. This picture is in his

62. Kuukkanen comes very close to the same view, but he does not elaborate on it. He elaborates only on the properties of colligation, not on how facts are incorporated in the historical representation. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, 122.

63. Turner, “Collingwood and Weber vs. Mink,” 32. I think Ankersmit and Collingwood agree with each other here.

64. Focusing on the relationship between historical research and the historical narrative, some other questions arise with regard to Van den Akker’s view. What does he mean by “establishing the facts?” Does it imply that those facts are used in statements that constitute the historical narrative as a whole? If not, what is the exact relationship between his so-called “established” facts and the facts used in retrospective alignment? What exactly do historians align in producing their retroactive alignments? Do they align what already are historical events or are they making nonhistorical events into historical ones? Van den Akker’s retroactive alignment leads to a very complicated or even an impossible relationship between facts used in retroactive alignment and facts existing in the inventory of the world found in historical research. David Weberman deals with these problems by invoking the notion of “skeletal pasts” and “skeletal events,” with regard respectively to a past inside and to events outside the narrative. See David Weberman, “The Non-Fixity of the Historical Past,” *Review of Metaphysics* 50, no. 4 (1997), 749-768, esp. 754. Van den Akker’s Minkian approach implies that he does not agree with Weberman in this case.

65. Nosál, “The Relation between Experience and Language,” 196.

66. Frank Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2001), 31-32.

mind and nowhere else; it is a subjective mental construction. But he claims that this subjective construction possesses objective truth.<sup>67</sup>

In my view research does not start with establishing the facts, but as Collingwood formulates it, with an encounter between a certain experience and its content, and inseparable from it a “mental construction” in the historian’s mind. Here a glimpse of truth as *aletheia* becomes visible. Two forms of such an encounter are of interest here. The first encounter can take the germinal form of a development into modernity, as in Margaret Jacob’s study about Freemasonry, which I discuss below. Argumentation in the form of colligation (comprehensiveness, specificity, and so on) makes this germinal development into a historical narrative. Such an inchoate development can also have a more undefined direction like “a moving spiral of continuously changing meaning,” as Nosál in his “The Relation between Experience and Language” formulates it.<sup>68</sup> Development implies here a temporal experience in a continuous form, which I will discuss in the next section by means of Van den Akker’s concept of retroactive alignment.

The second form can be an image suddenly rising up from the content of documents or from another text. It can be an image from the past with a striking similarity to the present (as in Burckhardt’s study about the Renaissance in Italy<sup>69</sup>) or from a past completely different from the present, but evoked by a historical sensation (the exposition of the Flemish Primitives in Bruges in 1902 that eventually led to Huizinga’s *The Waning of the Middle Ages*).<sup>70</sup> Like in the former example about continuous development, in this second form a temporal experience is also at stake. It does not concern an experience of continuity, but a disruptive experience, of which Simon observes that it “thwarts our expectations” and that it cannot work without expression.<sup>71</sup> Experience and expression come as one, evoking a struggle with language resulting in a novel historical insight, which is the germ of a new historical image. In the end it produces a representation, which I will discuss in the last section of this article.

Both experiences belong to an integral experience of a certain part of the past. It consists of a blurry image or story that, by a whole process of articulation, becomes in the end a historical representation or narrative. The process exists of encounters between images (sometimes found in words belonging to sources or to historiography and sometimes directly arising from experiences of the past) and facts, resulting in factual statements, which can perform their inferential tasks for the narrative as a whole. Thus we select and confirm facts that will participate in the ultimate story or representation.

67. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 170-171. Taken from Turner, “Collingwood and Weber versus Mink,” 8.

68. Nosál, “The Relation between Experience and Language,” 203.

69. In his *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Jacob Burckhardt perceives, next to the revival of antiquity, the modern state (as a work of art), the development of the individual, and the discovery of the modern world and man. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (London: Penguin, 1990); see also Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, 165.

70. J. Huizinga, *Verzamelde Werken III, Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1949), 3-4. See also Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, 123-137.

