

Georg Schmid

The Narrative of the Occident



PETER LANG
Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften

Contents

Preface	13
I	
Critiques of Techniques	21
Epochs, "Geschichtsbilder" and the Intelligibility of History (21) – "Narratemes" (26) – Hobbesian Thoughts on Governability by Prescriptive Images (33) – National Specificities in the Pursuance of Narrative Techniques (37) – Language as a Discriminator (44) – The Construction of Collective Identities by Narratives (51) – Provisional Hypotheses on What Went Wrong (54)	
II	
EX OCCIDENTE LUX	59
On the License to Speak, Opposites, and the Advantages of Narrative Ingenuity (59) – Arrogated Greatness, Pride and Jealousy, and the Conundrum of Values (66) – Religious Retraction and the Transfiguration of Religiosity into New Appearances (75) – Torpor, Self-Accusations and the Occident's Failure to Convince (81) – Alterity, Multiculturalism, Interior Gulfs (86)	
III	
Themes and Topics, teme e variazioni, Groupings and Selections	93
The Infinity of "Tell-Tales" and the General Controlling Authorities (93) – Towards a General Theory of Narrativity (96) – Cyclical Concatenations of Cultures (100) – Great Powers, Great Men, Great Wars, Great (and Bloodthirsty) Tyrants (104) – Competing for Narrative Legitimation (111) – Anonymous Actants (117) – The Bicephalous and Reversible Nature of Counter-Narratives (122) – Guilt Complex, Schisms, "Splitting of the 'We'" (126) – The Anti-Semitic Lore: Some Further Exploratory Steps (132) – The Frailty of Secularism and Rationality (137)	

IV**Methods or How to Bring Things Under Control
(and How to Loose It)**

147

Procedures to Create "Values to Die For" (147) – Ignominious Self-doubts and August Self-images (154) – Wrong Readings, Ruses to Exploit and the Explicatory Agency (159) – Political Behavior and "the Litany:" the Narrative as a Directive (167) – "Hammering Slogans Into the Minds of the Masses:" Leitbilder and the Litany (171)

V**Obscurity, Anamorphosis, Distortion: Thoughts on
Social Perception**

179

The "Explosiveness" of Images: the 9/11 Paradigm (179) – The Substitutive Character of Films: Fictionalizing the Narrative (187) – Lessons of History as Presented by the Narrative (192) – Continuity versus Ruptures (199) – Socialism vs. Capitalism and "Third Ways" (207) – The Challenge of Islam (226)

EXCURSUS A**Visualization. Narrating a Civilization by Visual Means**

235

VI**Economic Beacons. Ideologized *idées reçues* vs.
the Politics of Political Economy**

265

How to Explain Wealth, "Common Goods" and Social Use: Contradictory Readings, Ideological Barriers (265) – On State Dominance, Mixed Systems and Control: The Conundrum of Societary Benefit (272) – Property, Profit and Profusion: Behavioral Aspects of Economic Theory (277) – Measuring and Marking Success and Failure in Economics (283) – Ideological Perceptions of Economic Prosperity and Political Progress (288) – Interfaces of the Private Sphere, Group Interests and General Economic Policy Options (294) – How to Reconcile Dynamization and Social Justice (298) – Culture, Social Profit and the "Scientific Commons" (305)

VII Techno-Sagas and Their Decline	313
Diminishing Interest in Technological Progress and Distrust of Scientific Advance (313) – How the "Poor Relations" of Transportation See to Our Mobility and Freedom of Choice (317) – Sober, Knowledgeable Assessments vs. Persistent Myths and Ignorance (327) – Invincible Ignorance and Qualified Expertise: The Dilemma of the Expert (333) – Discredited Technology; Drives to Evasion and Negaction (336) – Anxieties, Faith <i>in lieu</i> of Rationality and the Continuity of Deceitful Explanations (340) – Technology as a Criterion for Confronting Challenges (345)	
Excursus B Aviation Annotations	353
VIII Narrating the Future	379
On the Auxiliary Construction of Alternate History (379) – Thinking About the Future Without the Encumbrance of Past Obtuseness (385) – Rejection of the Future Because of Social Anxiety (390) – On Real and Imagined, Likely and Improbable Threats (392) – Nuclear Technology: From the China Syndrome to the "Muslim Syndrome" (398) – Irrepressible Past, Guilt Complex and the Narration in the Guise of a "Poison-Pen Letter Returned to Sender" (410)	
IX A (Brief) Personal Postscript	423
Select Bibliography	433
Index	451