

Milka Car, Csongor Lőrincz, Danijela Lugarić,
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An den Rändern der Literatur.

Dokument und Literatur in
zentraleuropäischen Kulturen

Tracing the Edges of Literature.

Documentary Fiction in Central
European Cultures





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BÖHLAU

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Introduction

What Can Be Done With Documents?

1.

In Leo Tolstoy's epic novel *War and Peace*, the omniscient and authoritative narrator describes Napoleon's agitation through the quivering of the calf of his left leg. Kutuzov, on the other hand, is described as a corpulent and emaciated old man who dozes off while waiting for his lunch to be delivered during the Battle of Borodino. Later, he gets caught munching fried chicken while observing, somewhat indifferent and from a distance, the combat activities. The fate of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is well-known: despite the fact that the text is frequently criticized for being historically inaccurate in the sense that Tolstoy's depiction of Russian imperial history does not correspond to reality, the rhetorical devices of that novel left such a convincing impression on the reader (who else but a great and accurate connoisseur of Napoleon's character and deeds could characterize his emotional instability as quivering of his left leg, or Kutuzov's old age as the scene of his everyday meal?) that it is widely accepted to depict the Russian conflicts with Napoleon and the Battle of Borodino in accordance with Tolstoy's historically inaccurate portrayal of that period. In the context of literary theory, awareness that the opposition between fiction and faction is impenetrable is referred to as "tacit knowledge" according to Wolfgang Iser: "[it] is an elementary item in what the sociology of knowledge has come to call tacit knowledge—a term used to designate that storehouse of beliefs that seems so soundly based that their truth may be taken for granted" (Iser 1993: 1).

Authors in the volume *Tracing the Edges of Literature. Documentary Fiction in Central European Cultures* choose a variety of interlocutors to explore this tacit knowledge by addressing prose fictions that refer to documentary material (archival and ethnographic material, photographs, eyewitness testimonies etc.), and intentionally and actively probe and expose their literariness. What makes these literary texts analytically stimulating is that additionally they count on a sort of "reinforced referentiality" due to the documentary material they contain. These "non-binary"¹

1 This phrase alludes to one of numerous Lubomír Doležel's discussions about truth and authenticity in narration. According to him, the binary paradigm is distinguished "by a clear-cut and unambiguous opposition of narrator's discourse and characters' discourse" (Doležel 1980: 15), and he uses the

texts challenged us to observe implications and ramifications of Iser's seemingly impotent and obsolete question: "Are fictional texts truly fictions, and are nonfiction texts truly without fictions?" (ibid.). Documentary² in literary discourse generates an immense allusive space within textuality, revealing that many questions—including those about the relationship between literature and fiction, reflexivity, authorial intention, mimesis, reality, experience, archive, interactivity, and performance—do not come with answers tied handily to their tails. Grasping a literary work as a means of addressing an explicit question about the deep ambiguities of the uses of documentary material in literature becomes a special case of interpretation as such, an interpretation that, by pointing to the complex interweaving of literary field, ideology, media, and culture, doesn't hide its epistemic uncertainties. In view of this, the main objective of 17 case studies from contemporary Hungarian, Croatian, and German literatures, provided in this book, is to develop a new and innovative hermeneutic framework for the understanding of various modalities of the use of documentary material in literature. Perhaps it is unnecessary to emphasize that the hermeneutical perspective entails that there are no conclusive answers—given that each answer generates new questions. Nevertheless, the most significant topics raised by this book are: What strategies and techniques does literature use to deceive us into thinking it is imitating reality when it acts as modelling and creating it? How can a document in literary fiction be described: as redundant bureaucratic speech that takes on a decorative purpose, as a text that requires fresh and estranged readings, as a challenge to canonical literature or as a political statement? How does literature seduce us even when we know that it represents an imaginative investment in what seems to be a genuine report of the world? How do literary

term "the non-binary structures" (ibid.: 16) for various kinds of Ich-form and Er-form narrative models. In the book at hand, we are exploring literary material that does not adhere to the binary paradigm, thereby asking an update of the theory of authentication and assessment of the concepts of fictionality in intriguing, and occasionally provocative ways.