71. Simon, “The Expression of Historical Experience,” 178-194, esp. 188 and 191.

Summarizing, narrativism holds the historical representation to be true, if we do not define truth only as coherence with the facts or as confirmation of single factual statements. The representation can be true even if it is considered to be an indivisible whole that cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed by the single statements it consists of. Its truth lies in the coherence of its inferential parts. The confirmation or disconfirmation of the single statements means only that their selection makes them fit (or not) for being part of the representation as a whole. Making them fit means colligation, which can be defined as creating inferential relationships between singular statements and between them and the representation as a whole. The preparation phase does not start with establishing the facts, but with a vague plot or image that is articulated by factual statements (Collingwood). This procedure implies the nondetachability of facts from the narrative as a whole. A preliminary conclusion can be that narrativism has developed meaningful ideas about the nature of the representation as a whole and its relationship to the factual statements it consists of. I prefer this holistic approach above Kuukkanen's halfway assumptions about colligation and his preference for theses. However, narrativism also has disadvantages, which create the need for a postnarrative approach. Such an approach means maintaining the advantages of narrativism and avoiding their disadvantages. What are its disadvantages?

#### NARRATIVE AND RESEARCH CONCEPTS

I see two disadvantages of narrativism: first, it does not analyze narrative concepts and ignores their close relationships to research concepts, and second, it neglects time. The latter disadvantage I will discuss in the next section; for now, I intend to show how research concepts shine through narrative terms as "career" or "retroactive alignment." In the discussion about Collingwood's idea that research starts with a tentative, vague, but germinating story about the past in the head of the investigator, I have omitted to tell that such a story is not only an individual idea, but is also evoked by the culture in which the historical researcher takes part. He or she participates in a certain investigation culture with its own vocabulary. The concepts "career" and "retroactive alignment," which Mink and Van den Akker use, become important now. Both designate assumptions about social change, and both also indicate that behind narrativist concepts a range of research activities is hidden. Therefore, I will argue that with regard to social change, these narrative concepts are related to a research culture of interpretive historians, who prefer to think about change in terms of continuity. This argument implies research as well as time.

According to the culture of continuity, "change" is a succession of differences in time in a persisting identity. This means that change is inseparable from differences and especially from differences in time. Robert Nisbet defines a persisting identity as consisting of social relationships, which have coherence by norms, roles, statuses, or structures.<sup>72</sup> I perceive Nisbet's "persisting identities" as being the same as what Mink calls the "careers" of entities. They concern social bodies

72. Robert Nisbet, "Introduction: The Problem of Social Change," in *Social Change*, ed. Robert Nisbet (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) 1-45, esp. 1-2.

like states, nations, cultures, religions, trade unions, or as we will see below, free-masons' lodges, and so on. Other philosophers and theorists of history give them other names. Mandelbaum speaks of "continuing entities," Weber of "*perennierende Gebilde*," and Ricoeur of "*entités de premier ordre*."<sup>73</sup> They display a continuous, gradual, and cumulative form of modification. Thomas Kuhn, in his contribution to Nisbet's *Social Change* and in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, perceives this change in the prerevolutionary phase of scientific discovery. Nisbet characterizes Kuhn's view in this respect as "'mopping-up' operations, puzzle-solving, and thought characterized by a good deal of mere emulation or replication."<sup>74</sup> Elaboration on these continuing entities will make clear that they are associated with a research language, consisting of more than "only establishing the facts." As building blocks of the narrative, continuing entities belong to a research vocabulary that constitutes a specific historical collocation: the historical narrative, which differs from the historical representation.

Van den Akker's use of the concept of "retroactive alignment" suggests that the writing of the historical narrative is independent of research. By disclosing the research activities behind retroactive alignment, I want to make clear how his narrative action of "figuring" by retroactive alignment results from a previous action of "prefiguring" in research. Before I come to that, I first want to look at how Van den Akker exemplifies retroactive alignment, which provides information to connect it with the prefiguring activities of historical research.

