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"Narrative Transgressions: Third Space as an Emergent Blend in the Short Story Experience"

My paper skirts around the alternatives between liminality *of* the short story and liminality *in* the short story presented in the conference description, because it focuses on an imaginary that is the result of a complex interaction between specific textual strategies and mental processing on the part of readers. Because short stories need to appeal to the reader's imagination in such a way as to be remembered in spite of the brevity of the reading experience, they tend to make use of such strategies which promise cognitive and affective impact. One major strategy is the appeal to visual imagining, another is to provoke the reader's narrative prospecting. These processes of visualizing and prospecting compensate for the typical foreshortening of the fictional world. In contrast to the depth perception of novels, short stories favour a flat narrative space organized around binary structures that can easily suggest or symbolize conflict and its solution: home and abroad, inside and out, centre and margin. The genre thus displays a generic predisposition for a relatively static structural arrangement around contrasts which transport meanings acquired in cultural memory. However, through the participation of the reader these oppositional topographies are then resolved into a third "emergent blend" (Mark Turner). This is my main thesis - that the short story chronotope functions as a trigger for an emergent third space. Such blending must not be considered merely a matter of individual imagination, but has cultural, political or ethical implications since the transformation that occurs in blending involves a creative rewriting of cultural meanings.