

# *The Readjusted Arabesque*

## Narrating Architecture in Literary Text, the Case of Kafka's Bridge

**Esteban Restrepo Restrepo**

The architect is not the only artist who conceives architecture. As the most common spatial and material framework in which human life takes place, architecture also appears in other arts like painting, cinema, theatre and literature, where it is an unavoidable subject of conception and reflection. Among those arts, it is on the architectures that are present in literary texts that we will focus in this article.

When architecture deterritorializes itself from its domain of origin to be conceived and experienced in literature, its dominant and traditional ontological status is unavoidably altered. The cause of this alteration has to do with the

representative nature of its host art, which, according to Etienne Souriau, presents a formal split into a *primary form*, the one representing (the literary language), and a *secondary form*, that of the represented (in this case the architecture within the space in which the story takes place – this space being the diegesis).<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the architect, the writer conceives architecture with the technical conditions and the aesthetic particularities of the literary medium. Thus, the experience we make of literary architectures radically differs from the one we make of built architectures, which can be experienced first-hand and navigated at will. Instead, the reader's experience of literary architectures is mediated by three entities, namely: the *character* who experiences architecture, the *narrator* who relates it, and the *writer* who composes it and chooses the terms in which it is represented.

When dealing with literary architectures we often observe *what* is represented, rather than *how* it is represented. Still we often take literary architectures for built architectures, and we tend to observe exclusively their intrinsic qualities, such as context, spatial system, morphology, scale and materiality. In Souriau's terms, that means that we usually limit our understanding of these architectures to their *secondary form* (their very diegetical characteristics), and leave aside their *primary form* (the literary language in which they are expressed). This restrictive approach is explicitly condemned by Louis Marin, who argues that 'the whole phantasmatic of description and mimesis is built on the transitive dimension of representation (representing something) by forgetting its reflective opacity and its modalities (presenting itself)'. Like Marin, we will dwell on one of the overlooked characteristics of the *primary form* of literary architectures: the narrative level.

In literature, architecture must not only be considered as an object that exists synchronically in the diegesis, but also as a textual construction that appears diachronically during the narration, that is fragmented according to the aesthetical intentions conceived by the writer. This textual construction

is, according to Paul Ricoeur, the fundamental literary operation of a *mise-en-récit*; and he refers to it as *configuration*:

*Italians use a very accurate word, intreccio, the braid. This braid, this intrigue, allows the writer to gather not only the events, but also the aspects of the action, and in particular, the ways of producing it, with its causes, reasons, and coincidences.*

In other words, the writer cuts out and reconfigures the acts, facts, events and objects (including architecture) present in the diegesis, as Souriau explains:

*This need to divide the richness of events into distinct strands, which readjust themselves in relation to each other as new and continuous arabesques . . . is one of the most concrete artistic and aesthetically essential actions in the art of the novel.*

It is one such *readjusted arabesque* – a literary architecture, in this case – that we intend to explore here, and whose experience by the reader is based on Roland Barthe's claim that 'the reading of the 'realist' portrait is not realistic, it is rather a cubist reading, the senses are cubes piled up, shifted, juxtaposed and yet biting on each other'.

To appraise a literary architecture in these terms we will use two analytical categories from Gérard Genette's narratology, developed in his work *Discours du récit*, namely: (a) the *Voice* or the **situation** of the narrator in relation to the story he tells, and its implications in the representation of architecture; and (b) the *Order* or the **sequences** in which architecture is represented during the narration. We will use both categories to analyse Kafka's short story *The Bridge* (*Die Brücke*):

### **The Bridge**

*I was stiff and cold, I was a bridge, I lay over a ravine. My toes on one side, my fingers clutching the other, I had clamped myself fast into the crumbling clay. The tails of my coat fluttered at my sides. Far below brawled the icy trout stream. No tourist strayed to this impassable height, the bridge was not yet traced on any map. So I lay and waited; I could only wait. Without falling, no bridge, once spanned, can cease to be a bridge.*