Van den Akker illustrates his concept of retroactive alignment by analyzing Margaret Jacob's *The Origins of Freemasonry: Facts and Fictions*.<sup>75</sup> He states, Jacob "did not simply relate the masonic lodges to a chronicle of events; freemasonry is a phenomenon that is first understood by writing its history. [Note that no preparation phase is included in Van den Akker's view. Writing is for him the only way to understanding]. The social change Jacob writes about is basically, the eighteenth-century Western dream [and activities toward it] of a different social order based on merit instead of birth and wealth."<sup>76</sup> The eighteenth-century lodges, their members, and what they did and went through all exemplify the social change from an aristocratic into a more civil society. In his explanation of Jacob's narrative of freemasonry as an example of the grand modernizing dream of society, Van den Akker defends an exemplifying form of narrativism.

73. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973), 253; Maurice Mandelbaum, *The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 11; Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit* (Paris 1983), I, 273-275, or Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, I, 195-197. See also Harry Jansen, *The Construction of an Urban Past: Narrative and Identity in Urban History* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001), 119-126.

74. Nisbet, "Introduction," 19.

75. Margaret Jacob, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Facts and Fictions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). In his dissertation, "Beweren en tonen: Waarheid, taal en het verleden," Van den Akker uses a similar method (Van den Akker, "Beweren en tonen: Waarheid, taal en het verleden," PhD diss., RU Nijmegen, 2009). Alain Corbin's *Le village des cannibales* (Paris: Aubier 1990), is the example there, wherein the peasants of the French village of Haute-faye commit a murder that ten years later is assessed as being cruel. Thus, the peasants of Haute-faye as a small persisting identity counter-illustrate, by the indignation they aroused, the arising of the sensitive soul of the other big persisting identity, France!

76. Van den Akker, "Mink's Riddle of Narrative Truth," 356-357.

He perceives freemasonry as a “career” in Mink’s use of the term. It functions in Jacob’s study as a continuing entity to fill with facts that are retroactively aligned.

“Career,” or better, “the continuing entity,” and retroactive alignment then become instruments, making the research aspect in the historical narrative much more than what Van den Akker calls “establishing the facts.” This can be underscored by showing that the combination of career and retroactive alignment presents very important similarities to two of Weber’s research concepts: “*perennierende Gebilde*” and “ideal types.” Weber’s *perennierende Gebilde* need to be filled with concrete individual phenomena, and the ideal type is the instrument to achieve that. Weber says about ideal types:

An ideal type is formed by the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *thought* construct (*Gedankenbild*). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a *utopia*.<sup>77</sup>

Weber perceives ideal types as research concepts, which have the heuristic function of putting phenomena into a researchable framework, accentuating their characteristic properties, and bringing them together into a thought construct that enables the historian to anticipate the writing of the narrative. Doesn’t this display, despite differences, obvious similarities with retroactive alignment? This becomes evident of what Weber, a few pages later, adds to the definition of ideal types: “An ideal type of certain situations, which can be abstracted from certain characteristic social phenomena of an epoch, might—and this is indeed quite often the case—have also been present in the minds of the persons living in that epoch as an ideal to be striven for in practical life or as a maxim for the regulation of certain social relationships.”<sup>78</sup> In this sentence Weber makes clear that ideal types are, on one side, research concepts, which abstract characteristic phenomena from an era, but on the other side, they also reveal the ideals in the mind of persons in the past. Ideal types select and explain intentionally. Isn’t this exactly what Van den Akker defines as retroactive alignment in Jacob’s book about freemasonry? Doesn’t freemasonry reveal the dream in the minds of eighteenth-century people of a different social order based on merit instead of birth and wealth? Intentions of people in the past are combined here with the historian’s intentions with the narrative.<sup>79</sup>

77. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 190. Max Weber, “‘Objectivity’ in Social Science and Social Policy,” in Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, transl. and ed. Edward Shils and Henry Finch (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1949), 49-112, esp. 90 (Weber’s italics).

78. “Ein Idealtypus bestimmter gesellschaftlich Zustände, welcher sich aus gewissen charakteristischen Erscheinungen einer Epoche abstrahieren lässt, kann—und dies ist sogar recht häufig der Fall—den Zeitgenossen selbst als praktisch erstrebendes Ideal oder doch Maxime für die Regelung bestimmter sozialer Beziehung vorgeschwebt haben.” Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 196. English from Weber, “‘Objectivity’ in Social Science and Social Policy,” 95.

