



Science, science fiction, and storytelling

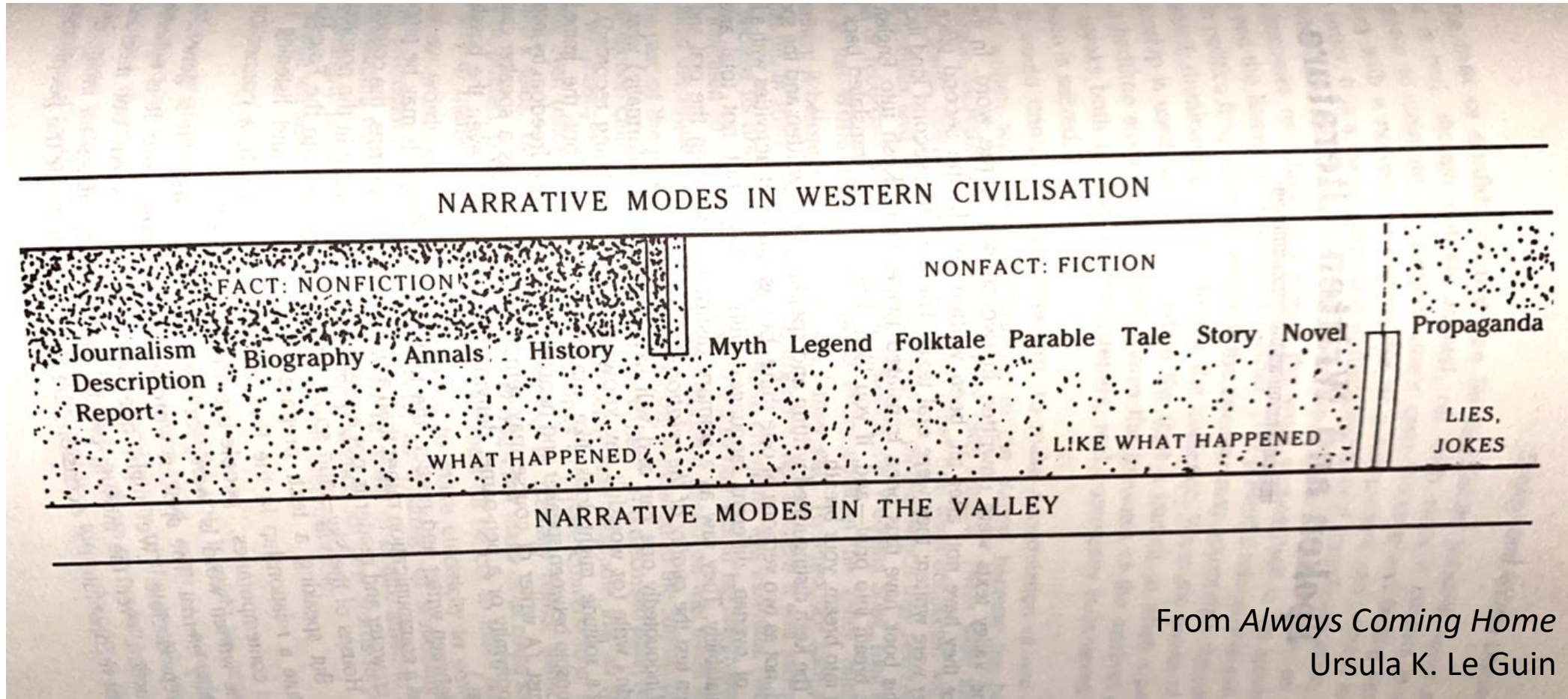
A two-day workshop at IdeaSquare, CERN
28-29 September 2023



“Julia was twenty-six years old... and she worked, as [Winston] had guessed, on the **novel-writing machines** in the Fiction Department. She enjoyed her work, which consisted chiefly in running and servicing a powerful but tricky electric motor [...] She could describe the whole process of composing a novel, from the general directive issued by the Planning Committee down to the final touching-up by the Rewrite Squad. But she was not interested in the final product. She ‘didn't much care for reading’, she said. Books were just a commodity that had to be produced, like jam or bootlaces.”