*It was toward evening one day – was it the first, was it the thousandth? I cannot tell – my thoughts were always in confusion and perpetually moving in a circle. It was toward evening in summer, the roar of the stream had grown deeper, when I heard the sound of a human step! To me, to me. Straighten yourself, bridge, make ready, rail-less beams, to hold up the passenger entrusted to you. If his steps are uncertain, steady them unobtrusively, but if he stumbles show what you are made of and like a mountain god hurl him across to land.*

*He came, he tapped me with the iron point of his stick, then he lifted my coattails with it and put them in order upon me. He plunged the point of his stick into my bushy hair and let it lie there for a long time, forgetting me no doubt while he wildly gazed around him. But then – I was just following him in thought over mountain and valley – he jumped with both feet on the middle of my body. I shuddered with wild pain, not knowing what was happening. Who was it? A child? A dream? A wayfarer? A suicide? A tempter? A destroyer? And I turned so as to see him. A bridge to turn around! I had not yet turned quite around when I already began to fall, I fell and in a moment I was torn and transpierced by the sharp rocks which had always gazed up at me so peacefully from the rushing water.*

### **Voice, or the Situation of the Narrator**

The narrator is the figure created by the author to transmit, among other things, a 'vision' of the architectures supposed to exist within the

diegesis; the reader has no other access to them other than through the words of the narrator. As Genette points out, this is why the narrator's situation, understood as 'the relationships between him and the story he tells' and, more precisely, the 'close relationships between the narration, its protagonists and its spatiotemporal determination', fundamentally shape literary architectures, and determine the way the reader will comprehend them.

Like painted architecture, literary architecture implies one or more predetermined points of view. It appears, though, that the point of view chosen by the painter to represent architecture in a painting differs substantially from the one assigned by the writer to the narrator in order to tell the story he conceives; in the sense that it does not refer to one or more precise geometrical positions in the represented space, defined by a height, an angle of vision and a depth of field within a precise frame. If we consider the first sentences of *The Bridge: I was stiff and cold, I was a bridge, I lay over a ravine. My toes on one side, my fingers clutching the other, I had clamped myself fast into the crumbling clay . . .*, we will notice that we are not given any precise indications regarding the geometrical framework of the represented scene. We cannot ascertain the height from which the narrator describes the scene (even if we know that he speaks from his point of view, he does not represent it geometrically in his description), we ignore the colours of the objects and the spaces involved; we cannot even form an image of the formal characteristics of the bridge, which remain partial and schematic. A painter, whose medium demands that these characteristics are specified, could hardly paint this bridge based on these indications. Nevertheless, that does not prevent us from bringing out some characteristics of the narrator's point of view. First, we can acknowledge his role as a character within the diegesis. Secondly, we can recognize that he relates his own perceptive and affective experience (and not one from another character in the story). Finally, we can identify the temporary situation of the narrator in relation to what is narrated, which is situated in the past.

These characteristics constitute the three fundamental elements that determine literary architecture's situation: *person*, *focalization* and *verb tenses*.

The *person* is defined as the position of the narrator in relation to the diegesis. The narrator can be part of the diegesis (*homodiegetic narrator*) or be outside of it (*heterodiegetic narrator*). Each modality has its specificities. In the case of a story with a *homodiegetic narrator*, like *The Bridge*, he experiences architecture through his own body, which makes up part of the diegetic space. On the other hand, in stories with a *heterodiegetic narrator*, the narrator approaches the architectural object from outside the diegesis, from a *a priori* knowledge, without any physical restriction.

Genette defines *focalization* as 'a restriction of field, a selection of narrative information [and] the instrument of this (possible) selection is a located focus, a sort of information bottleneck, which lets only in what the situation allows'. According to him, there are three types of stories based on the focalization adopted by the narrator. These are: 'The story with an internal focalization (fixed, variable or multiple), the story with an external focalization, and the non-focalized story.' From this perspective, a *heterodiegetic narrator* with an *internal focalization* will give us information about the character's feelings about the architectures they experience. Each form of *internal focalization* (fixed, variable or multiple) has its own particularities. A *heterodiegetic narrator* with *fixed internal focalization* will only reveal the feelings and sensations of one of the characters with regard to architecture, giving the reader an univocal perception of it. On the contrary, a *heterodiegetic narrator* with *variable* or *multiple internal focalization* will communicate the different architectural feelings or sensations of multiple characters, and therefore include tensions between subjectivities; this multiplicity will lead to what we call *architectural intersubjectivity*. Virginia Woolf's novels are good examples of *multiple internal focalization*. For a *heterodiegetic narrator* with an *external focalization*, architectural data are not related to a

