Divine Rhetoric. Divine Narratology

Silviu Lupaşcu
Universitatea „Dunărea de Jos ”, Galaţi

The analysis of language mirrors the immanent existence of the Divine Word and the transcendent existence of the Divine Word: human rhetoric and divine rhetoric, human language and divine language, time, history and historiography, the continuity of the historical “story” and the continuity of the Abrahamic sacred texts, the narratology of the sacred and profane stories, as well as the “narratology” that somehow allows for the intuition of the inner dynamism of God’s Word. This paradigmatic “uttering” is divinely generated in the matrix of all languages and resonates into man’s earthly ontological texture like an anamnesis of the ontological infinite. As linguistic mechanics of the divine living, the “narratological mechanics” of God’s Word seems to be, from the perspective of the theology of history, the infinite power that animates the created universe, history and time, and the continuity of the Abrahamic sacred texts. God creates, “utters” Himself, “communicates” Himself, and “narrates” Himself. His “traces” are “written” by His Word in the known and unknown Tablets.

Writing the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur’ānic* texts *distances* the message from its initial locutor, the original environment of its preaching and the primordial receivers. At a kerygmatic level (the level of proclamation, of the preaching of sacred words), two complementary channels could be outlined, through which the continuity of the Abrahamic religious rhetoric asserts itself: the oral word – the written word – the oral word (within which the *Torah*, the *Gospel* and the *Qur’ān* mediate between two oral messages, between the primordial oral message preached by the founder of the religious realm and the later message preached by his apostles, missionaries or saints) and the written word – the oral word – the written word (within which the oral message or preaching mediates between the *Torah*, the *Gospel* and the *Qur’ān*, with a missionary purpose). The unfolding of the “reality” or “universe” of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur’ānic* texts objectifies the narrative, prophetic, legislative, and prosodic continuity through which God’s Word is conveyed to the world and the human beings.

The Divine *Lógos* reveals himself in the uttered ontological symphonies of words and beings, in the human beings’ consciousness as uttered living entities. This essay, which adds axiomatic value to the previous formula, and at the same time gives it the role of a spiritual center able to support and organize our line of reasoning, intends to construct from this perspective an assumption as consistent as possible regarding the inner dynamics of God’s Word, and the linguistic “mechanics” of the

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

divine typology through which God communicates Himself in time, in history, and throughout the Abrahamic sacred texts. Since the Divine *Lógos* identifies himself directly with the absolute living, his inner "functioning" is revealed through the data provided by rhetoric and narratology. This exegetic incision, which has in view both divine loquacity and silence, will highlight once more the biography of the *lógos*.

The Divine *Lógos* reveals himself in the uttered ontological symphonies of words and beings, in the human beings' consciousness as uttered living entities. This essay, which adds axiomatic value to the previous formula, and at the same time gives it the role of a spiritual center able to support and organize our line of reasoning, intends to construct from this perspective an assumption as consistent as possible regarding the inner dynamics of God's Word, and the linguistic "mechanics" of the divine typology through which God communicates Himself in time, in history, and throughout the Abrahamic sacred texts. Since the Divine *Lógos* identifies himself directly with the absolute living, his inner "functioning" is revealed through the data provided by rhetoric and narratology. This exegetic incision, which has in view both divine loquacity and silence, will highlight once more the biography of the *lógos*.

Rhetoric is the art of language, a technique of language seen as art, which includes all stylistic devices. A science of expression and literature, during the Middle Ages rhetoric was one of the three liberal disciplines included in *trivium* (together with grammar and logic) or the first part of academic studies. Originally, in ancient Greece, it meant the art of composing a legal or political speech. Famous works such as Aristotle's *Perì rhētorikē*, Cicero (106-43 BCE)'s *De oratore* and *Orator*, and Quintilian (c. 35-100 CE)'s *De institutione oratoria* establish the four parts of rhetoric: *invention*, or the search for the arguments and evidence to be developed; *arrangement*, or order of the arguments and evidence to be exposed; *style*, or manner of exposure, as clearly and convincingly as possible, of the arguments and evidence conceived separately; *delivery*, which refers to intonation, pace, gestures, and physiognomy. Before long, rhetoric extended its realm from judicial, administrative and political persuasiveness to literature and philosophy. The art of "speaking well" thus operates a fundamental translation from the universe of orality to that of written texts. It is based concomitantly on the language-thinking-speaker and the language-thinking-writer[1].

