CHAPTER 2
The Tale and the Telling: The Evolution of Novelistic Narratology

2.1. The Significance of Time Narration

In the study of literature there is a dual significance to time that we have to consider “because such works exist in time while simultaneously representing objects that themselves exist in time” (Harmon 129).

An examination of narratives in any form, particularly literary narratives, over the centuries of their evolution helps us with a direct insight into the cultural values and philosophical outlook of the respective cultures that produced them. They provide us with diverse cultural models of time. The focus of our study at this point is literary narratives of the modern era which radically reconstituted the notions of time and space. The tools provided by structuralist narratology are helpful in this regard. Hence we begin with a brief discussion of narratology, focusing on the field of prose fiction.

2.2. Narrative and Narratology

‘Narrative’ is a word that has gained wide currency in cultural studies. It is with the emergence of narratology as an offshoot of semiotics and structuralism (two closely related disciplines) that it has gained so much prominence in literary and philosophic discourses. In the world of theory today, the idea of narrative has become a multifaceted subject of enquiry encompassing many disciplines. In simple terms we may define narratives as the stories that we tell ourselves to make sense of experience. As accounts of what happened to particular people in particular circumstances and with specific consequences, stories have been recognized as a basic human strategy
for coming to terms with time, process and change. As the protagonist in Sartre’s 
*Nausea* says:

This is what I thought: for the most banal to become an adventure, you 
must (and this is enough) begin to recount it. This is what fools people: 
a man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and 
the stories of others, he sees everything which happens to him through 
them; and he tries to live his life as if he were telling a story. But you 
have to choose: live or tell . . . . I wanted the moments of my life to 
follow each other and order themselves like those of a life 
remembered. I might as well try to catch time by the tail. (56)

An examination of the structures of such tales would provide insight into how 
at various times men have attempted to catch “time by the tail”. The comparatively 
new discipline of narratology is about this. To understand narratology, we may begin 
with some of the basic notions involved.

### 2.3. Narrative – Definition and Scope

The etymology of the word “narrative” is traced to the root Latin words 
*gnoarūs* meaning “knowing,” “expert,” or “acquainted with” (Prince 129), and 
narrāre which means “to tell,” “relate”, “recount,” “explain”, or “to familiarise with”. 
Both these expressions are derivatives of the Indo-European root *gna*, (“to know”). In 
many Indian languages we use the noun *gnānam* to signify knowledge and wisdom. 
Thus the word narration carries two related basic meanings – “to relate” and “to 
know”. Relation implies connecting and also telling (a story, for example). Human 
beings relate to the world and relate to each other. It is the process by which they
know the world around them. Relating implies communication. Human beings communicate in various ways, and each act of communication is a way of relating. We tell stories; we connect things and try to explain them. We define space and time in order to make such connections, because human understanding is conditioned by time space realities which serve as a ‘framework’ within which the world is understood and articulated. “Narrative always reports one or more changes of state but . . . . also a particular mode of knowledge. It does not merely reflect what happens; it discovers and invents what can happen” (129).

Life is lived in space and time. As the philosophers would say, life is lived “as narrative”. Life is happening with a chaotic simultaneity, without any inherent order, a discernible pattern or regularity. The world and its happenings surround us all at once, all the time, everywhere. Our senses receive stimuli from all around through the five senses from without and thoughts and emotions from within. We attempt to make sense of this chaos constantly by trying to answer, albeit unconsciously, questions such as “Where am I? What is around me? Where have I been? Where am I going? What am I doing? What is happening around me?” Our experience of coherence belies the surrounding chaos. Out of the stream of unregulated sensation, the human intellect configures objects in space and perceives actions in time. We attempt to connect them by means of causality and chronology into ‘events’. The intellect imports meaning to experience, sets goals and roadmaps for the journey of life. Patterns are imposed on experience, creating narratives at the most basic level. The creation of such patterns help human beings understand themselves and relate to the world. It is an existential need.
At the most fundamental level, we may define narrative as a re-presentation of two events ordered in time. The mind conceives the events in a sequence and connects them in terms of time, space and causality. Such a narrative may be called a “minimal narrative”.