2 In anglophone scholarship, the term "documentary" is mostly used in film theory. Carl Plantinga emphasizes that from 1930s, the term designates "a 'higher' order of nonfiction film" (Plantinga 2008: 494) and involves forms with "little human intentionality or creative intervention" (ibid.: 495). However, just like in literary criticism, film critics assume that documentary films cannot be reduced to the provision of documentation, or, to put it another way, that documentary film and document are not synonymous: "The documentary film is not just a document, though it may make use of documents" (ibid.: 496). (For further discussion regarding documentary in film see Renov 1993; Eitzen 1995; Aufderheide 2007; Chanan 2007; Chapman 2009; Aitken 2013; Juhasz, Lebow 2015; Kahana 2016, etc.). Apart from the well-known and canonized accounts on different issues more or less closely related to documentary in literature in Auerbach 2003 [1946]; White 1987; Genette 1988; Genette 1990 and Derrida 1995; for inspiring analysis of documentary in literature (at least in German and English languages) see Arnold 1973; Assmann 1980; Brooks 1984; Foley 1986; Gansel, Braun 2019; Cohn 1989; Cohn 1990; Danto 1981; Sauerberg 1991; Uecker 2007 and Van der Bergh, Bonciarelli, Reverseau 2019.

and creative practices convey a reflexive engagement with historical sources and documentary material? Finally, how does fiction manufacture the very object to which it appears to refer?

2.

The first overarching premise of this book is that literary contextualization fosters a process of eradicating the document's seemingly factual allusions and effects: different literary texts, analyzed in this book, turn to document not to claim their historical, but—more importantly—textual authority, urging the reader toward viewing authenticity as an essential rhetorical aspect of the documentary discourse. In the analyzed literary works, the reader is compelled to envision him- or herself into a different realm, and to accept everything that occurs there as plausible, since the documentary material facilitates and enchants the process of voluntarily suspending her or his skepticism. Since in this book, documentary novel is seen as fundamentally a structured rhetorical discourse, authenticity is seen as an outcome of different strategies, conventions or structural features of the text, which, as Eagleton maintains in his *The Event of Literature*, “constitute the vital link between work and reader, as the cooperative activity which brings literary work into being in the first place” (Eagleton 2012: 186). To that end, the incorporation of documentary material in literary works illuminates that literariness is not only a relational and differentiating phenomenon, but also an aberration that is strongly tied to the context in which it occurs. The inclusion of documentary material in literature demonstrates that—let us turn to *The Event of Literature* once more—the distinction between fact and fiction is not nearly as stable as it is commonly assumed (ibid.: 112). Or, in Bill Nichols' words, “Documentary and fiction, social actor and social other, knowledge and doubt, concept and experience share boundaries that inescapably blur” (Nichols 1994: 1). Additionally, as Eagleton argues, this distinction has its own, distinct temporal logic: not only does it tend to blur as one travels back in time, but the documentary material employed in literary works occasionally better captures our time than it does its own. Finally, several chapters in this book imply that a statement can be factual and fictional at the same time, proving that “make-believe [...] is not primarily a state of mind but a social practice, conducted according to a determinate set of rules and conventions” (Eagleton 2012: 119).

The second overarching premise of this book is that 1989—with the fall of the Berlin wall, the beginning of the German unification process, and the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc—can be seen as a possible chronological boundary that encouraged the emanation of new narrative methods and strategies in Central

European literatures.³ Among other things, these new workings of the text reflect the aspiration for the authentic in the diegesis of prose in a period in which the “documentariness” (Kaspe 2010), as material and aesthetic objective in various national literary fields, presents an attempt to reinforce reliability as a literary category at a time when interpretive patterns have grown increasingly problematic. Authenticity, documentation and the concepts of “new sincerity” and “new realism” provide useful descriptions of this new kind of literary endeavor. Moreover, in contemporary Central European literatures, which are—especially after the end of the Cold War—lodged at the crossroads of places, histories, and traditions in overlapping geocultural landscapes of alterity (Matei, Moraru, Terian 2022: 23), the use of documentary material is often a political gesture: the document is a cultural product that acts as a historical building block, which is why it should be submitted to doubt. Or, to put it another way, the objectivity of a document in fiction frequently functions to highlight, bring attention to, showcase to emphasize, or, contrary, mask and disguise a political perspective.