From a narratological perspective, *lógos* expresses the related notions of "subject", "content", "theme", "thought", and "argument". According to Gerald Prince[2], this interpretation comes from Aristotle (*Poetics*, *Perì poietikēs*) who

[1] Pierre Guiraud, *La stylistique*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1970, p. 11-23.

[2] Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of* N*arratology*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1987, p. 10-126.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

finds that imitating a real action (*práxis*) is an argument (*lógos*) able to provide the motive for a plot (*mýthos*). The narrative (at the same time a product and a process, an object and an action, a structure and a way of structuring) is seen as the recounting (story) of one or several real or fictive events, told by one, two or more narrators (better or less known) to one, two or more receptors of the narrative (better or less known). In order to make the distinction between a nar0rative and the mere description of some events, certain narratologists (William Labov, Gerald Prince, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan) define it as the story of at least two real or fictive events (or a situation and an event), neither of them logically involving or presupposing the other. For a better distinction, it has been established that narration should have a plot that develops permanently and makes up a single whole. Labov introduced the idea of a *complicating plot* and postulated the existence of six macro-structural elements within the narrative: "abstract level", "orientation", "complicating plot" (it should develop fully, completely, in order to point out all components of the narrative), "evaluation", "result" or "resolution", and "denouement". In accordance with the Structuralist pattern, the narrative consists of two parts, namely "story" and "discourse". The story involves a permanent unfolding in time, the *time sequence* (the metamorphosis of a state of affairs at t_o into another state of affairs at t_n, the latter differing from the former in at least one aspect), or what Aristotle designated as the joining of a beginning, a middle and an end. The same story can be *told* (not only orally and in writing, but also through pictures, gestures, music, or signs that are not letters or words) in various ways through narratives using various types of discourses (for example, the fundamental topics of the Semitic mythology, narrated differently in the *Torah*, the *Gospel* and the *Qur'ān*; or the message of the *Gospel*, which is expressed differently by the four Apostles-Evangelists and which is rendered, in a language that is different from the written one, by the iconographic art), the same way as various stories can be told by means of only one discourse. The narrative art also reveals itself as a gnoseological approach: the etymological regress involves the Latin term *gnarus*, the story-teller is the one who knows and imparts his knowledge to his fellow-men. Since the narrative reveals the meaning of time flow or gives it a meaning (pointing to the potentiality of the end, which is characteristic of any beginning), it is consubstantial with the time flow and *utters* the human beings as beings belonging to time. The paradigmatic *act* of speech presupposes a *locutionary act* (the pronunciation of a grammatical utterance), an *illocutionary act* (an act achieved by uttering a certain statement) and (possibly) a *perlocutionary act* (an act achieved by uttering a statement and which generally leads to the birth of a certain state in the message receiver). This "internal anatomy" of the utterance, together with the time

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

immersion able to give it a tragic and human character, is essential information to signal the presence of *Lógos* in the Universe[3].

Michel Meyer[4] proposes a trichotomic language pattern consisting of three levels: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Syntax is the study of the inner relations among signs. Semantics deals with the relations among signs and what the latter stand for, therefore the relation between signs and the world. Pragmatics refers to the relation between signs and their users. This trialectic structure of the language can be compared, in the same tripartite manner, to grammar – ontology – usage and form – significance – context. As a matter of fact, Michel Meyer uses here Chaïm Perelman's approach[5], according to which there is no chance of argumentation without producing a rhetorical effect, the act of argumentation and the art of rhetoric being interdependent. Rhetorical techniques are the essence of the relation between the author's message and the audience, as well as the main strategy to draw attention and approval. Perelman divides these techniques into two categories: association of and dissociation from notions. The rhetorical effect is thus reducible to the sum of relations established between various values which meet, "clash", and come close to or reject each other. Rhetorical argumentation, therefore, has in view the inducement of particular states in the members of the audience, states that are necessarily the result of this "game" of values of the same or opposite signs and are, at the same time, consubstantial beyond identity and otherness, given the role of measure or limit within the space of rhetorical dynamism.