Barbara Herrnstein provides the simplest definition of a narrative, which states that a narrative is “someone telling someone else that something happened” (228). But this definition does not cover products of imagination – made up tales or fantasies, let us say fiction. Also its stress on “telling”(which implies listening also) excludes visual or written forms of narration. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s definition is useful as a starting point of our analysis. To her, “the term narration suggests (1) a communication process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addresser to addressee and (2) the verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message”(Introduction 2). This notion helps to distinguish literary narrative fiction from other forms, such as film, photography or painting, dance or pantomime.

To Rimmon-Kenan, narrative is “the narration of a succession of fictional events” (2). The phrase “succession of events” “suggest that narratives usually consist of more than one” event (3).

The above definitions, helpful as they are, are similar in some ways but also dissimilar. In Herrnstein’s notion, narration is any kind of telling or relating of things that “happened”. In the second, fiction (imagination) is emphasized. Since narration implies mediation – of an agent (teller or narrator), and the medium that is used – the teller in both cases is assumed. There is someone – an organizing and mediating consciousness – that relates an event(s) to another individual or individuals. Hayden White speaks of narrative as “a meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which
transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted” (1). White sees the analysis of narrative structure as vital because “to raise the question of the narrative structure is to invite reflection upon the very nature of culture and possibly, even the nature of humanity itself” (1).

In a little more abstract manner we may define narrative as the ordering, articulation or representation in a medium, of ideas, images, or emotions in time and space in an attempt to create and communicate meaning out of life experience at whatever level. Thus, in its broadest sense, narrative does not mean mere story telling or reporting of actual events; it implies meaningful structuring and communication as well. This structuring and communication implies “narrativity”. This is of course difficult to define properly. Narrativity may be conceived as the processes involved in the production and reception of narratives as well as the properties that help us distinguish narratives from non-narratives. It involves the organisation of data into meaningful units. It can serve as the basis for making distinctions among different genres and sub-genres of narratives.” To Martin McQuillan “Narrativity’ is the process which constitutes that textual inscription of the inter-subjective context and the signifying chain” (Introduction 11). Every human thought or plain statements may be at least potentially a narrative but to become proper narratives they should possess certain features that distinguish them. It is difficult to identify all these. “Narrativity”, as Porter Abbot admits “is a vexed issue, and as with many issues in the study of narrative there is no definitive test that can tell us to what degree narrativity is present” (25). There are many elements in a narrative and they differ from genre to genre and often overlap too. However “narrativity is a matter of degree that does not
correlate to the number of devices, qualities or, for that matter, words that are employed in the narrative” (25).

Abbott’s definition of narrative is analogous to Saussure’s structuralist definition of the sign. He speaks of it as a combination of story and discourse in much the same way the sign for Saussure is a combination of the signifier and the signified. The “story”, says Porter “is an event or sequence of events (the action), and narrative discourse is those events as represented” (16). This may be restated to say that narrative is the textual manifestation of the story while the story is what we infer or abstract from the narrative.

Whatever the definition we give to narratives, there are three things that are common to all of them and which are necessary for their realization.

They are:

1. Mediation, implying a medium through which communication is made possible or the link between the narrator and the narratee.

2. Temporality, implying the condition of time boundedness within and without the narrated idea.

3. Spatiality, referring to space within and without the narrated idea.

According to recent theories in psychology, narrative is not merely the human mind producing patterns out of the chaos of experience and articulating them in various forms, it is consciousness itself. Jenny Rankin points out that “Narrative has often and for long periods been dismissed as a representation or imitation of reality, and as an artefact arising from an otherwise idle human consciousness – rather than constitutive of consciousness itself . . . Narrative not simply describes the world, rather it is involved with “creating, expressing and unfolding the possibilities of
becoming” (1). She further observes that “it is only through narrative that we comprehend and express time and indeed all thought” (2). Gerald Prince elaborates on this point when he says that narrative is not only a particular mode of knowledge but above all, perhaps, by instituting different moments in time and establishing links between them, by finding significant patterns in temporal sequences, by pointing to an end already partly contained in the beginning and to a beginning already partly containing the end, by exposing the meaning of time and imposing meaning on it, narrative reads time and teaches how to read it. In other words, narratology has helped to show how narrative is a structure and practice that illuminates temporality and human beings as temporal beings. Indeed, to speak most generally, narratology does have crucial implications for our self-understanding (Prince129).