79. There is a contradiction between Weber’s utterance about ideal types as being present in the mind of the historical actors and Danto’s claim that “that frequently and almost typically, the actions of men are not intentional under those descriptions given by them by means of narrative sentences.” Arthur Danto, *Narration and Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 182. However, that contradiction is nothing else than the four differences, mentioned above, between an actionist and a narrativist approach.

I see four differences between Mink's retroactive understanding and Van den Akker's retroactive alignment on one side and Weber's ideal types on the other. First, Weber's ideal types function from an actionist viewpoint, whereas Mink's understanding and Van den Akker's retroactive alignment work from a narrativist viewpoint.<sup>80</sup> Second, a narrativist view takes unintended consequences of actions into account, which is more complicated in an actionist view.<sup>81</sup> Third, Weber's ideal types are proactive, whereas Mink's understanding and Van den Akker's alignments are retroactive. Fourth, Weber's facts can only be actions, whereas Mink's and Van den Akker's facts can be anything that can be put in the form of a narrative.<sup>82</sup> However, historians always work in hindsight, which makes the difference slight.<sup>83</sup> It illuminates how research concepts like Weber's ideal types shine through narrative concepts like retroactive understanding and retroactive alignment.

The opening line of Proust's *Remembrances of Things Past* can illuminate what happens here: "For a long time, I went to bed early." There is a forward-going action ("I went to bed") in this phrase and at the same time this action is told afterwards (the sentence is in the past tense). Marcel, the protagonist in Proust's novel, is at the same time the hero as well as the narrator. Like Weber's ideal type, Marcel the hero is experiencing in a forward direction what the narrator in retroactive alignment tells backward.<sup>84</sup> So it is not strange to see a close relationship between an actionist and a narrativist approach to the past.

Paul Roth in his "The Pasts" underlines this.<sup>85</sup> He argues that pasts are not found but made and that their making is the result of classification and argumentation.<sup>86</sup> Roth does not mention Weber's ideal types, but from what follows it becomes clear that they are at stake here. Important in Roth's argument is his reference to Danto's narrative sentences in which he discovers a diachronic time, because the end codetermines the beginning.<sup>87</sup> This is reinforced by an example Roth gives from history-writing. He points to Gad Prudovsky's and Alexander

80. Turner states that for Mink, events become history through incorporation into a narrative. For Weber, Turner sees the core subject matter in actions, defined in the following terms: "We shall speak of 'action' insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior. . . ." Here we see the same difference between an actionist and a narrativist approach. Turner, "Collingwood and Weber versus Mink," 9.

81. Unintended consequences are not completely ruled out from an actionist viewpoint, because an actionist knows that lots of actions are the result of collective deliberation, as Frederick Olafson has argued: Frederick A. Olafson, *The Dialectic of Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Ricoeur, in the footsteps of Danto, makes the difference too big, surely where it concerns the prefiguring relationship between research and narrative, as is done here. See Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, I, 147.

82. Turner, "Collingwood and Weber versus Mink," 11.

83. In *The Construction of an Urban Past*, I make a distinction between teleology as an aspect of an actionist view and finalism as an aspect of a narrative view. Both are the result of hindsight where it concerns Weber's ideal types. Jansen, *The Construction of an Urban Past*, 79 and 81.

84. See Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, II, 134. The forward-looking Marcel displays the narratological technique of the prolepsis; the backward-looking Marcel shows an analeptic approach. *Ibid.*, 83.

85. Paul Roth, "The Pasts," *History and Theory* 51, no. 3 (2012), 313-339.

86. *Ibid.*, 326-331. Classification implies community practices. *Ibid.*, 328.

87. Roth refers to an example other than the Thirty Years War, to which Van den Akker points. He elaborates on: "Talleyrand begat Delacroix and Delacroix painted the *Mort de Sardanapale*," *ibid.*, 324-326.