Speech and writing are two distinct techniques that enable language to manifest itself, to reveal the manifestation of *Lógos* as identical to himself. For Paul E. Corcoran[6], the evolution of language and the evolution of humankind are coincidental phenomena. He conceives an interesting comparative analysis of the language in the "oral society" and the society that historically succeeds it – a society whose spirituality is based irrevocably on written texts, within which the *Lógos* is therefore invested with a literary existence. In the oral society, the language of power (on which political domination, clan leadership, and primitive

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 35-87. William Labov studied the language in its social context, see William Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1991, p. 183-260. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan outlined the ontological consubstantiality of "text" and "time", defined the "story" as an outcome of "events" and "characters", and emphasized the "levels", "voices" and "speech representation" of a "narration", see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, Routledge, London-New York, 2005, p. 7-60, p. 89-120.

[4] Michel Meyer, *Logique, langage et argumentation*, Hachette, Paris, 1982, p. 105-115.

[5] Chaïm Perelman, *L'empire rhétorique*, Vrin, Paris, 1977, p. 28-70.

[6] Paul E. Corcoran, *Political Language and Rhetoric*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1979, p. 13-35.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

royalty are based) reveals itself as a language of invocation. This totemic language is endowed with a magic force, it is able to trigger the gods' anger or good deeds by simply and adequately uttering the ritual formulas, known and preserved by the religious tradition, of blessings and curses. That is why the correct utterance of the incantatory formulas preserved by the oral tradition is of the essence. The early history of the people of Israel is shown through the same relation between the language that animates a given society, in a certain period of its evolution, and the leading castes (prophets, priests, scribes, scholars) of the same society, who have a grip on power because they possess the science of using the sacred language, a language that objectifies itself historically through a manifestation of the art of governing (theocracy). Unlike the oral society, a society whose messages begin to be entrusted to the written texts (through the writing technique, that of "leaving" signs-words on something meant to last so that they will be recalled by reading whenever it is needed) is more stably anchored in duration. The writing technique involves the idea of consubstantiality among Time, Text, Universe and Society. From a wider perspective, that of the history of religions, the same issue is discussed and attractively argued by Jack Goody[7]. He opposes God's Word – the sacred texts of Antiquity, to Mammon's word – texts of economic agreements, of the trade establishment, as well as to the state bureaucracy.

Linguistic dynamics finds a correspondent in the *mechanics* of the language. From this viewpoint, language can be defined as a mechanics of significances[8]. Consequently, in every man there is a movement of meaning, the same way as there are movements of nature. Thus, the movements revealed by the structure of a language are organized judiciously and involve a real mechanics, for the simple reason that they accompany the process of symbolization of the relations between man and the world, inherent to the existence of the language. While the mechanics of the universe has space and time as its framework, linguistic mechanics uses space symbolically in order to structure its temporality, it dominates time and causes its condensation.

The transition from the spoken word to the written word has also been studied by Ėtienne Gilson[9]. Unlike the orator's speech, which is alive and spontaneous, the written text involves a conversion of the initially spontaneous thought into a system of intelligible signs, adopted as alphabetical conventions by a given society. While the purity of its exercising through man's body and mind is inherent to the art of oratory, the art of writing necessarily duplicates itself into an art of thinking and mental expression of the words, and into a manual art of direct

[7] Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1988, p. 10-232.

[8] André Jacob, *Temps et langage*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1967, p. 190-206.

[9] Ėtienne Gilson, *Linguistique et philosophie*, Vrin, Paris, 1969, p. 203-237.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

calligraphy of the written text, a particular technique whose achievement involves resorting to material additions foreign to the human being (the writing tool and the surface used to write on) but which are absolutely necessary to objectify a thought or spoken message into a textual "vehicle" made up of written words able to guarantee (albeit relatively) temporal preservation and (possibly) periodic recall. That is why, according to Ėtienne Gilson[10], man has not the same attitude toward writing and orality. Writing presupposes the interposition of a manual technique between the utterance of one's thoughts and its calligraphic expression.