2.4. Two Basic Kinds of Narrative

Narratives may be of two kinds – the unarticulated (virtual, primal) narratives and the (real, complex) narratives. The constant, silent mental process that we engage in all our living moments, which helps us make sense of our life and preserve our sanity, constantly addressing the questions that we have formulated above is not always articulated in outward expressions. We may call them “elementary” or “inarticulate” narratives.

Articulated narratives are those that are communicated to the outer world, in the form of various modes of communication. These provide a bewildering array of forms with differing degrees of complexity and sophistication. Communicating to each other through gestures, sounds or words may be called articulated narratives at
the simplest level. At a still higher level art and literature form the most sophisticated forms of narratives that human beings create. They may be separated from other articulated forms of narrative by labelling them as ‘aesthetic narratives’. It is in the case of such articulate narratives that questions of organization, mediation and communication are discussed. Narratology starts here.

2.5. Conceiving Space and Time

Human narrative construction is a process inspired by the attempt to make sense of the world, organizing the spatial and temporal dimensions in which we exist and comprehending the events that unfold around us, making the connections that create the patterns out of them. We engage in such narratives on a daily basis. Through these narratives, we connect representations of segments, temporally in the case of space, causally in the case of events. The mode of construction of these narratives reveals and affects how people think about scenes in space and events in time. Although space and time are continuous, the mind discretizes them as objects in space and events in time. The framework of spatial narratives (such as painting) is objects and the spatial relations between them; they are united by perspective; that is the point of view of someone who moves through space or looks down upon a scene of action. Temporal narratives (such as a novel) are structured by objects and the actions taken or suffered in relation to them. Space and time form the background on which life is lived. These provide the basis for complex narratives, narratives enriched with voice and character, with perspective and motivation. The events of life in themselves do not possess structure or pattern. The human intellect imposes structures and patterns upon experience. The process of structuralising is motivated by its own conscious or unconscious intentions which provide a theme for the structures.
And those intentions can frequently alter the teller’s own interpretation of the events. The alterations that narrative themes impose on events – exaggerations, minimizations and omissions of factual data, as well as fabrications – cannot only affect the thought processes of the audiences of the stories, but can also mislead the narrators of the stories themselves, making them ‘believe’ in their narratives.

A narrative “does not merely reflect what happens; it discovers and invents what can happen. It does not simply record events; it constitutes and interprets them as meaningful parts of meaningful wholes, whether the latter are situations, practices, persons, or societies” (Prince 129).

2.6. Narratology – a Definition

To Miecke Bal, “Narratology is a theory of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events: cultural artifacts that ‘tell a story’. Such a theory helps to understand, analyse, and evaluate narratives” (Introduction 3).

Bal’s proposal of a definition of narrative in terms of narratology establishes the relationship between narrative and the discipline of narratology. To her, narratology is a system or a handy tool that helps us create and understand narrative texts. However, she does not allow this to be understood in a mechanical way; it is not “some kind of machine into which one inserts a text at one end and expects an adequate description to roll out at the other” (Bal 3 – 4). Bal speaks of it in the context of narrative fiction. Narratology can be best understood as a helpful tool in the study and explanation of narratives of various kinds. It has developed a large and sometimes confusing terminology for this purpose. By using terms such as fabula, siuzet, histoire, recit, narration event, actor, story, discourse, text, object, time, location and
a number of such other terms, narratology tries to clarify the differences between 
those texts that are and are not narratives.

Narratology is also a discipline that helps us examine the ways in which 
narratives structure our perception of both cultural artifacts and the world around us. 
The study of narrative is particularly important since our ordering of time and space in 
narrative forms constitutes one of the primary ways we construct meaning in general.

Narratology examines and attempts to describe “the way in which a narrative 
text is constructed” which in turn leads to the “description of a narrative system” (Bal, 
Introduction 3). Once this task is accomplished, readers are offered an instrument with 
which they can describe narrative texts (Bal 3).