—George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

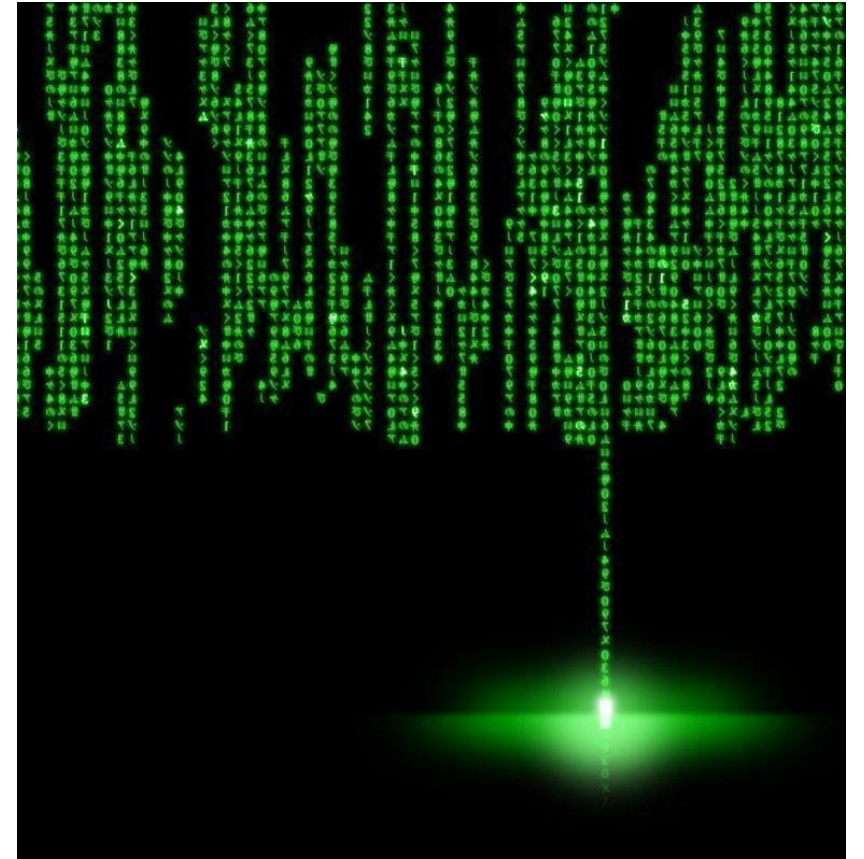
Narrative modes of the Kesh



The SF ‘megatext’

“the huge body of established moves or reading protocols that the reader learns through immersion in many hundreds of sf short stories and novels [and] from movies, television episodes, and games). [...] For a story to be effective sf, it is insufficient that it invoke futuristic or extraterrestrial locales in ignorance of those narrative constraints or opportunities that already exist. These are embodied in science fiction's century and more of imagined worlds and their inhabitants, created via specific rhetorical moves, tools and lexicons.”

—SFE: The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction





Summary

- **Aim:** bridge the gap between the science and the storytelling.
 - Create space for blue-sky thinking on topics such as sustainability, consciousness, peace, and post-truth.
- **Aim:** capture the work by building a toolkit for creative practice for both scientists and the storytellers.
 - Devise a toolkit of creative exercises in various formats to extrapolate about the future.



The Galactic Federation Interviews Earth for Membership

—Vinny Thomas



Devising a creative exercise

- **Method:** What form will your exercise take?
 - Exploratory? Game play? Other?
- **Output:** What will the exercise produce?
 - Written word? Performance? Other?
- **Focus:** What parameters will you set?
 - **Setting:** an exercise to map the terrain of a futuristic environment.
 - **Novum:** an exercise to create a technological advance and explore its impact.
 - **Transition:** an exercise to explore pathways to the future beyond conflict.