The writer's approach faces the experience of the freedom of the words' meanings expressed through writing, and the imperative, restraining acceptance of codified grammar rules. Orality itself (often uncontrollable, excessively inventive, or altogether chaotic at the level of people's communication, both in point of individuals and groups) experiences the same restraining process of freedom, the same limitation caused by the normative activity of the grammatical authority when, for various reasons, one resorts to converting it into a written form, to ordering something usually abundant and formless depending on the principles of textual discipline. Therefore, we can state that writing is an analysis of speech, the same way as speech itself is an analysis of thought[11].

Since *homo sapiens* reveals himself as essentially *homo loquens*, linguistics or the science of language is a central component of anthropology. While man individualizes himself as an animal that speaks, eloquence, the art of oratory, appears as the noblest of the attributes that define his condition. This must be the meaning that Cicero gave to *humaniores litterae*: letters are preeminently human, as the word attains perfection as a signifying means only in written form, while literature marks the peak of the human being's self-knowledge, self-knowledge that blends with knowledge of the universe, with knowledge of the world[12].

The two poles of the narrative *Lógos* are *inventio* and argumentation[13]. The text imposes its argumentation both on the author's discourse and on the characters, a statement in which *lógos* is defined as *manipulation depending on knowledge*, according to the semiotic pattern suggested by Algirdas Greimas[14]. From the same viewpoint, the exegesis of the narrative *páthos* becomes accessible by its theoretical and discursive appeal to rhetoric, semiotics, and the aesthetics of reception. In the Aristotelian rhetorical tradition, the narrative *ēthos* of the characters (their ability to make a qualified choice) defines their moral position on

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 207.
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 217.
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 219.
[13] Albert W. Halsall, *L'art de convaincre*, Ėditions Paratexte, Trinity College, Toronto, 1988, p. 101-187.
[14] Algirdas Greimas, *Du Sens II. Essais semiotiques*, Seuil, Paris, 2012, p. 123-124.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

the scale of nuances included in the field of ethics and in the complementary field of anti-ethics.

The analysis of a discourse as a whole envisages both the amplitude of argumentation and the order of arguments. The arguments can be expressed in *succession* (continuity) or in *dissociation* (the separation of the elements previously united by language or a known tradition). Within the discourse, argumentation reaches the highest point of elaboration when the receiver of the message is a mixed audience or several audiences. Consequently, it is not only that arguments can interact; they can also generate new argumentative processes, initiated by individuals or groups that have been part of the audience[15].

Human speech and writing (and implicitly the human narrative as a process or product created through speech and writing) should be understood, in the light of the above, as *mise en abîme* in relation to divine speech and writing, in relation to the eternal narrative about God Himself (expressed at the same time in God's created universe, history-time, and the Abrahamic sacred texts). In Henri Mechonnic's opinion[16], Biblical Hebrew should be seen as precisely the unseen realm in which linguistic and logic interpenetrate. The Biblical language is the language of a mystery (God's mystery, Israel's mystery), concurrently being the instrument of the thorough study of this mystery[17]. As religious ground of the Jewish monotheism, the transcendent character of Hebrew involves the notion of Revelation, the complex relations between the language and the Revelation and, as a result, the evidence of a theological grammar. In a Biblical context, the Hebrew grammar should be understood as a mystique of the language. The present, the past and the future are united in Hebrew, in the continuous flow of the Biblical text, while the thought expressed through language does not have in view abstractions or theoretical speculations, but concrete realities able to trigger in individual consciousnesses and in the collective consciousness the infinite power of God's Word. The theological Hebrew grammar presupposes a theological semantics within which the things themselves and their names fuse into a transcendent reality. By the semantic embodiment in the structure of the Hebrew language, the theological sacredness of the Jewish monotheism is invested deeply, genuinely, with divine power, with God's knowledge. Hence maybe the steadiness, the fixity of Semitic languages, languages immune to erosion, to the wear and tear of time. God is meta-linguistic and infra-linguistic, and the sacred language, objectified in the unfolding of the Abrahamic sacred texts, is the "trace" of His eternal presence in history and the universe.

[15] Perelman, *L'empire rhétorique*, p. 63-67.

[16] Henri Meschonnic, *Pour la poétique II*, Gallimard, Paris, 1973, p. 220-237.