3.

In methodological terms, one of the most inspiring ways of thinking about documentary literature involves examining it through the prism of J. L. Austin’s influential theory of the performative will. The majority of contributions in this volume show (even if they don’t state explicitly) that every fiction, like performatives in general, including documentary and/or “non-binary” forms, is “an event inseparable from its act of utterance” (Eagleton 2012: 137) given that it “has no support from outside itself, in the sense that what it asserts cannot be checked off in any important way against some independent testimony” (ibid.). This approach to documentary fiction proves to be extremely resourceful and engaging, owing to the multifaceted viewpoint it entails in designing the relationship between text and its surroundings since it places particular emphasis on procedures of referencing in all their complexities, nuances, and ambiguities. Every fiction, including the kind that uses documents as signs for specific, extratextual ends of make-believe or telling the truth,⁴ is “self-founding” (ibid.: 138) in the sense that it is—as a per-

3 Tihanov 2004, especially footnotes 5 and 23, provides a comprehensive bibliography of studies on the umbrella designations “Central European” and “East-Central Europe”. In addition, Svetlana Alexievich’s receiving of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2015 assisted in the proliferation of documentary literature globally.

4 In addressing the issue of truthfulness in documentary films, film theorist Carl Plantinga introduces the useful concept of “asserted veridical representation” (Plantinga 2008: 499), which means that the primary function of illocutionary acts in documentary films is to provide “*implicitly* truthful,

formative act—ultimately about itself. At the same time, fiction establishes at least two connections to reality, defined here as “referring to the empirical world, which is a ‘given’ for the literary text and generally provides the text’s multiple fields of reference” (Iser 1993: 305), i. e., “the variety of discourses relevant to the author’s approach to the world through the text” (ibid.). First, through the act of referring to itself, and second, through having more or less powerful interventions in the world (Eagleton 2012). To that end, fictive, as Iser famously argues, operates as “fictionalized doubling”, meaning that it “simultaneously disrupts and *doubles* the referential world” (Iser 1993: xv; emphasis added).

Although it may appear that documentary literature delivers more factual knowledge than other types of storytelling (by claiming that the discursive nature of this type of fiction is factual truth, rather than fictional truth, see Riffaterre 1993), influential study *The Scandal of the Speaking Body* by Shoshana Felman offers another stimulating line of reasoning that the reader will hopefully hear echoing in most chapters in this book. Performative, in Felman’s understanding, is not non-referential. Contrary to constative, cognitive knowledge, the referent, as an effect of language, reinforces a different type of knowledge: “Referential knowledge of language is not knowledge *about* reality (about a separate and distinct entity), but knowledge that *has to do with reality*, that acts within reality, since it is itself—at least in part—what this reality is made of. The referent is no longer simply a preexisting *substance*, but an *act*, that is, a dynamic movement of modification of reality” (Felman 2003: 51; emphasis in original; see also Judith Butler’s attempt to reframe this connection in *Afterword*). Moreover, and just to recall, in her analysis, Felman notes that, similarly to Don Juan in Molière’s play, Austin, in his *How to Do Things with Words*, introduces into thinking about language first and foremost “the dimension of *pleasure*” (ibid.: 41; emphasis in original), which is quite distinct—Felman maintains—“from that of knowledge” (ibid.). According to Felman, the seductive

reliable, and/or accurate representation” (ibid., emphasis added; see also Nichols 2016). In literary scholarship, however, the issue of truthfulness is, on the one hand, too complex to be addressed in such a brief introduction; on the other hand, if one assumes that what is true in literary discourse owes its existence to the discursive act itself (see Eagleton’s treatment of this issue in the aforementioned book), it is indeed “difficult to find a place for the concept of truth in literary theory” (Doležel 1980: 9). Although it is commonly known that Austin places speech acts beyond the framework of falsehood and truth, Judith Butler’s discussion in the *Afterword* of Shoshana Felman’s book on the subject provides noteworthy and illuminating insights (Felman 2003: 113–123). Jean-Luc Nancy explores truth within the larger context of his philosophical study of the discursive conditioning of meaning in his work *The Forgetting of Philosophy*, especially in the section titled *The Simple Truth*, offering interesting perspectives for literary scholars as well (Nancy 1997). Also, one of the most recent, as well as encouraging and erudite examinations of this complex issue, can be found in Jonathan D. Culler’s research article, conveniently entitled *The Indispensability of Truth*, and published in the newly established journal “Central European Cultures” (<https://ojs.elte.hu/cec/index>; see Culler 2022).