character's sensations because the narrator does not have access to their internal universe. Instead, architecture is narrated from the outside, through the actions and uses characters make of it. Samuel Beckett's novella *Le Dépeupleur* (*The Lost Ones*) is a good example of *external focalization*. Finally, a *non-focalized heterodiegetic narrator* (that is, one with zero focalization) enjoys total freedom to narrate the story and the architectures in it; he can focus architecture from multiple points of view without being necessarily attached to the interior or exterior universes of one or more characters – each one with their own autonomy of vision, including even a neutral (objective) point of view.

The *homodiegetic narrator* is, unlike the *heterodiegetic narrator*, present as a character in the story he relates. This is the case in *The Bridge*. The *homodiegetic narrator* is often the protagonist of the story, and his vision of architecture is inextricably linked to his own experience; that is to say, to his physical, intellectual, sensitive and psychological universe. The focalization of this narrator is usually internal, offering the reader an entirely subjective and unambiguous version of the architecture implied in the story.

However, the fact that the character-narrator in Kafka's short story is also an architecture, a bridge in this case, makes of him a very rare literary and architectural phenomenon: a first person architectural narrator (!).

In the first three sentences of the story we become aware of the importance given to *identity*, expressed in the iteration of the pronoun 'I': *I was stiff and cold, I was a bridge, I lay over a ravine*. The character-narrator is aware of his bridge-ness, but realizes that his condition is not fulfilled until someone uses him. Without use his identity remains incomplete. Meanwhile, he remains in limbo, in a pre-use state, in a pre-bridge state, which leads him to an identity crisis. The reiteration of the pronoun 'I' in the narrator's discourse seeks to palliate the effects of this crisis.

Despite the choice of the grammatical first person used by the character-narrator to refer to himself, confusion (another manifestation of his identity crisis) will eventually lead him to use alternative voices, such as the second-person singular (*Straighten yourself, bridge, make ready, rail-less beams, to hold up the passenger entrusted to you*) and the third-person singular (*No tourist strayed to this impassable height, the bridge was not yet traced on any map . . . A bridge to turn around!*).

As we said, the typical *homodiegetic narrator*, which we have also called the character-narrator, can move through the diegetic space at will and therefore has access to a considerable amount of information about the architectures he experiences. But Kafka's bridge is immobile. Its immobility defines and restrains its vision and perception, which in this case is a self-perception, or, to be more precise, a self-architectural-perception. In the tale's first paragraph the bridge ascertains its constituent elements and its topographical position from the point where it is stuck (*I was stiff and cold, I was a bridge, I lay over a ravine. My toes on one side, my fingers clutching the other, I had clamped myself fast into the crumbling clay. The tails of my coat fluttered at my sides. Far below brawled the icy trout stream*).

Nevertheless, other architectural aspects that will be revealed later in the narration seem to refute this physical restriction. When the bridge tells us, in the middle of the first paragraph, that *no tourist strayed to this impassable height* and that *the bridge was not yet traced on any map*, we can presume that its awareness goes beyond its current fixed position. Might it be that it has not always been there, but rather came to this remote place, voluntarily or not?

If the characteristics we have just referred to exclusively concern the external qualities of the bridge, there are others characteristics concern-

ing the internal universe of the character-narrator. Several times during the monologue we are invited to contemplate the bridge's *état d'esprit*. First, it makes explicit its resignation, its state of *waiting-to-be-used*, like every architecture: *So I lay and waited; I could only wait*. Following, it expresses confusion: *It was toward evening one day – was it the first, was it the thousandth? I cannot tell – my thoughts were always in confusion and perpetually moving in a circle*, and anxiety: *When I heard the sound of a human step! To me, to me. Straighten yourself, bridge, make ready, rail-less beams, to hold up the passenger entrusted to you*. Finally, in the third and last paragraph, it expresses pain (*I shuddered with wild pain, not knowing what was happening*); astonishment and disbelief about itself, about its own nature and condition (*And I turned so as to see him. A bridge to turn around!*).