[17] André Chouraqui, *La vie quotidienne des Hébreux au temps de la Bible*, Hachette, Paris, 1971, p. 61.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

The analysis of the narrative discourse points out to a narrative structure characteristic of both the historical story (historians' narrative) and the fictive story (told narrative). This common narrative structure involves an identity of function and an identity of conceptual truth able to outline the common intentionality through which the essential act of the story objectifies itself[18]. From this exegetic viewpoint, the narratological approach to history is done in two steps: *narrative sentences* and *narrative discourse*. A narrative sentence describes an event A referring to a future event B which cannot be known (by all the agents involved or the "ideal chronicler" that is contemporary to them) when A happened. A narrative statement is, therefore, one of the possible descriptions of an action in relation to subsequent events, unknown to those who experience it directly, but known to the historian the moment he makes his analytic effort. The knowledge of future events is thus able to change the knowledge of past events (just like when one is reading a fictional narrative), and the element that "illuminates" an event decisively can occur later than the event itself.

If any narrative sequence extracted from the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* texts is envisaged macro-historically in the light of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* history, the "illumination" of any narrative sequence by *davar-Elohyim*, Divine *Lógos* and *kalamū-Allāh* is paramount: its living dynamics covers the "story of the centuries" included in the Judeo-Christian-Muslim time, linear and finite, unfathomable yet limited, unfolding its ontological polyphony between Genesis and Apocalypse.

A narrative sentence is just one of the elements of a story, by story (historical or fictional) one understanding a composition that includes an entire sequence of events in a specific order (in the example above, referring to the Biblical history in its entirety, we relatively extended the notion of narrative sentence to include the larger notion of story). History is a particular type of story, and understanding or knowing history presupposes the existence and perfection of a previous ability or competence – *following the unfolding of a story*[19]. The joining and continuity of the events that make up a story (whose meaning, whose significances generally change because of ulterior events and actions) point out a certain progress in a particular direction. The unfolding of the story "pushes" those who live it (this overwhelming impulse is generated by the auctorial will, by the divine will), while the inexorable becoming of a narrative is doubled by the "expectation" of those who "read" it, who already intuit the "end of the story". The denouement or

[18] Paul Ricœur, « Pour une théorie du discours narrative », in: *La narrativité*, Ėditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1980, p. 5-71. See also Arthur Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1965, p. 118-155.

[19] W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, Schocken Books, New York, 1968, p. 10-238.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

conclusion of the narrative is the attraction or absorption of the entire narrative discourse. It should be logically compatible with the episodes that make up the story, and make the constructive effort of the entire narrative argumentation. The denouement of the story is, therefore, the "target" of the entire teleological approach of the narrative, and the teleological tension (which is in the power of the auctorial authority, of the divine authority) is the fundamental "driving force" of the story's writing and reception.

Identifying the common narrative structure and the common ultimate truth for the historical story and the fictional story presupposes defining history as God's fictional-non-fictional story. The hermeneutics of the sacred texts which founded the Abrahamic religious realms and the philosophical hermeneutics are in a mutual relationship of inclusion. While, on the one hand, the exegesis of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* texts is a particular application of the philosophical hermeneutics, the theological hermeneutics of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* texts subordinates the philosophical exegetic approach[20]. The reversal between the two kinds of hermeneutics takes place when one passes from the "structures" of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* texts to the ontological "universe" of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* texts. From this viewpoint, the "profession of faith" in the Abrahamic sacred texts is in a relation of interdependence with the types or forms of discourse through which editing was done (for example, the narrative structure of the *Pentateuch* and the *Gospel*, the numinous structure of the prophetic books, the aphoristic character of the sapiential books, the lyrical character of the hymns and psalms, the numinous-prophetic-lyrical structure of the *Qur'ān*). There is a certain style of the profession of faith for every form of discourse and the effects that stem from the oppositions, contrasts and parallelisms existing among these forms and styles have a first-rate theological importance. Thus, the forms of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* discourses pose three fundamental questions: the relation between a certain form of discourse and a particular variant of the profession of faith; the relation between a couple of such textual structures (for example, the narrative and the prophesy, or the legislative parts and the lyrical parts) and the changes of nuance generated in the theological message; the relation between the overall configuration of a literary *corpus* and what could be called the "space of interpretation", which includes all forms of discourse within the Abrahamic sacred texts, altogether. An exhaustive analysis might reveal the fact that all forms of discourse make up a circular system, and the theological content of each of them gains its own significance from the entire constellation of the various but converging types of Abrahamic sacred discourse[21].