Narratology is a term that came into currency when it was first used by the 
structuralist theoretician Tzvetan Todorov in his Grammaire du Décaméron (1969), a 
work that analyzed the structure of Boccacio’s The Decameron. It first became 
popular in French literary circles. Though it is a term used in the structuralist 
parlance, it is now extended to apply to any systematic study of narratives of any 
kind. Deeply related to formalism and rooted in structuralist principles, it became a 
new theoretical discipline in the 1960s and 70s.

Proposing the structural analysis of narratives, Todorov points out that it is a 
“theoretical attitude” as opposed to the “descriptive” attitude or a “scientific method”. 
He notes: “It is easily seen that such a (structuralist) conception of literary analysis 
owes much to the modern notion of science. It can be said that structural analysis of 
literature is a kind of propaedeutic for a future science of literature” (“Structural 
Analysis...” 251). He also distinguishes the structural method as different from the 
sociological and psychological approach which are seen as theoretical (external) and
the New Critical approach which is ‘descriptive’ (internal). It is different in that “structural analysis coincides (in its basic tenets) with theory, with poetics of literature” (251).

Structuralism, like formalism in the modernist period, brought to literary criticism and cultural studies the rigour and exactitude of science. Narratology may be considered “the science of narrative” deriving as it is from structural linguistics which is described as the “science of language”.

The structuralists try to abstract a structure out of all narratives, arguing that it is possible to find the basic codification system, a common denominator for all narratives, in whatever textual medium, from folktales to comic strips and cinema. It is in some way analogous to the notions underlying the unified field theory in modern physics. Narratology now holds under its umbrella comparative studies, historiography, gender studies, reception theory, and theories of authorship, psychoanalysis and even information technology.

**2.7. The Evolution of Narratology**

The emergence of narratology resulted from a confluence of many disciplines that developed independently in different parts of the Western world. Two currents are to be mentioned in particular: Russian Formalism and Saussurean linguistics. But the antecedents of these can be traced further back to certain 19th century philosophical postulates and the New Critical approaches of the modernist period.

The New Critics of America and their counterparts in England overthrew the prevailing mode of historical/biographical criticism to focus on the form (text), basing their evaluation on psychological approach and focusing on the reader’s response to a text. I.A. Richards’ *Science and Poetry*, (1926), W.K. Wimsatt’s *The Verbal Icon*
(1958), Cleanth Brooks’ *The Well-Wrought Urn*, (1949) are landmarks in this approach. The structuralists are kindred spirits who approached the work of literature as an object whose meaning can be interpreted in terms of its signifying structures or symbolic patterns.

The new critics are sometimes referred to as Neo Aristotelians, for they took the cue to structural analysis from the well entrenched ideas formulated by Aristotle. In their novelistic theories, there is a clear shift towards the aesthetics of structural studies. Among these, Cleanth Brooks’s contribution to novel criticism stands out. In fact Brooks anticipates some of the more refined and technical approaches of the structuralists. For example, in his essay written in collaboration with Robert Penn Warren, the question of narrative temporality is examined.

An action takes place in time, the movement of an event is from one point in time to another. But narration gives us a *unit* of time, not a mere fragment of time. A unit is a thing which is complete in itself. It may be part of a larger thing, and it may contain smaller parts, which themselves are units, but in itself it can be thought of as complete. A unit of time is that length of time in which a process fulfils itself. (151–152)

This is perhaps the earliest critical attempt to look at fictional temporality before the arrival of the specialized terminology developed by the structuralists who would have approached the problem of narrative, making use of distinguishing terms such as the ‘fabula’ and the ‘sjuzet’ the ‘story’ and the ‘discourse’ in place of New Critics’ use of the “natural order” and the “narrative order” (Brooks and Warren 152).
Penn Warren also discusses the notions of “beginning” (exposition), “middle” and “end” and also discusses the idea of “point of view”. His terminology clearly echoes Aristotelian thoughts on structure.

The roots of the specifically structuralist approach can be traced to the emergence of Saussurean linguistics and the emergence of formalism in the early twentieth century. In his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) Ferdinand de Saussure opened up the study of language as a system of linguistic signs which are composed of the ‘signifiers’ and the ‘signifieds’. Among his most important formulations the dichotomy of the signifier and the signified and their relationship is of supreme importance in the field of literary analysis. Saussurean linguistics gave birth to Semiotics and Structuralism, the influence of which began to be felt in the West after the mid 20th century.