Together with *person* and *focalization*, the third aspect that defines the *situation* of a narrator regards *verb tenses*. This choice will determine the narrator's position in relation to the time of the actions he relates, impacting both the conception and perception of literary architectures. An architecture narrated in the past tense appears as a memory, and unless the narrator tells us otherwise, nothing guarantees its presence in the narration's present. An architecture narrated in the present tense, on the contrary, affirms its current existence. We can also think of other types of architectures linked to other verb tenses. An architecture described in the *conditional tense*, for example, assumes architecture as a mere possibility. Its presence is hypothetical or phantasmal, like that of the architectures described in Beckett's novel *The Unnamable*.

The verb tense used in *The Bridge* is mainly the simple past (or preterit in some languages like Kafka's German). We can distinguish two ways of using this verb tense in the narration. The first is used in the first paragraph, where the bridge emphasizes its fixed position and constant waiting. Both are sustained and prolonged situations, so the narrator makes an *iterative* use of the past tense.

The use of the past tense changes in the second and third paragraphs, where the bridge recounts an event that happens in a specific moment of the chronology of the story: its own destruction by a wayfarer. This is actually the only event presented during the narration and marks a shift from the iterative to the *assertive* use of the past tense.

Furthermore, a very singular verb form is used in the second paragraph of the tale: the *imperative* (*Straighten yourself, bridge, make ready, rail-less beams, to hold up the passenger entrusted to you. If his steps are uncertain, steady them unobtrusively, but if he stumbles show what you are made of and like a mountain god hurl him across to land*). In this moment of the narration we are confronted with an imperative state of architecture. Rather than waiting, the bridge encourages itself to accomplish its function. The imperative form of the verb seeks to dissipate doubts in the character-narrator's mind regarding its bridge-ness; this could be seen as a strategy to overcome his lack of self-confidence concerning his capabilities of being, but also a desperate manifestation of his desire to be. In both cases this refers to two levels of being: being as such, and being a bridge.

With these choices, the most remarkable feature of Kafka's use of verb tenses in this particular story is the temporal position from which the bridge tells its own story. If we consider that, *grosso modo*, *The Bridge* is the story of a murder narrated by the victim itself, the present of the narration is located after the death of the victim. Thus, Kafka's tale must be considered as a post-mortem report narrated by a voice that no longer exists as a bridge, and who recalls its last moments as well as its failure to become a real and complete bridge. The current material or physical nature of the narrator is then spectral, immaterial . . . a voice from beyond the grave.

### Order, or Architectural Sequences

In *Discours du récit*, Gérard Genette argues:

*To study the temporal order of a narration means to confront the order of arrangement of the events or temporal segments in the narrative discourse with the order of succession of these same events or temporal segments in the diegesis, as it is explicitly indicated by the narration itself, or that can be inferred from an indirect clue.*

An action, fact or event can be situated both in the chronological timeline of the diegesis, and in the narrative timeline of the literary composition. Nevertheless, architecture is not an action, a fact or an event, but an object supposed to exist in its entirety and (in most of cases) permanently within the diegesis. In consequence, it would be senseless to try to situate it in the timeline of the latter. However, as it appears as a possible *act of enunciation*, architecture can be part of the narration, and not only as a described object, but also as an entity affected by actions, facts and events. Every author decides *when* and *how* to include and feature architecture in his composition according to his artistic intentions. Thus, an analysis of the narrative order of literary architectures will not only allow us to apprehend the aesthetic intentions and effects of its own fragmentation, but also the role of architecture in the literary work.

A first step for the study of the narrative order of actions and events in a literary work, according to Genette, 'consists in enumerating its segments according to the changes in the time of history'. We can take this first step and adapt it to our purpose by simply enumerating all the parts of the narration where architecture is stated. To determine these parts we will refer to Genette's distinction between a macro-narrative level, which recognizes major articulations in the story; and a *micro-narrative* level, which deals with the minute details of the story.

At the *macro-narrative* level Kafka's tale is composed of three parts – a paragraph each: the first is a description of the physical characteristics of architecture (the bridge itself), the second suggests a possible user for the bridge (and the expectations generated by his arrival), and the third narrates the destruction of the bridge (by its first user). In simpler terms, the architectural macro-narrative structure of Kafka's short story can be synthesized as: physical description – introduction of the user – event.