[20] Paul Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action*, Ėditions du Seuil, Paris, 1986, p. 119-133.
[21] *Ibidem*, p. 123.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

Writing the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* texts *distances* the message from its initial locutor, the original environment of its preaching and the primordial receivers. At a kerygmatic level (the level of proclamation, of the preaching of sacred words), two complementary channels could be outlined, through which the continuity of the Abrahamic religious rhetoric asserts itself: the oral word – the written word – the oral word (within which the *Torah*, the *Gospel* and the *Qur'ān* mediate between two oral messages, between the primordial oral message preached by the founder of the religious realm and the later message preached by his apostles, missionaries or saints) and the written word – the oral word – the written word (within which the oral message or preaching mediates between the *Torah*, the *Gospel* and the *Qur'ān*, with a missionary purpose)[22]. The unfolding of the "reality" or "universe" of the Biblical-Evangelical-*Qur'ānic* texts objectifies the narrative, prophetic, legislative, and prosodic continuity through which God's Word is conveyed to the world and the human beings.

In order to assert the definition of time and history from the perspective of the Divine Word's linguistic dynamics, it is befitting to summarize Hayden White's theory[23] about the historical work. In his opinion, there are five levels of conceptualization in a historical work: 1. the "chronicle"; 2. the "story"; 3. the "plot-building"; 4. the "argument-building"; 5. the "ideological commitment". The "chronicle" and the "story" refer to the "primitive elements" that make up the historical narrative, both of them selecting and structuring the historical information in order to make a certain historical fragment accessible to an audience of a certain type. From this viewpoint, the historical work is an attempt at mediation between the direct historical field, the unprocessed historical data, other historical narratives, and the audience.

A first organizational stage involves ordering the events within the chronicle. The next stage involves ordering the chronicle so that it makes up a story (in which the events become the elements of a "spectacle" with a beginning, a middle and an end). The transformation of the chronicle into a story involves defining certain events within the chronicle as inaugural motives, other events as transitional motives, and again others as denouement motives. A certain event of a certain chronicle can belong to any of the three categories of motives, if it is included in different historical narratives or stories. Codifying the events of a chronicle through the above-mentioned categories of motives (what Paul Ricœur, after Aristotle, defines in *Temps et récit* as "*Mímēsis* I", "*Mímēsis* II" and "*Mímēsis* III") constitutes the metamorphosis of the chronicle into a story. Hayden White believes that progress, the continuity between the beginning and the end, is characteristic of only the historical story. The chronicle is, therefore, an open

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 125.

[23] Hayden White, *Metahistory*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore-London, 1985, p. 10-464.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

writing, mimetically unstructured into a beginning, a middle and an end (the second ordering stage). It does not necessarily include inaugural elements; it simply begins the moment the chronicler decided to write, to record a certain number of events, a moment after which the chronicle can continue indefinitely, without any climaxes and without any "plot". In fact, the historian's task is often to identify the "stories" *buried* in "chronicles". The "archeological approach" of the historical narratology, however, is doubled by *inventio*, by a fictional process through which the historian chooses the means to express historical stories: tragedy or satire, saga or comedy, the means of narrative style or lyrical style. It so happens that different historians can describe the same event in contradictory terms, in opposite manners, which are likely to lead to diverging conclusions and judgments. The relation between a given historical story and other historical stories, which are likely to be discovered or "read" in the same chronicle, including the initial story, can be explained by plot, argument and ideological commitment.

The explanation through plot lies in finding the meaning of a story by identifying the type of story to be analyzed. If the story was built from the very beginning through a tragic plot, the historian chose a tragic "explanation". Likewise a comic "key" or "motive" provides a comic "explanation", based on a plot that belongs to the field of comedy. In this respect, Hayden White identifies three main types of plots: romantic, tragic, satirical and comic.