In Russia, in the early 20th century, Viktor Shklovsky, Jan Mukarovsky, N.S. Troubetzkoy, Vladimir Propp and Mikhail Bakhtin engaged in formulating the basic theories of narratology, though under the Stalinist totalitarianism these remained more or less unknown to the world outside till late in the 20th century.

Structuralist narratology came into vogue in the 1960s and 70s when Saussurean and Bakhtinian ideas percolated into western universities and we notice a new confluence of the various critical disciplines developed in various countries during this time, creating new paradigms for culture studies.

This new academic interest in the study of narrative received a strong impetus under the influence of these Russian formalists along with the famous French structuralists Tzvetan Todorov, Claude Bremond, Claude Levi Strauss, Roman Jakobson, Gerard Genette, and Roland Barthes. In the U.S.A., they had their
counterparts in Paul Ricoeur, Alisdair MacIntyre, Hayden White and Gerald Prince. These thinkers have developed a set of new conceptual tools and terms that are useful in the analysis of various narratives. They differed from the previous theorists in that they took narrative studies out of the limited area of genre studies and made it interdisciplinary – in the sense that it cut across various media and sciences by the application of the principles of semiotics.

Mikhail Bakhtin in his Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics (1929), and Rabelais and His World (1940) developed the concept of dialogism as basic to the use of language in the novel form. From this he went onto develop the ideas of polyphony, carnival and chronotope which later became useful tools for the analysis of novel. It is of historical significance that Bakhtin’s works were translated into English and other European languages only in the 1960s.

Roman Jakobson’s approach was functional, helping to extend some of the concepts of Saussure further, as exemplified by his “Linguistics and Poetics” (1958). He made structuralist analysis more dynamic by his identification of the six different functions of language and deriving the ideas of “metaphor” and “metonymy” as the two axes of language.

Claude Lévi-Strauss’s, Structural Anthropology (1958) applied the linguistic analysis of Saussure to anthropological analysis. His method was epoch-making in that he pioneered the identification of the so called “mythemes” in pairs and functioning as binary opposites in a “four-term homology” (Rimmon-Kenan 111). His method bears close resemblance to the method of A. J. Greimas.

Roland Barthes developed Strauss’s method further to develop into cultural criticism and used the basic concept of sign to open up the avenues of Semiotics. His
Mythologies (1957) demonstrates this. In his “An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative” (1966), Barthes established distinctions between functions, actions and narration and between “kernel” and “satellite” structures within the narrative. This was an attempt to identify a common syntax for all narratives. His most famous fictional analysis was S/Z (1970) in which he provided a study of Balzac’s “Sarasine” from a loosely structuralist perspective. A still more rigorous and detailed approach to fictional structure is displayed in his “Textual analysis: Poe’s ‘Valdemar’”. In this piece Barthes speaks of the “divergence” appearing within the scientific discipline of structural analysis of narrative which comes under two broad categories:

in the first, faced with all the narratives in the world, the analysis seeks to establish a narrative model – which is evidently formal –, a structure or grammar of narrative, on the basis of which…each particular narrative will be analysed in terms of divergence. In the second tendency, the narrative is immediately subsumed … under the notion of ‘text’, space, process of meanings at work, in short, ‘significance’… which is observed not as finished, closed product, but as production in progress, ‘plugged in’ to other texts, other codes (this is intertextual), and thereby articulated with society and history in ways which are not determinist but citational. (151)

Tzvetan Todorov’s “Typology of Detective Fiction” (1966) is one of the well known attempts at application of structuralist methodology of classification. In this
case it is detective fiction genre which he classifies into three groups dependent on the structural devices – the whodunit, the thriller and the suspense novels.

He also has this to say about the method and significance of structuralist approach to narrative: “Textual analysis does not try to describe the structure of a work; it is not a matter of recording a structure, but rather of producing a mobile structuration of the text…. Textual analysis does not try to find out what it is that determines the text …, but rather how the text explodes and dispenses” (151). The structuralist approach does not seek to produce “all the meanings of the text”. Instead it …. attempts to “locate avenues of meaning…… it touches on a theory, a practice, a choice, which are caught up in the struggle of men and signs”. (151)

In the 1980s the field of narrative theory emerged with a recognizable identity.