As we can clearly see, the narrative strategy developed by Kafka in *The Bridge* is quite simple, and yet extremely effective, as a means to develop the profound tension that exists between being and nonbeing, embodied in the architecture of the bridge. For Jean-Paul Sartre, this tension is the very meaning of (existential) fragility.

While a *macro-narrative* analysis reveals to us the main structure of the plot, a *micro-narrative* analysis allows us to see the details of its construction. A close look at each paragraph allows us to dissect each and every appearance of architecture, and the aspects that characterize it. These aspects are not exclusively formal and dimensional, but also include character's experiences within that architecture, as well as the narrator's thoughts about it. By dismembering each paragraph and classifying the different aspects of the literary architecture, we should be able to grasp the aesthetical intentions in regard to the order of architectural sequences in Kafka's short story.

**First paragraph:** description of the physical characteristics of the bridge

01 • *I was stiff and cold* (material characteristics)

02 • *I was a bridge* (typological definition)

03 • *I lay over a ravine* (topographic position)

04 • *My toes on one side, my fingers clutching the other,* (building components)

05 • *I had clamped myself fast into the crumbling clay.* (anchoring device)

06 • *The tails of my coat fluttered at my sides* (building component and atmospheric quality)

- 07 • *Far below brawled the icy trout stream* (topographic position)
- 08 • *No tourist strayed to this impassable height*, (geographical reference)
- 09 • *the bridge was not yet traced on any map*. (geographical reference)
- 10 • *So I lay and waited; I could only wait*. (action)
- 11 • *Without falling, no bridge, once spanned, can cease to be a bridge*  
(philosophical statement)

As we can see, this first paragraph abounds in architectural statements, and most of them are related to physical characteristics of the architectural object. First of all, we must pay special attention to the incipit of the story. It is not casual that Kafka begins with the sentence *I was stiff and cold*. The pronoun 'I' reveals to us the human aspect of the character-narrator, who, by means of these physical characteristics, seems to be a dead body. This could be seen as an anticipation of the fate of the character. It is only in the second sentence that the character-narrator clarifies that its stiffness and coldness are in fact the properties of his bridge nature. According to Clayton Koelb, with this second sentence Kafka manages to preserve the double nature of the character-narrator as both human and bridge, while ensuring that neither of these two natures becomes the metaphor of the other. Following up on that strategy, between the third and the sixth sentences of this first paragraph the narration alternates between the human and the architectural characteristics ascribed to the character-narrator.

In the seventh and eighth sentences of this paragraph, Kafka operates a significant turn concerning the architectural scale: the narration leaps from the immediate context and the spatial components of the anthropo-morphized bridge to a geographical scale where it reveals itself in total isolation. These different scales reveal different levels of fragility in which the bridge exists, while transmitting a sensation of vertigo to the reader.

The last two sentences of the paragraph effect a change in the cadence of the narration, by shifting from the external characteristics of the bridge

and its context to its internal, psychological reality. The bridge declares that waiting is its only action, restricting it to a condition of reflection that leads it to state: *Without falling, no bridge, once spanned, can cease to be a bridge.* This statement, though, seems to reveal a more secret intention: to become a bridge so that it can immediately stop being one. If becoming a bridge depends on being crossed by someone, ceasing to be one could also result from that crossing. This anticipates the fate of the bridge, but also unravels the core of its *fragility-identity* device.

Aside from shifting our attention from the external to the internal aspects of the bridge, these last two sentences also transition us into the second paragraph, which is mainly composed of psychological *enoncés* and also sets the basis of the tale's plot.