series in Molière's play *Don Juan* is built around a string of false promises that are finally found to be false or betrayed. Don Juan, that "compulsive promise maker and promise breaker" (Stanley Cavell in *ibid.*: xiii), seduces his mistresses by routinely promising them something (usually eternal love and marriage), but he violates these promises, leaving a trail of broken hearts in the aftermath: "Saying, for him, is in no case tantamount to knowing, but rather to *doing*: *acting* on the interlocutor, modifying the situation and the interplay of forces within it. Language, for Don Juan, is performative and not informative; it is a field of enjoyment, not of knowledge" (*ibid.*: 14; emphasis in original). For Don Juan, "Speech is the true realm of eroticism, and not simply a means to access to this realm. To seduce is to produce language that enjoys, language that takes pleasure in having 'no more to say'. To seduce is thus to prolong, within desiring speech, the pleasure-taking performance of the very production of that speech" (*ibid.*). Then, by continuing her playful tone, Felman draws a comparison between Don Juan's treatment of his mistresses with the way a literary text (and a play about Don Juan in particular) treats its readers. She argues that, like Don Juan, the literary text seduces the reader by making unwavering promises of something, that something being usually a key, indisputable and fundamental meaning or idea. However, as mentioned earlier, a literary work (even when it incorporates documentary material and counts on "reinforced referentiality") is primarily a performative act and therefore meaning—let us turn shortly to Jean-Luc Nancy—"requires its own conditions of possibility and production" (Nancy 1997: 55). As a result, anyone who adheres to the promise, and therefore makes an effort to arrive at some definitive, accurate, and truthful interpretation, is already misled. Or, in Shoshana Felman's words, "Like linguistics, literature believes in meaning; like the philosophy of language, it deconstructs its own belief" (Felman 2003: 47). In this book, the authors tried to avoid that seductive trap. Therefore, instead of focusing on the promise itself, they turned to the seduction: scholars were interested in how literary strategies correspond to a reflexive use of documentary material. In other words, they deliberately concentrated on what the language of the literary text achieves and how it makes their authors instead of on what the text means. Documentary, in that respect, presents itself also as a mode of reception.

Milka Car's theoretically oriented chapter "*Wirklichkeit in der Möglichkeitsform*". *Zur Typologie der Dokumentarliteratur* appears in the first section, titled *The Intrinsic Logic of the Documentary*. Although the central question of documentary literature frequently overlaps with traditional mimetic concepts of literature, partly due to its borrowing from extra-literary references, and in this regard, it has typically been understood as having a (neo)realist orientation, it also raises ontological questions about the limits of literature, and thus probes the margins of literariness, as understood in the tradition of Roman Jakobson. Aside from providing a nuanced perspective on testimony as a (literary) genre, Csongor Lőrincz, in the chapter *Die Schwere der Dinge und der Körper in der Sprache. Zu Marcel Beyers Wasserstands-*

bericht, investigates how the body simultaneously conditions and guarantees the testimonial act's failure. In this regard, Lőrincz draws attention to reflexivity as a key aspect of fundamentally mediated types of testimonial acts. Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó explores Imre Kertész's novel *Jegyzőkönyv* (literally, *Protocol*, 1993) as an example of a text in which a document, governed by legal or other institutional discourses, is transformed into literature, and appears to undermine rather than reinforce the strength of such narrative frames. As a result, the fact recorded in Kertész's work, for all its objective authenticity, cannot be identical with the speech act: the novel obstructs access to the facts it records. Gábor Tamás Molnár turns to another world-literature Hungarian author, Péter Esterházy, and offers an in-depth study of specific strategies used to give his *A Novel of Production* "a quasi-documentary feel" in order to show how self-reference, metafiction and irony are used to document not only the social and cultural realities encompassing the composition of the text but also the very methods and principles of that composition. Finally, Marina Protrka Štítec explores how Daša Drndić, in her documentary novel *Trieste (Sonnenschein, 2007)*, through "textualist strategies of writing" (Matijejić 2020: 253; emphasis in original), addresses the limits of responsibility and the bounds of literariness and—at the same time—with an authoritative voice calls for a serious evaluation of European ethics after the Nazi crimes.