2.8. Critique of Structuralist Narratology

Structuralist Narratology has received a lot of criticism from theoreticians with other theoretical orientations. One such is that it is too abstract and has no connection with real works. But the answer to this is that it does make use of real works though only as a starting point and then it moves towards a general theory.

Dino Felluga notes that narratology for some theoreticians is a “rather pretentious label that refers to the structuralist study of narrative”. But he also has something more to say:

The structuralist seeks to understand how recurrent elements, themes, and patterns yield a set of universals that determine the makeup of a story. The ultimate goal
of such analysis is to move from taxonomy of elements
to an understanding of how these elements are arranged
in actual narratives, fictional and nonfictional.
(“General Introduction to Narratology.”)

Structuralist narratology is the most influential force in the emergence of postmodern fictional studies. However, its formalist approach based on synchronicity has been criticized from many quarters, mainly by the New Historicists, on the basis of the “common perception that this banished time and history entirely from Structuralist narratology” (Currie, PM N Theory 76). But it is pointed out that “it doesn’t take much exploration in the structuralist handbooks to determine that the internal temporality of a narrative – the order and frequency of its events – was one of the major concerns of the structuralists” (77). Currie agrees that in structuralist narratological practice “there was a kind of disregard for the possible historical dimension of synchronic analysis and a tendency to view the internal temporal sequence of narrative as a spatial or structural organization of narrative elements” (77). But he offers this explanation: “In theory structuralist narratology was neither ahistorical nor disinterested in the temporal organization of the narrative, but in practice anything temporal was quickly translated into spatial relationships or differences” (77).

Novices in the field would soon discover that “Narratology is complicated by the fact that different theorists have different terms for explaining the same phenomenon, a fact that is fueled by narratology's structuralist background: narratologists love to categorize and to taxonomize, which has led to a plethora of terms to explain the complicated nature of narrative form” (Felluga).
Structuralist Narratology is often criticized as being “reductive”, “static” and impervious to the dynamics of storytelling. It is also possible to find fault with the methods for ignoring the contextual relations of the text in favour of its methodology or the “how” in place of the “what”.

Whatever the limitations that are pointed out, it is a fact that narratology has deepened our insights into both the structure of literary narratives of all kinds and their link to primal tales, by providing a common topology and deepening our cultural wisdom.

2.9. Scope and Application of Narratology

As a critical method, narratology studies cultural artifacts as well as the manner and modes by which our perceptions of the world at large are conditioned by narratives. In other words, it studies the ways reality is ordered or recreated as structures both temporal and spatial. The significance of this discipline is enhanced by the fact that our world is a world of narrative proliferation produced by the various communication media.

Initially narrative studies were the concern of literary critics and anthropologists. With the rising influence of structuralism and post-structuralism, the narrative approach has been adopted into various disciplines – anthropology, psychology, philosophy, and history. This in turn has facilitated the emergence of interdisciplinary approaches in postmodern academics. Stories (fictional or historical narratives) have great significance in shaping and transforming a civilization. Every civilization has its grand narratives in the form of religious truths, mythology, legends, epics or fairy tales that provide models of the world embodying ethical
principles or a cosmology that guides and controls human thought and behaviour. Hence the study of narratives becomes vital.

The relationship between narrative and life has been subject of much questioning in contemporary cultural studies. Postmodernist writing has celebrated this notion in various ways. Especially in the field of literature, narrative representations have become a widely discussed issue. Theoreticians look into the realm of literature as allowing for the construction of models of the world.

Narratology has also developed a critical methodology which allows its practitioners to analyze and describe literary as well as non literary texts and distinguish between artistic conventions and lived reality. In other words, narratology provides a basic foundation for the analysis of popular media – cinema, fiction, television and information technology. Narratology analyses popular media narratives, providing the key to the meaning and purpose of such narratives. It attempts to systematically formulate “a set of general statements about a particular segment of reality. That segment of reality . . . . consists of ‘narrative texts’ of all kinds, made for a variety of purposes and serving many different functions” (Bal Introduction 3).