**Second paragraph:** sound of footsteps from a possible first user of the bridge

- 01 • *It was toward evening one day* (time situation of the event)
- 02 • *– was it the first, was it the thousandth? I cannot tell – my thoughts were always in confusion and perpetually moving in a circle.* (declaration of the character's state of mind)
- 03 • *It was toward evening in summer,* (time and seasonal situation of the event)
- 04 • *the roar of the stream had grown deeper,* (hearing perception)
- 05 • *when I heard the sound of a human step!* (introduction of an eventual user in the form of a noise)
- 06 • *Straighten yourself, bridge, make ready, rail-less beams, to hold up the passenger entrusted to you* (typological auto-encouragement and hypothetical action )
- 07 • *If his steps are uncertain, steady them unobtrusively, but if he stumbles show what you are made of and like a mountain god hurl him across to land.* (hypothetical actions)

In this second paragraph the character-narrator's discourse changes radically: it no longer describes its physical characteristics, but rather its psychological reactions to the arrival of a user.

The first four sentences describe the environment where the event takes place: a summer night, dark and hot. Sight and touch are the senses involved. However, it is hearing that will take centre stage in the scene as the sound of the stream becomes evident, increasing the tension in the reader's mind, and is soon followed by a noise that suggests the arrival of a wayfarer. More important than these perceptions is the bridge's confusion explicitly stated in the second sentence, which becomes evident in this paragraph, and that will have a dramatic effect, not only in what follows, but in the reader's understanding of what has already been told. In fact, the reader's representation of the bridge and its architecture are affected by this part of the story. All subsequent architectural statements are affected by this revelation, which inevitably makes the reader suspicious of the bridge as a narrator. Its veracity and accuracy cannot be trusted, given its state of confusion.

The fifth sentence of this paragraph introduces the bridge's user, as a noise. Kafka generates suspense about the wayfarer's identity by deferring it, while increasing the bridge's uncertainty about its ability to perform like, and therefore actually be, a bridge. The event – the meeting of architecture and user – is delayed, keeping the narration focused on the bridge's inner world, as it waits.

In the following sentences (the sixth and seventh) the character-narrator's discourse shifts from perception to introspection: the bridge encourages itself to not let escape its first and possibly only chance of being used, and therefore of becoming its true and complete self. Never used, it appears to rehearse the lines of an instruction manual for bridges that tells it exactly what to do when crossed. The fundamental stability attributed to

architecture is thus called into question. The bridge's fragility reaches its highest and most critical level.

While this second paragraph is mostly focused on the bridge's psychology, its architectural qualities are still mentioned. In the sixth sentence we can still notice the presence of a physical detail that was not featured in the first paragraph. The bridge tells us that its beams are rail-less, which might render it unfit to perform. It declares itself not to be safe enough to accomplish its purpose and therefore it clearly sabotages its attempt to encourage itself to be a bridge by exposing one of its faults, which could lead to the failure of its own project. Confusion and fragility anticipate and reveal, once again, a secret wish to fail.

**Third paragraph:** event: the destruction of the bridge

- 01 • *He came*, (user's action)
- 02 • *he tapped me with the iron point of his stick*, (user's action),
- 03 • *then he lifted my coattails with it and put them in order upon me*. (user's action)
- 04 • *He plunged the point of his stick into my bushy hair and let it lie there for a long time*, (user's action)
- 05 • *forgetting me no doubt while he wildly gazed around him*. (user's action)
- 06 • *But then – I was just following him in thought over mountain and valley – he jumped with both feet on the middle of my body*. (user's action)
- 07 • *I shuddered with wild pain, not knowing what was happening*. (main character's sensation)
- 08 • *Who was it? A child? A dream? A wayfarer? A suicide? A tempter? A destroyer?* (main character's speculation about the identity of the user)
- 09 • *And I turned so as to see him*. (physical reaction of the character-architecture)
- 10 • *A bridge to turn around!* (exclamatory reiteration of the character's reaction)
- 11 • *I had not yet turned quite around when I already began to fall, I fell and*

*in a moment I was torn and transpierced by the sharp rocks which had always gazed up at me so peacefully from the rushing water.* (event conclusion: destruction of the bridge)

The third and final paragraph concerns the outcome of the event: the destruction of the bridge, which is also the murder of the main character and narrator of the story. Attention here is no longer on the bridge's physical characteristics and its surroundings, or on its psychology. Instead, this paragraph is devoted to the newcomer's actions on the bridge, and its reactions.