Departing from the premise that the issue of documents' authenticity is of paramount importance in the context of irregularized migration, in her analysis *Refugee Literatures, Documents and Fakes: Kristian Novak's The Gypsy*, but the *Fairest of Them All*, and in the opening text to the second portion *Strategies of Documentary in Contemporary Literature*, Marijana Hameršak postulates that this prize-winning novel reclaims the function of literature as both a social document and a call for social change. Róbert Smid analyses Szilárd Rubin's *Holy Innocents*, along with Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, and introduces the term "infactuation" to designate a mediation between affection and factuality. Rubin's novel produces a fictional figure and uses an affective tone, with which it essentially acknowledges that notwithstanding all the evidence gathered, specific reasons and characteristics of a person under investigation can remain not only unknown, but also incomprehensible. In his essay, Morten Nissen maintains that the documentary is not merely conceptualized as a "supporting medium" in Péter Esterházy's *Revised Edition*, but forms a three-step procedure: reading, transcription, and editing of the dossier's contents. The documentary is characterized as a structural framework that arises from the thematization of a tension between fictional and factual and refers to the autobiographical on the one hand and the poetic on the other. In his paper, Tamás Lénárt examines Péter Nádas' 2017 novel *Világó Részletek* (literally, *Bright Details*) through the lenses of the sources' veracity and the narrator's memory, respectively. Thus, the documentary nature of the text focuses less on the factual accuracy and documentary nature of the individual memories and more on how the text deals

with—or, more precisely, how it presents to be dealing with—sources as pillars of one's own memory. Ágnes Balajthy analyses Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* from the point of view of tropes of abundance and documentariness and argues that the novel suggests that “neither the normative, administrative, nor the individual, idiosyncratic, performative way (manifest in the novel) of reusing documents can endow them with the power of preserving one's self”. In her chapter *Fakt macht die Fiktion. Sten Nadolny: Ullsteinroman*, Ágnes Hansági discusses the paratextual elements of literary text while viewing it as both an object and an event, as well as a fact and an act. Marijan Bobinac assesses the relationship between the story and history, along with the relationship between contemporary literature, historical representations, and documentary narration, using the novel *Im Krebsgang (Crabwalk, 2002)* by Günter Grass as the primary case study.

The third and final section, titled *Productive Edges of Literature*, starts off with Hajnalka Halász's illuminating and exhaustive analysis of Kathrin Röggla's *wir schlafen nicht (we never sleep, 2004)*. The book, which is in part journalistic and in part literary, depicts the emergence of a media event that does not correspond to one reality, but rather generates multiple realities. In his chapter titled *A Diary of Unfinished Cadences*, Zvonimir Glavaš examines key metonymies that form the basis of Ratko Cvetnić's novel *Short Field Trip* as one of the main novels belonging to Croatian war fictions of the 1990s: irony instead of pathos, fragments and marginal stories instead of the epic war novel. This subversiveness disables the romanticized view of war and undermines any grand narrative into which an idealized depiction of war may be inserted. According to Glavaš, the ultimate form of metonymy in Cvetnić's novel, its autoreferentiality, delivers the most significant literary “punch” to any totalizing pretensions. Dubravka Zima explores Marko Gregur's recently published novel *Vošicki* through three types of integration and manipulation of the documentary, along with the question of how “documentary time” is conceptualized at the historical and ideological crossroads. In her primarily historical-anthropological research, Maša Kolanović focuses on texts that are often overlooked, namely letters written by non-professional writers who emigrated from Yugoslavia to the United States, in order to highlight the economic knowledge they share within the mythologized image of America. Kolanović's analysis demonstrates that reference is not a straightforward connection between an act and a thing: rather, in the texts she explores, it is primarily a social activity. Ferenc Vincze concludes this book, as well as his own analysis of graphic novels, by confirming that the references make sense only in the context of the implementation of signs for specific purposes and by introducing the concepts of multiculturalism and multilingualism in his transnational comparative research.