One of the most significant developments that resulted from the rise of structuralist narratology was the questioning of the epistemology of the Enlightenment. It sought to raise new questions concerning the way reality is conceived and expressed by the Enlightenment thought in terms of linearity, causality and empiricism. Such an attitude may be said to have developed in the 20th century as a result of the radical changes in various fields of knowledge as well as historical experience which called to question the basic assumptions of Enlightenment thought.
The postmodernist approach to historiography itself can be cited as a case in point. Hayden White, the narrativist historian problematizes the discipline of historiography. In his *Metahistory* (1973) he raises the argument that, when historians provide an account of the past, they are partly concerned with finding a plot according to which factual events can be ordered in a meaningful sequence. This “emplotment” is the way in which meaning is made of otherwise discrete, even random events. The writing of history, like the writing of fiction also involves this emplotment which is the syntax that invests meaning to experience. In his article “The Fictions of Factual Representation”(1976), White highlights the literary nature of history writing. It is a “poetic process” involving the literary procedures of selection, troping and emplotment. The often deliberate erasing or narrowing down of the epistemological differences that marked the boundaries of literature and history is part of the postmodernist project which attempts to subvert the Enlightenment premise concerning the factuality of written history. This issue of epistemology raised by structuralism has its implications in the postmodernist concepts regarding “fact” and “fiction”. This is a part of the rejection of the “grand narratives” of Modernism and a declaration of the failure of the humanist realist claims regarding the representation of reality. This idea of the “literary nature” of history or, history also as a mode of representation on a par with fiction is a recurrent theme in postmodernist historiographic metafiction and magic realism. Christine Brooke Rose cites the example of Rushdie’s *Shame* as embodying this idea: “The notion is that of history as itself a fiction, the expression is varied” (125). To her, a fictional work such as *Shame* thus becomes “palimpsest history” (125).
In political science, Fredric Jameson (1981) has proposed an interpretive scheme which claims that ideological systems are produced in part by the workings of narrative structures.

Narrative of any kind implies a structuring of events in a sequence – a linear arrangement with beginning, middle and an end connected by the link of causality which we call a plot. As Peter Brooks perceptively stated:

plot… is the design and intention of narrative, what shapes a story and gives it a certain direction or intent of meaning. We might think of plot as the logic or perhaps the syntax of a certain kind of discourse, one that develops the propositions through a temporal sequence and progression. Narrative is one of the large categories or systems of understanding that we use in our negotiations with reality, specifically, in the case of narrative, with the problem of temporality: man’s time-boundedness, his consciousness of existence within the limits of mortality. (Preface1)

Brooks’s theory was greatly influenced by Paul Ricoeur, who explored the notion of “emplotment”(1:21–22) further from a deeply philosophical approach. Both these theoreticians deal with the problem of narrativity or “structuration” – the process of narrative making – rather than narrative itself. (McQuillan, Introduction 7). This means that “…narrative is both necessarily metaphysical – narrative has a necessary connecton to time – and a cognitive process by which the subject constructs meaningful realities” (7). Ricoeur is concerned with the manner in which our very experience of time is dependent on the narrative structures that we impose on experience. He claims that narratives unfold a temporal world and the temporal
character of experience(1: 3). A narrative becomes meaningful because of its articulation of time through the act of emplotment.

Among other things, this new discipline has brought about a radical shift in the study of literary arts. The shift that they brought about was the changeover of literary criticism from dealing with particular literary genres and thematic concerns to an exploration of structures, or in other words to look at narrative in terms of semiotics. Thus narrative is emancipated from being a concern of mere literary criticism and studied in relation to other aspects of culture. Structuralist approach therefore is interdisciplinary. Traditional theorists of the novel were focussed on the content – action, character, setting, and themes – and its meaning. The structuralists and formalists insist that the first thing that a reader encounters in any narrative is the “telling” of it. The story and its meaning are actually an abstraction derived from it after the reading act. Story tellers construct their stories out of pre-existing cultural materials, other narratives, out of which they make their own narratives. Hence there are no absolutely original stories in this world. All tales are “twice-told”, all tellings ultimately retellings. It is only through the telling of the story that the reader has access to it. And by the act of retelling, the story is filtered through a different consciousness which provides a different version of the story rearranging, editing, omitting and adding to the original in the process.