The first six sentences of this paragraph develop a sequence of actions in which the wayfarer interacts with the bridge. Almost immediately these actions shift from predictable to unexpected, which lead to the event itself, which Derrida defines as the 'surprise, [the] exposure, the unanticipable . . . the event is what comes, what happens'. This event in Kafkas short story is actually a misuse of architecture, and reveals the real identity of the newcomer, who is not a regular user, but actually its executioner.

The reactions of the bridge are consigned between the 'seventh and the eleventh sentences of the paragraph. It is here that the character-narrator reveals its astonishment with the way its first and only user proceeds, as it narrates its agony and the way it succumbs. This last scene is also the accomplishment of the event: the destruction of the bridge, which is (apparently) the exact opposite of what it expected: being crossed by a user and therefore becoming a bridge. Nevertheless, the way it expresses its end (*I was torn and transpierced by the sharp rocks which had always gazed up at me so peacefully from the rushing water*) suggests, for the third time in the narration, that this collapse was what it really wanted.

## Conclusion

The two *aspects* from Genette's narratology that we developed in this article – *Voice* (situation) and *Order* (sequences) – must be considered as immanent components of every literary architecture. Changes in the situation of the narrator, or in the sequence in which architecture appears during the narration, result in substantial alterations of a literary architecture. Thus, literary architectures will be defined, not only by their physical aspects related to their presence within the diegesis (morphology, dimensions, etcetera), which only correspond to their *secondary form* (cf. Souriau); but also by the specific aspects related to the narrative strategy conceived by the author in which they are implied, and which correspond to their *primary form* (cf. Souriau).

Thus, literary architectures are never static or stable structures; rather, they are in flux, in dynamic transformation. Their complexity increases as the narration evolves. Like we've seen in Kafka's tale, the architecture a story starts in is never the same as that in which the story ends. As it crosses the narration, literary architectures will be unavoidably altered.

We have been able to establish the abundance of narrative instruments utilized by Kafka in his short story and the effects they cause. In *The Bridge*, a vertiginous experience of architecture serves to push the Czech writer's vision of identity and fragility to the limit.

- 1 'Dans les arts représentatifs, ou arts du second degré, la dualité ontologique de l'œuvre . . . entraîne une dualité formelle. Une partie de la forme concerne l'œuvre elle-même, qui, de ce point de vue possède (comme les arts du premier degré) une forme primaire. Mais il s'y trouve tout un autre jeu d'organisations morphologiques qui concernent les êtres suscités et posés par son discours [forme secondaire].' Translation: In the representative arts, or arts of the second degree, the ontological duality of the work . . . involves a formal duality. One part concerns the work itself, which, from this point of view has (like the [presentative arts or] arts of the first degree) a primary form. But there is a whole other set of morphological organizations which concern the beings aroused and posed by its discourse [secondary form]). Etienne Souriau, *La Correspondance des arts* (Paris: Flammarion, 1947), 88-89.
- 2 We must not forget the reader himself, as the forth agent of this *mediation*, who reads and interprets the text according to his sociocultural context, his sensitivity and his personal 'encyclopedia'.
- 3 'Toute la fantasmatique de la description et de la mimesis s'est édifié sur la dimension transitive de la représentation (représenter quelque chose) par oubli de son opacité réflexive et de ses modalités (se présenter).' Louis Marin, 'Mimesis et description', in: Louis Marin, *De la Représentation* (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 1994), 255.
- 4 The *narrative* level of analysis of Literary Architectures is part of a larger method whose prototype was elaborated in my PhD dissertation on Comparative Literature, defended in November 2018 at the Université Paris VIII Vincennes Saint-Denis: *L'écrivain en architecte: La conception de l'architecture dans le texte littéraire et ses effets esthétiques et cognitifs* (Le Dépeupleur de Samuel Beckett et Le Terrier de Franz Kafka). This method was the product of combining existing elementary categories of architectural and literary analyses in order to constitute a compound device to study their (aesthetical) interactions and effects. Four *levels of conception* have been defined there: the first two detail the way architecture is organized within the diegesis of the literary work (the *secondary form* according to Souriau), and they are the *level* of conception of the architectural *object*, and the *level* of conception of the *experience* the characters make of it; the two other *levels* detail the way architecture is modulated, amplified, deformed and oriented by the artistic language (the *primary form* according to Souriau), and they are: the *level* of conception of the *narration* of the architectural object and the experience the characters make of it, and the *level* of conception of their *textualization*.