4.

Last but not least, this book is one of the results of decades-long collaboration between the Association for the Study of General Literature, based at Eötvös Loránd University and the Institute of Literary Studies at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. In this light, it is worth noting that in their prize-winning book *Theory in the “Post” Era*, Romanian scholars united around the Critical Theory Institute (CTI) deviate from the premises that “the birth of literary theory can never be a truly national affair” (Matei, Moraru, Terian 2022). Furthermore, conventional frameworks and axis of theoretical reflection, notions and patterns in literary analysis today tend to be seen as privileges and exclusive achievements associated with specific “geothoretical” (ibid.: ix) centers. Contributions in this volume conceptualize one of the central aesthetic phenomena in contemporary Central European literatures from what is usually referred to as “peripheral” or “semi-peripheral” theoretical locales. Far from putting Hungarian and Croatian critics and theorists reunited in this volume at a disadvantage, both the time and place of our efforts regarding particular debates about fiction, reflexivity, archive, intention, performatives, mimesis, etc. give us distinctive insights, allowing all voices, central or otherwise, to be heard: this bilateral community is, as the reader will hopefully see, an inspiring production site and engine of theoretical work. Such theorizations do not enhance the putative “(semi-)peripheral” status of the theorists. Like literature (or even more so than literature, see ibid.: 6), theory is made through translation and multicultural exchange. This particular collaboration is one of the many conceptual laboratories that exist today. As one of the many sites of dedicated and acutely regional recalibrations of concepts in global circulation, this cooperation demonstrates that, as our Romanian colleagues write, “we are reaching a point where critical-theoretical thinking is thinking *with*—with others at a distance yet as involved as we are in the same ‘global dynamic’ of reading, reflecting, and writing” (ibid.: 21; emphasis added).⁵

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⁵ Ágnes Balajthy and Gábor Tamás Molnár’s articles (an extended version of the latter) were originally published in journal “Central European Studies”, vol. 2, no. 2 (2022).

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I. Die Eigenlogik des Dokumentarischen

The Intrinsic Logic of the Documentary

Milka Car

„Die Wirklichkeit in der Möglichkeitsform“

Zur Typologie der Dokumentarliteratur

1.

„Es gibt weder pure Fiktion, noch gibt es pure Dokumentation“, heißt es im Essay des bekannten deutschen Filmemachers und Autors Alexander Kluge *Gegen einen Hitler nützt die Literatur wenig. Und dennoch entwirft die Kunst unentwegt die Wirklichkeit in der Möglichkeitsform* (Kluge 2022). Darin setzt er sich mit den Repräsentationsmodi der außerliterarischen Wirklichkeit wie auch mit der Frage nach den Grenzen und Aufgaben der Literatur im 21. Jahrhundert auseinander. Er kommt dabei zu seiner prägnanten Formel über die Wirklichkeit in der Möglichkeitsform, die einen Einblick in die Problematik der Dokumentarliteratur bietet, da schon der Begriff der Dokumentarliteratur ebenso aporetisch geprägt ist und den expliziten referentiellen Bezug zu seinem Ausgangspunkt macht. Mit seiner Behauptung wird einerseits die faktographische Referenz in Frage gestellt und andererseits das Postulat über die unvermeidbare Fiktionalität des literarischen Diskurses. Damit werden zugleich zwei für die Definition der Dokumentarliteratur wichtige Aspekte angesprochen: Einerseits die Frage nach dem Wahrheitsanspruch und Wirkungshorizont der Literatur und andererseits diejenige nach ihrem Referenzverhältnis. Vor allem die letzte, in der poststrukturalistischen Literaturwissenschaft (Felski 2015: 75f.) fast obsolet gewordene Frage, denkt man insbesondere an das von Roland Barthes¹ verkündete Ende des Realen bzw. an die Spannung zwischen dem Wirklichkeitseffekt und der Vorstellung des Realen², ist jedoch für die Dokumentarliteratur konstitutiv, wobei der grundlegende Unterschied zwischen fiktionaler und faktualer Literatur nicht auf-, sondern vielmehr hervorgehoben wird. Dabei wird – was äußerst signifikant für die definitorischen Schwierigkeiten im Umgang mit Dokumentarliteratur ist –