Koyré's ascribing to Galileo Galilei a concept of inertial mass of which the latter knew nothing. Prudovsky and Koyré see this ascription to Galilei as an indeterminate approximation of a later full-blown concept of inertial mass. In my view this is nothing else than a Weberian ideal type. Most of the time such coherence *approaches* its full-blown character after a certain course of time.<sup>88</sup> Thus the ideal type creates a narrative, which has a mainly diachronic character, displaying a development from an initial nuclear meaning into a more accomplished one.<sup>89</sup> Its diachronic features can be discovered only in hindsight. Thus inertial mass is the ideal type from which Galileo's gravitation element is the first manifestation. The same can be said about another example of Roth's essay: the gradual medicalization of insights with regard to suicide.<sup>90</sup> They all illustrate a continuous time.

#### NARRATIVISM AND TIME

We have seen that the forestalling activities in the preparation phase are not completely the result of historians' imagination but are codetermined by the historical culture they take part in.<sup>91</sup> The mutual dialogue between imagination and culture forms the facts in such a way that they constitute at the same time the infrastructure and the superstructure of the intended representation. Infrastructurally, they are confirmed as evidence to substantiate the narrative; at the same time they are colligated in inferential relationships.

In this culture-induced structuring of the historical representation temporality is enclosed. The relationship between time and narrative is not obvious. Mink, and Ankersmit in his *Meaning, Truth, and Reference*, argue that time is obliterated in the historical narrative.<sup>92</sup> Opposite to them I argue that time is not obliterated, but hidden in it. I will show this first for the narrative and in the next section for the representation. Weber elucidates the temporal implications of ideal types by saying that the historian has to ascertain in every single case how close to or how far from the ideal type the empirical material stands or develops.<sup>93</sup> This makes

88. "Historical research faces the task of determining in each individual case, the extent to which the ideal-construct approximates to or diverges from reality . . ." (Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," 90). This becomes perfectly clear when Weber writes: "It [the ideal type] has the significance of a purely ideal *limiting* concept with which the real situation or action is *compared* and surveyed for the explication of certain of its significant components" (*ibid.*, 93). This implies the inverse: each individual case, for instance Galileo's approach to inertial mass, has to be assessed with regard to the extent to which it approximates or diverges from the ideal type. "Approaches" is emphasized here because I use Weber's ideal type in its genetic character, which means that it is a logical construct, whereby empirical reality "can only be compared or related to it" (*ibid.*, 100). See also: "Developmental sequences too can be constructed into ideal types and these constructs can have quite considerable heuristic value. . . . Whether the empirical-historical course of development was actually identical with the constructed one can be investigated only by using this construct as a heuristic device for the comparison of the ideal type and the 'facts'" (*ibid.*, 101-102). I thank Stephen Turner for his remarks on this point.

89. "The construction of abstract ideal-types as recommends itself not as an end but as a means" (*ibid.*, 92). See also, for these Weberian issues, Jansen, *The Construction of an Urban Past*, 128-134.

90. Roth, "The Pasts," 332-335.

91. *Ibid.*, 328.

92. Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Explanation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), chapter 2.

93. The historian is obliged "in jedem Falle festzustellen, wie nahe oder wie fern die Wirklichkeit jenem Idealbilde steht." Weber, *Wissenschaftslehre*, 191.

Weber's ideal type a concept displaying a diachronic dynamic. In the case of Jacob's example, the ideal-typical approach can illuminate how far or how close the eighteenth-century freemasonic dream of a society has been realized in a society of merit (an ideal type) instead of a society of blood and wealth (another ideal type). Weber's ideal type thus receives a temporal dimension. When phenomena approximate the ideal type, historians use terms like "growth" or "rise"; when phenomena distance themselves from it, terms like "decline" or "fall" are used. It is not without reason that Richard Appelbaum counts Weber among the "rise and fall" theorists.<sup>94</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, "rise and fall" points to a perception of time as diachronic and homogeneous.<sup>95</sup> Its homogeneity comes from the fact that rise and fall take place in a continuing entity, whereby the development from past into present and future implies change, but change in an entity that maintains its identity. In the above-mentioned example, it is the identity of a society developing from "blood" into "merit." The time-culture of rise and fall is, via ideal-typical research, the co-producer of a narrative.