Because of the format of an academic article, the full method cannot be developed here. Nevertheless, each level is considered as an autonomous analysis entity.

- 5 '... en italien, on utilise un mot très juste, intreccio, la tresse. Cette tresse, cette intrigue, ne permet pas seulement de rassembler des événements, mais aussi des aspects de l'action, et, en particulière, des manières de la produire, avec des causes, des raisons d'agir, et aussi des hasards.' Paul Ricœur, 'Architecture et Narrativité', *Urbanisme* 303 (1998), 47.
- 6 'Cette nécessité de découper la richesse des événements en torons distincts, qu'on rajuste par fragments les uns aux autres pour en faire une nouvelle arabesque continue... voici une des actions artistiques les plus concrètes à la fois et les plus essentielles esthétiquement dans l'art du roman.' Souriau, *La Correspondance*, op. cit. (note 1), 124.
- 7 'La lecture du portrait "réaliste" n'est pas réaliste: c'est une lecture cubiste, les sens sont des cubes entassés, décalés, juxtaposés et cependant mordant les uns sur les autres.' Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970/2002), 67-68. Quoted by Luz Aurora Pimentel, *El Espacio en la ficción: Ficciones espaciales* (Mexico City/Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2001), 18-19.
- 8 English translation by Willa and Edwin Muir, 1931.
- 9 '... les relations entre le narrateur et l'histoire qu'il raconte.' Gérard Genette, *Discours du récit et Nouveau discours du récit* (Paris: Seuil, coll. Points, 1972/2007), 219-222.
- 10 '... relations étroites entre le récit, ses protagonistes et ses détermination spatio-temporelles.' *Ibid.*, 219-222.
- 11 'Une restriction de "champ", c'est-à-dire en fait une sélection de l'information narrative [et] l'instrument de cette (éventuelle) sélection est un foyer situé, une sorte de goulot d'informations, qui n'en laisse passer que ce qu'autorise la situation.' *Ibid.*, 348.
- 12 'Le récit à focalisation interne (fixe, variable ou multiple), le récit à focalisation externe et le récit non-focalisé ou à focalisation zéro.' *Ibid.*, 206-207.
- 13 We say *usually* because it is possible to find stories (even if they are very rare) whose narrator is in fact homodiegetic with an external focalization, as is the case of the novel *La Jalousie* by Alain Robbe-Grillet.
- 14 'Etudier l'ordre temporel d'un récit, c'est confronter l'ordre de disposition des événements ou segments temporels dans le discours narratif à l'ordre de succession de ces mêmes événements ou segments temporels dans l'histoire, en tant qu'il est explicitement indiqué par le récit lui-même, ou qu'on peut l'inférer de tel ou tel indice indirect.' *Ibid.*, 23.

- 15 'L'analyse temporelle d'un texte consiste d'abord à en dénombrer les segments selon les changements dans le temps de l'histoire.' *Ibid.*, 26.
- 16 Blake Lee Spahr, defines the parts of *The Bridge* as: 'Expectation, Experience and Failure'. Blake Lee Spahr, 'Franz Kafka: The Bridge and the Abyss', *Modern Fiction Studies* 8/1 (1962), 3-15.
- 17 'Et qu'est-ce que la fragilité sinon une certaine probabilité de non-être pour un être donné dans des circonstances déterminées? Un être est fragile s'il porte en son être une probabilité définie de non-être.' Translation: And what is fragility if not a certain probability of non-being for a given being in specific circumstances? A being is fragile if he carries within his being a definite probability of non-being. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Être et le Néant* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1943), 42.
- 18 Which are, for Phillippe Boudon, the very essential acts of architectural conception. Philippe Boudon, *Sur l'espace architectural* (Marseille: Éditions Parenthèses, 2003).
- 19 'Un événement suppose la surprise, l'exposition, l'inanticipable . . . l'événement est ce qui vient, ce qui arrive.' Jacques Derrida in: Jacques Derrida, Gad Soussana and Alexis Nouss, *Dire l'événement, est-ce possible? Séminaire de Montréal: Pour Jacques Derrida* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 81 and 84.

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