

### Facts about the field of study

This thesis investigates:

- Fictionality
- The eighteenth-century Danish novel
- Eighteenth-century novel prefaces
- The novel and the Volksbuch
- The novel and the periodical
- Novels forgotten by contemporary literary history

### About Simona Zetterberg Gjerlevsen

Simona Zetterberg Gjerlevsen, MA, Scandinavian has conducted her Ph.D.-dissertation at School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University. She is currently lecturer at Department of Scandinavian Studies and Experience Economy. She has published on fictionality as a theoretical concept, its relation to speech act theory and on the eighteenth-century novel. Her thesis *Fictionality and the Formation of the Novel – with a Focus on the Invention of Eighteenth-Century Danish Fiction* centers on these issues. Her publications include “Fictionality” *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, 2016; “A Novel History of Fictionality,” *Narrative* 24.2:174–189 (2016); “Johannes Ewald i romanhistorien – En omdatering og revurdering af Herr Panthakaks Historie,” *Passage* 74, 2016:35–50; “Forordets betydning for etableringen af den danske roman,” *Nordica* nr. 32. 2015: 396–428; and “Distinguishing Fictionality,” with Henrik Skov Nielsen, *Fictionality and Factuality: Blurred Borders in Narrations of Identity*, de Gruyter (forthcoming)

### Time and place for the defence

14 December 2016 at 13.15 to 16.15

Aarhus University, Nobelauditoriet building 1482, room 105, Jens Chr. Skous Vej no. 4, Aarhus C

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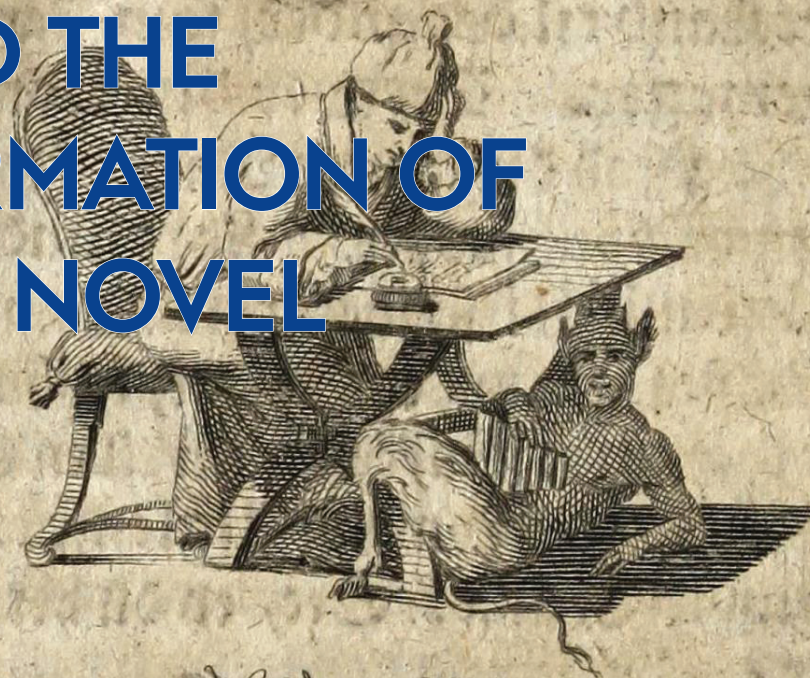
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# FICTIONALITY AND THE FORMATION OF THE NOVEL



PhD Dissertation by Simona Zetterberg Gjerlevsen



AARHUS UNIVERSITET

# FICTIONALITY AND THE FORMATION OF THE NOVEL - WITH A FOCUS ON THE INVENTION OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DANISH FICTION

**Fictionality and the Formation of the Novel – with a Focus on the Invention of Eighteenth-Century Danish Fiction** by Simona Zetterberg Gjerlevsen, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University, explores how fictionality may be conceptualized and defined as an autonomous rhetorical concept, and how that concept informs the understanding of the formation of the novel, and the early Danish novel, specifically.

## The Danish Eighteenth-Century Novel

The Danish eighteenth-century novel has not been thoroughly investigated since 1936 (Stangerup). The thesis provides an overview of the original eighteenth-century Danish novels and conducts case studies of eighteenth-century Danish novels and their prefaces. In doing so, it demonstrates how the novel rose as a genre through means of fictionality.

## Fictionality and the history of the novel

The thesis is positioned within a theoretical framework of rhetorical narratology and fictionality theory. It argues that although earlier endeavors tried to connect enquiries into literary history with narratology (Fludernik 1996; 2003, Cohn 1999, Alber 2011) and fictionality (Gallagher 2006, Paige 2011), none of these applied a concept of fictionality that was distinct from fiction, and therefore could not adequately explain how fictionality came to form the emerging novel.

## Defining fictionality

The thesis suggests that speech act theory may clarify how fictionality functions as a speech act in which the receiver is cued to recognize that the message indirectly serves a function other than referential truthfulness. It pursues a definition of fictionality as intentionally signaled,

communicated invention. It argues that instead of looking for signs that point to the genre of fiction, the proposed definition enables a method by which it is possible to seek signs of fictionality inside as well as outside fictional genres.

## Case studies

The investigation includes:

- Analysis of fictionality in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749), Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (first edition 1764, second edition 1766), and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1888, written in 1798–99).
- The first ever systematic investigation of the prefaces to the eighteenth-century Danish novels
- A comparative analysis of the Danish novel and the *Volksbuch* with a particular focus on Carl August Thiello's novel, *Den Unge Uglenspeil, eller det slet opdragne Menneske* [The Young Uglenspeil, or the Person who was brought up badly] (1759), and the *Volksbuch, Tiile Uglenspeil* (1669) (in Jacobsen, Olrik and Paulli 1930).
- A renewed study of and a suggestion for reevaluating the dating of Johannes Ewald's *The Story of Mr Panthakak* compared to a story about Mr Panthakak from the periodical *The Foreigners*.

## Conclusion

The thesis reconceptualizes fictionality theory and provides a definition of fictionality as intentionally signaled, communicated invention, which allows for an investigation of fictionality as an autonomous rhetorical concept in the formation of the novel. It demonstrates the methodological consequences such a definition has for each of the case studies undertaken. Overall, the thesis contributes to Danish literary history and eighteenth-century novel studies in three respects: 1) by gaining an overview of the original eighteenth-century Danish novels; 2) by introducing a rhetorical concept of fictionality to Danish novel studies; 3) by conducting case studies of eighteenth-century Danish novels and their prefaces, both of which have been forgotten by contemporary works of literary history.

## Perspectives

A concept of fictionality separated from fiction suggests a new way of thinking about communication. Investigating how widespread fictionality is and for what purposes the rhetoric of fictionality is exercised, has the potential to expand our idea of the purposes and functions of human communication. We might find that the human capacity to invent in communication is far more widespread and influential than hitherto assumed. And if the novel is one of the high points of the artistic expression of that capacity, fictionality gives us yet another reason to study the novel.