Doesn't this mean the return of emplotment in history? Perhaps, but it is not an emplotment through literary construction and thus not only the result of the historian's imagination. It is the culture-induced application of some form of ideal-typical research. This form of research includes temporality.<sup>96</sup> Research does not only imply a procedure of argumentation to reach the narrative whole; it is also a time-induced procedure. Time codetermines the historiographical result. It underlines the important role experience, and especially the experience of *time*, plays in the initial phase of the research.

#### REPRESENTATION, RESEARCH, AND TIME

In this section I want to show how a different research culture produces a different research concept and a different time, leading in the end to a representation in the limited sense of the word. In the foregoing I referred to the metaphor as Mink's second form of historical understanding. Metaphor is a cognitive instrument creating, for instance, Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Huizinga's work surely is a historical representation, but not in the form of a narrative, like Jacob's Freemasonry study. We have seen how a research concept as "continuing entity" shines through Mink's narrative concept of "career" and how Weber's research

94. Richard P. Appelbaum, *Theorists of Social Change* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970) 101-115.

95. See Jansen, *The Construction of an Urban Past*, 245-249 and 251-273. See also Harry Jansen, "Time, Narrative and Fiction: The Uneasy Relationship between Ricoeur and a Heterogeneous Temporality," *History and Theory* 54, no. 1 (2015) 1-24, esp. 5-8.

96. There is a multitude of examples of historical studies based on a rise-and-fall temporality, for example, Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate 1648-1871* [1971] (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press: 1998). See Jansen, *Construction of an Urban Past*, 117-170 and 237-274. Further, see E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 2d ed. (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books 1974), J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). In Reinbert Krol, "Het geweten van Duitsland: Friedrich Meinecke als pleitbezorger van het Duitse historicisme," PhD diss., University of Groningen, 2013, Meinecke's view on Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is presented as a development of rise and fall. Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* I, II, and III can be seen as a defense of the rise-and-fall approach in historiography.

concept of the ideal type prefigures Van den Akker's retroactive alignment. In the same way, a research concept is hidden behind the metaphorical structure of the representation, namely Walsh's colligatory concept. To understand this, we need Raymond Gibbs's argument about the literary metaphor. He claimed that this metaphor can be seen as a process as well as a product.<sup>97</sup> The same applies to the representational metaphor. As a process, that metaphor functions as a colligatory concept that makes a first image into an articulated representation, and as a product, the same metaphor functions as the intended representation. As process, the colligatory concept projects "a structure on the past," as Walsh puts it. Then it works in the same way as what Ankersmit calls a "historical interpretation." Walsh stipulates that the colligatory concept has an explanatory function and emphasizes that there is no contradiction between interpretation and explanation. So he sees it as a research concept that, first, incorporates facts into a whole; second, gives the singular facts a holistic meaning (which implies in my view creating with them inferential relationships); and consequently, third, makes the specific simultaneously universal. Walsh's inventory requires two remarks: first, he combines the aforementioned research and writing activities into one single preparatory phase; second, he lets colligatory concepts produce discontinuous change. Thus Walsh's colligatory concepts obviously differ from Weber's ideal types, which create continuous change.

Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity* exemplifies a representation in which, first, historical research develops along the line of the colligatory concept; second, a disruptive experience is perceptible; and third, a temporality comes about other than that in the rise and fall of the narrative. First, Israel brings a multitude of issues, persons, institutions, and events under the heading of "Radical Enlightenment."<sup>98</sup> He refers to the publishing of learned journals changing Europe's intellectual culture, to the emancipation of women and sexual freedom, to the aversion to censorship, and to the emergence of so-called *universal* libraries in which books of all kinds of religious and philosophical denominations were incorporated. It also brings philosophies like Deism, Spinozism, and Cartesianism to light. He tries to view every person, institution, and debate from the perspective of "Radical Enlightenment." Israel examines Franciscus van den Enden, the brothers Koerbagh, Lodewijk Meyer, Dirk Santvoort, Willem Goeree, Hendrik Wyermars, and especially Frederik van Leenhof as Spinoza's closest disciples. They are, in Israel's view, the missionary monads of the new radical philosophy. They become so because they figure as future-oriented Spinozists against the background of a retrograde Christian worldview.