1 „Es gibt in unserer ganzen Zivilisation eine Vorliebe für den Wirklichkeitseffekt, die aus der Entfaltung spezifischer Genres wie des realistischen Romans, des Tagebuchs, der dokumentarischen Literatur oder der vermischten Nachrichten, [...] hervorgeht, deren einziger relevanter Zug (im Verhältnis zur Zeichnung) eben darin besteht zu bedeuten, daß das dargestellte Geschehen wirklich stattgefunden hat“ (Barthes 2005: 162).

2 „Der Diskurs beansprucht ‚real‘ zu sein, wie es in performativen Äußerungen der Fall ist. Damit ersetzt die Vorstellung des Realen das Signifikat und erzeugt die Illusion bzw. Fiktion des Realen“ (Jaeger 2002: 64).

der referentielle Rahmen zugleich relativiert und gleichzeitig auch als Ausgangspunkt angesehen, um ihn in fiktionale Modelle zu überführen. Obwohl sich die zentrale Frage der Dokumentarliteratur mit ihrer Anlehnung an die außerliterarische Referenz vielfach mit den traditionellen mimetischen Konzepten der Literatur überschneidet und sie insofern in der Regel als eine (neo)realistische Ausrichtung verstanden wurde, öffnet sie zugleich die ontologischen Fragen nach den Grenzen der Literatur, d. h. nach ihrem ontologischen Bezug und erkundet somit die Ränder der Literarizität, verstanden in der Tradition von Roman Jakobson als die selbstreferentielle sprachliche Aussage (Jakobson 1979). Auch Kluge verbindet in seinem Beitrag die Aufgabe der Gegenwartsliteratur mit dem Konzept der *Mimesis*, etwa wenn er behauptet, die Autorinnen und Autoren seien, „nicht Buchhalter, nicht Registratoren, nicht Abschreiber von Wirklichkeit. Von Anfang an sind sie auch Chronisten“ (ebd.). Darin ist auch das Moment der *Poiesis* enthalten, weil kein Abbild der vorgefertigten Realität angestrebt wird, sondern es werden lediglich ihre Versionen konstruiert bzw. die *res factae* mit literarischen Mitteln in *res fictae* überführt, womit die außertextuellen Fakten in eine direkte Relation mit Fiktionalitätsprivilegien gebracht werden, d. h. es zum Bruch mit dem sonst „konventionell geregelten Verzicht auf Referenzialisierung“ kommt (Saße 1986: 16).

Mit einem solchen fließenden Zusammenspiel der Fakten und Fiktionen, d. h. der Literarizität und Referenzialität beschreibt Kluge nicht nur seine eigene dokumentarische Poetik, sondern behauptet zugleich auch, die referenziellen Bezüge seien nicht nur durch fiktionale Strategien „wahrnehmbar“ zu machen, vielmehr sollen sie mit Hilfe des faktisch verbürgten dokumentarischen Materials auf ihre „Möglichkeitsform“ geprüft werden. Dabei wird gerade mit Dokumenten – verstanden als Anker in der Außenwelt – eben diese Referenz hergestellt, wobei die Materialität der Dokumente und die Literarizität des Textes in ein enges Zusammenspiel treten, sodass in Analogie zur Literarizität hier von Dokumentarizität zu sprechen ist bzw. von dem besonderen Effekt des dokumentarischen Materials auf den literarischen Text. Insofern ist das „Erzählen [...] erfahrungsgesättigt und gehorcht den Gefühlen, darin unterscheidet es sich von bloßer Information“ (Kluge 2022). Die gleiche, nicht selbstverständliche Verbindung der Referenzialität/Information mit dem Erzählen/Gefühl betont Kluge im Vorwort seines *Opus magnum*, der umfassenden Sammlung der Prosaarbeiten unter dem Titel *Chronik der Gefühle*: „Die Gefühle sind die wahren Einwohner der menschlichen Lebensläufe“ (Kluge 2004: 7). Es geht in seiner umfassenden Chronik des 20. Jahrhunderts um den Versuch, „Tatsachen mit Vorstellungskraft zu verbinden, Wünsche und Rebellion gegen Tatsachen als öffentliche Realitäten, [...] zu erfahren“ (Kluge 1999: 69). Damit wird eine „Verschiebung der Erfahrungsebene“ (Kluge 2022) angestrebt, wobei diese Verschiebung von der referenziellen Ebene ausgeht und sie im nächsten Schritt in den Möglichkeitsraum der Literatur überführt, um sie zwischen literarischer Struktur und sinnlich erlebbarer Realität chargieren zu lassen.