The formal argument, explicit or discursive (which allows for the explanation of what happens in the historical story by appealing to ordering principles that serve as presumed or conventional laws of historical exegesis), is a level of conceptualization in which the historian explains the events that make up the story (the fact that, by choosing a certain type of plot, the author of the narrative imposed a particular form on the events should not be overlooked) through a line of reasoning, a deductive algorithm invested with the power of a "form law" which makes the links or segments of the historical story inevitably flow from each other. From this angle, Hayden White identifies four types of deductive algorithms: formal, mechanical, organic and contextual.

On the other hand, the ideological dimensions of a historical story involve a particular position regarding the nature of historical knowledge and the way in which the study of past events can "illuminate" present and future events. In this respect we find it extremely useful to recall the hermeneutic "clash" that Paul Ricœur deals with in *Temps et récit*, a "collision" that, in fact, is in itself a methodological recall of the rabbinic exegesis of the Biblical text, an exegesis the rhetoric principles and tools of which built the hermeneutical edifice of the Oral Law or *Torah shebealpe*. By "ideology", Hayden White understands a number of injunctions or precepts which enjoin the individuals and the communities to situate themselves on certain positions in contemporary social *praxis* and that, in

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

this context, determine a particular type of action, either to change the world or to preserve its current state. Thus, four fundamental ideological positions can be postulated: anarchism, conservatism, radicalism and liberalism. Depending on the above, the adequate combinations of the levels of the plot, argumentation and ideological commitment define the historiographic styles and are implied by the "elective affinities of historiography"[24].

The analysis of language mirrors the immanent existence of the Divine Word and the transcendent existence of the Divine Word: human rhetoric and divine rhetoric, human language and divine language, time, history and historiography, the continuity of the historical "story" and the continuity of the Abrahamic sacred texts, the narratology of the sacred and profane stories, as well as the "narratology" that somehow allows for the intuition of the inner dynamism of God's Word. This paradigmatic "uttering" is divinely generated in the matrix of all languages and resonates into man's earthly ontological texture like an anamnesis of the ontological infinite. As linguistic mechanics of the divine living, the "narratological mechanics" of God's Word seems to be, from the perspective of the theology of history, the infinite power that animates the created universe, history and time, and the continuity of the Abrahamic sacred texts. God creates, "utters" Himself, "communicates" Himself, and "narrates" Himself. His "traces" are "written" by His Word in the known and unknown Tablets.

Bibliografie

CHOURAQUI, André, *La vie quotidienne des Hébreux au temps de la Bible*, Hachette, Paris, 1971.

CORCORAN, Paul E., *Political Language and Rhetoric*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1979.

DANTO, Arthur, *Analytical Philosophy of History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1965.

GALLIE, W. B., *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, Schocken Books, New York, 1968.

GILSON, Ėtienne, *Linguistique et philosophie*, Vrin, Paris, 1969.

GOODY, Jack, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1988.

GREIMAS, Algirdas, *Du Sens II. Essais semiotiques*, Seuil, Paris, 2012.

GUIRAUD, Pierre, *La stylistique*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1970.

HALSALL, Albert W., *L'art de convaincre*, Ėditions Paratexte, Trinity College, Toronto, 1988.

JACOB, André, *Temps et langage*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1967.

LABOV, William, *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1991.

MESCHONNIC, Henri, *Pour la poétique II*, Gallimard, Paris, 1973.

MEYER, Michel, *Logique, langage et argumentation*, Hachette, Paris, 1982.

[24] *Ibidem*, p. 1-43.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)

PERELMAN, Chaïm, *L'empire rhétorique*, Vrin, Paris, 1977.
PRINCE, Gerald, *A Dictionary of* N*arratology*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1987.
RICŒUR, Paul, « Pour une théorie du discours narrative », in: *La narrativité*, Ėditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1980.
RICŒUR, Paul, *Du texte à l'action*, Ėditions du Seuil, Paris, 1986.
RIMMON-KENAN, Shlomith, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, Routledge, London-New York, 2005.
Hayden White, *Metahistory*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore-London, 1985.

BDD-A24856 © 2015 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:57:34 UTC)