Here Israel makes the second point regarding the disruptive experience:

Spinoza, then, emerged as the supreme philosophical bogeyman of Early Enlightenment Europe. Admittedly, historians have rarely emphasized this. It has been much more common, and still is, to claim that Spinoza was rarely understood and had very little influ-

97. Raymond W. Gibbs, "The Process of Understanding Literary Metaphor," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 19, no. 2 (1990), 65-79, esp. 65.

98. Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

ence, a typical example of an abiding historiographical refrain which appears to be totally untrue, but nevertheless, since the nineteenth century has exerted an enduring appeal for all manner of scholars. In fact, no one else during the century 1650–1750 remotely rivaled Spinoza's notoriety as the chief challenger of the fundamentals of revealed religion, received ideas, tradition, morality, and what was everywhere regarded, in absolutist and non-absolutist states alike, as divinely constituted political authority.<sup>99</sup>

This statement points at a break between Israel's own assessment of the early Enlightenment and previous historical views on it. With Spinoza, Israel creates a discontinuity between the period of what he calls the "Radical Enlightenment" and the foregoing period. He "thwarts common expectations" (Simon), and suggests a sudden appearance, by a flash of lightning, as Nietzsche would have it. Nietzsche refers to Schiller to underline this discontinuity. Schiller does this in the famous preface of his *Braut von Messina* (Bride of Messina) in which he considers the choir as the living wall with which the tragedy closes itself off from the real world. The choir creates a representative universe apart from the real world.<sup>100</sup> "Radical Enlightenment" does the same. As a colligatory concept it is a research instrument that, first, creates a frame in which it collects facts, which, second, support the metaphor of Radical Enlightenment. Third, due to its representational result it becomes the metaphorical indication of a period. Periodization points in the direction of a time dimension. Radical Enlightenment creates a "living wall" between a period before 1670 and after 1730. Around 1670 it marks an abrupt end to an era in which Christianity was the dominant culture. The Radical Enlightenment Era ends, in Israel's view, about 1730, because then a new, more moderate form of Enlightenment comes to the fore, as a kind of treason to its first, radical appearance. Under the colligatory concept of the Radical Enlightenment, Israel creates a period with non-Christian qualities. It is a framework with a time dimension, distinct from rise and fall. It is the synchronic time dimension of Mink's metaphorical configuration of history-writing (which he distinguishes from the narrative): "To comprehend temporal succession means to think of it in both directions at once and then time is no longer the river which bears us along, but the river in aerial view, upstream and downstream in a single survey."<sup>101</sup>

Israel shows the time of the Radical Enlightenment as a *Gestalt*. Israel's book, consisting of more than 800 pages, is a collage of all those issues illustrating the Radical Enlightenment. The distinct temporality of Van den Akker's retroactive alignment on one side and colligatory concepts on the other becomes especially clear in the contrast between the above-mentioned function of ideal types and colligatory concepts. The latter do not show a rise or a growth combined with a

99. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 157.

100. Nietzsche: "Eine unendlich wertvolle Einsicht über die Bedeutung des Chors hat bereits Schiller in der berühmte Vorrede zur Braut von Messina verraten, der den Chor als eine lebendige Mauer betrachtete, die die Tragödie um sich herum zieht, um sich von den wirklichen Welt rein abzuschliessen und sich ihren idealen Boden und ihre poetische Freiheit zu bewahren." Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in *Nietzsche Werke*, ed. Karl Schlechta, 3 vols. (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954), I, 46.

101. Mink, *Historical Understanding*, 56-57. See also Frank Ankersmit, *De macht van representatieve. Exploraties II: cultuurfilosofie en esthetica* (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1996), 68.

decline. The Radical Enlightenment suddenly arises through a flash of lightning and introduces a new era in history. Discontinuous colligations show a break with previous and subsequent eras, illustrated by [a] representative event[s], [one] person[s] or a representative issue (a debate, a rebellion or even a revolution). An ideal type leads to the discovery of new processes in a continuing entity; a colligatory concept leads to a new periodization. The sudden occurrence of new phenomena, which creates a new period, usually means that the time was right for something new.