2.

Um die Autorität der Dokumente mit ihrem Hinweis auf die außertextuelle Wirklichkeit nachvollziehen zu können, sei an die ursprüngliche Etymologie des Wortes *documentum* erinnert: Es kommt aus dem Lateinischen und bedeutet nicht nur Urkunde oder amtlicher Beleg, sondern es bezeichnet in erster Linie den Beweis, der zur Belehrung über etwas bzw. zur Erhellung von etwas dient. Mit diesem semantischen Feld sind die zentralen Kategorien der Dokumentarliteratur zu verbinden: Der referenzielle Wirklichkeitsbezug, die angenommene empirische Überprüfbarkeit wie auch der damit verbundene, auf Tatsachen beruhende Wahrheitsanspruch. Heraus resultiert auch der vielbesprochene und umstrittene Authentizitätsanspruch der Dokumentarliteratur, wobei Authentizität³ als Fremdreferenz im Sinne von Abbildung oder auch als Referenzauthentizität gedeutet wird, versteht man die Materialität der Dokumente als ein „Ingrediens wirklichkeitsbasierter Literatur“ (Uecker 2007: 92). Das Potenzial des Dokumentes liegt in seiner fixierten und unveränderlichen Überprüfbarkeit, einer ihm immanenten Glaubhaftigkeit oder bloß dem Hinweis auf ihre „empirische Echtheit“ (Costagli 2010: 158). Dokumente bezeugen somit die empirisch überprüfbare Welt, das heißt sie wird erst mit Hilfe der Dokumente bestätigt. Anders gesagt, das Reale existiert, wenn es dokumentiert werden kann, oder umgekehrt, erst das Dokument verbürgt die Referenzialität. Insofern kann man das Dokument als eine Art der Legitimation verstehen, als eine notwendige Begleiterscheinung des referenziellen Anspruchs, mit deren Hilfe die sonst fluiden Realitätspartikel den diskursiven Status einer Beglaubigung erlangen. Zu verstehen sind Dokumente als „komplexe materielle und symbolische Artikulationen der imaginativen und ideologischen Strukturen der Gesellschaft, die sie produziert hat“ (Kaes 2001), und mit der Integration der Dokumente in den literarischen Text kommt es zur „Aufhebung der Schranke zwischen fiktionaler und nicht-fiktionaler Darstellung“ (Scheunemann 1990: 304). Der Begriff der Dokumentarliteratur wird demzufolge nicht als eine Sammelbezeichnung für eine abgeschlossene literarische Periode oder Stilrichtung⁴ benutzt, reflektiert wird vielmehr ihr ausgestellt selbstreferentieller Anspruch, der hier als Dokumentarizität bezeichnet wird.

3 Über den Begriff der Authentizität in historischer Hinsicht vgl. Knaller 2006: 17–36.

4 Die Gattungsvielfalt der Dokumentarliteratur nach Rolf-Peter Carl: „Unter dem Firmenzeichen des ‚Dokumentarischen‘ bieten sich inzwischen Publikationen ganz unterschiedlicher Anlage und Zielsetzung: Romane mit mehr oder weniger großem Tatsachengehalt, historische Recherchen, wissenschaftliche Feldstudien und Enquêtes, Nachschriften von Tonbandinterviews, Reportagen, Montagen von Nachrichten und Dokumenten, Bühnenrekonstruktionen von historischen Vorfällen, politische Revuen“ (Carl 1971: 100).