To understand what this means, we have to look at Nietzsche and his attitude with regard to waiting. Nietzsche associated it with “the right time.”

*The problem of those who wait.* Strokes of luck (*Glücksfälle*) and many incalculable factors are needed for a higher human, in whom the solution to a problem sleeps, to go into action at the right time—“into explosion” you might say. This does not usually happen, and in every corner of the earth people sit waiting, hardly knowing how much they are waiting, much less that they are waiting in vain. . . . What if in the realm of the genius, the “Raphael without hands” (taking that phrase in the broadest sense) is not the exception but, perhaps, the rule? Perhaps genius is not rare at all: what is rare is the five hundred hands that it needs to tyrannize the kairos, “the right time,” in order to seize hold of chance by grasping the forelock!<sup>102</sup>

Applied to *Radical Enlightenment*, Nietzsche’s “waiting” refers to the historiography of the early Enlightenment before Israel wrote his book. Historians prior to Israel saw the second part of the seventeenth century as dominated by religion and Spinoza as a small ripple in the still-flowing Christian waters. By articulating the role of Spinoza, Israel grasps Kairos by his forelock in the same way that Spinoza did by his farewell to a personal God in the seventeenth century. The effect of the colligatory concept “Radical Enlightenment” is the creation of a new period with discontinuities around 1670 and 1730. Hence we can call periodization by colligatory concepts the consequence of a kairotic perception of time.

The difference between narrativism and representationalism consists of different preparatory activities and different temporalities. Narratives are the result of a complex relationship between colligation and research activities in the preparation phase, ending in an articulated time of emergence and decay. Representations show a strong coherence between narrative colligation and research activities that originate from colligatory concepts. They simultaneously act as research instruments and as the infrastructure of the representative result. They are characterized by a discontinuous time, consisting of kairotic moments revealing new periods.

#### CONCLUSION

Postnarrativism implies narrativism and postrepresentationalism entails representationalism. Narratives and representations bring together divergent statements by making them inferential parts of a meaningful whole. They originate in experiences evoking inchoate colligations. Research means an assessment whether

102. Guy Shapiro, “Kairos and Chronos: Nietzsche and the Time of the Multitude,” in *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 123-139, esp. 123. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, in Schlechta, ed., *Werke*, III, 274.

these germinal colligations can be articulated by factual statements, which have inferential relationships with one another and with the colligation as a whole. Colligations come about by research concepts like continuing entities, and ideal types on one side and colligatory concepts on the other, which belong to distinct historical cultures. In retrospect, it is clear that these stories or representations can be analyzed by concepts such as career and retroactive alignment, but their construction in the preparation phase requires a forward movement based on research concepts. In the preparation phase, an argumentative infrastructure unfurls, which works during the writing phase as a hidden persuader, because of two elements: 1) the epistemic values of colligation (such as exemplification, coherence, comprehensiveness/scope, and originality) and 2) the perception of a continuous or a discontinuous time. That is why I stated that the argumentative infrastructure shines through the narrative superstructure.<sup>103</sup>

Departing from an inchoate representation, it is senseless to prepare statements that in the end do not have a functional relationship with the narrative whole. Therefore I don't agree with Kuukkanen's statement that not all factual statements are necessary for understanding the whole. It is true that he is not searching for a representation but for a thesis, but even then I don't see the usefulness of unnecessary factual statements. Moreover, the entire preparation phase is filled with activities to make the germinal representation into a complete, articulated representation. The preparation phase starts with an inchoate plot or a germinal representation, which is the reason why research is an integral part of the narrative approach. Therefore, there is no research phase apart from a writing phase, although there is a preparation phase dominated by research/writing activities and a writing phase with similar activities.

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103. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, 105-115 and 122-130. Note that his epistemic values are the same as those of Ankersmit in his defense of narrativism.