2.10. The Grand Principles of Prose Fictional Narrative

Henrik Schärfe speaks of the “Three Grand Principles” that are rendered as the epitome of much effort in Narratology. These are: Succession, Transformation and
Mediation. The Grand Principles of Narratology correspond to three textual levels with their own characteristics in relation to different narrative concerns.

Succession corresponds to a Narrative Syntax, addressing narrative coherence. This may, in other words be explained as the sequencing of each item in a narration making or suggesting their interconnection and succession in time which naturally includes causality also.

Transformation corresponds to a level of Narrative Semantics, addressing the significance of correlating properties of textual elements, distributed throughout the narrative. Finally, Mediation corresponds to a level of Narrative Pragmatics, addressing questions of intentionality and relevance. The description is subject to ontological considerations.

Though all the three principles in some way touch upon the question of temporality, it is the principle of succession that is often considered most important. Therefore this needs some more explanation at this point. A verbal narrative being a construct of language, succession implies temporality and causality at different levels in a discourse. The reader follows one word after the other, sentence after the other, event after the other, making the connections in time. A fictional narrative is a linear representation of non-linear, non-uniform time. Its form is thus especially influenced by the prevailing notions of time. Since language itself is constructed to cope with the commonsense notions of time and space, the representation of these realities poses special difficulties for the writer. The narrative is constructed in a sequence of linguistic signs bearing the same relationship to reality as that between the signifier and the signified in the Saussurean parlance. The verbal icon stands for the events that are coded in the language. Just as a sentence is read sequentially, so we read a
tale. At best the articulation of time and space can only be indirect or ‘iconic’. Speaking particularly of the question of time or chronological sequencing of events in a verbal narrative, Rimmon-Kenan pinpoints the problems involved in this:

The notion of story-time involves a convention which identifies it with an ideal chronological order, or what is sometimes called ‘natural chronology’. In fact strict chronological succession can only be found in stories with a single line or even with a single character. The minute there is more than one character, events may become simultaneous and the story is often multilinear rather than unilinear. (17)

Along with this the age old question of causality is also to be considered. The problem of fictional causality is not as simple as E. M. Forster represented it in his famous distinction between story and plot. ‘The King died. The Queen died’ is a story according to Forster, whereas the ‘King died, the queen died of grief’ is a plot (82). In the first statement there are two events in a chronological sequence. The events are connected by cause-effect logic in the second case. But this definition is rather simplistic because it ignores the fact that “temporal succession, the ‘and then’ principle, is often coupled with the principle of causality – ‘that’s why’ or ‘therefore’” (Rimmon-Kenan 17). In the case of the first two statements, the reader or the auditor would assume the causal connections between the events, whereas in the second one the causal connection is given by the narrator himself. “There is nothing to prevent a causally -minded reader from supplementing Forster’s first example with the causal link that would make it into an implicit plot” (17). It is also to be noted in passing that Forster’s distinction of plot and story falls within the Russian concept of the sjuzet. Fabula-sjuzet distinction is not the same as the distinction between plot and story.
“Causality can either be implied by chronology or gain an explicit status in its own right” (17). Rimmon-Kenan points out that even while causality and closure (i.e. a sense of completion) may be the most interesting features on which their quality as stories is most often judged… temporal succession is sufficient as a minimal requirement for a group of events to form a story, because “causality can often (always?) be projected on to temporality; …If, … we posit causality and closure (through inversion, repetition, or analogy) as obligatory criteria, many groups of events which we intuitively recognize as stories would have to be excluded from this category” (18 – 19).

This ‘minimal’ narrative is an example of the smallest possible unit of a narration involving time, space and causality. A plot is created out of two events. This ‘emplotment’ creates semantics of experience and explains events to us. Add to this the flourishes of language and other aesthetic factors, and we have aesthetic narratives of various kinds which we may call a proper narrative discourse. Such a narrative, invested with rhetorical devices and details of description, dramatizations etc, according to the nature of the medium of narration, may be called enriched narratives. In the formalist terminology, it is the sjuzet. For many others it is “discourse”. These enriched narratives are conditioned not only by a certain ordering of events in terms of time, space and causality but also voice and emotion which involve the literary procedures of selection, troping and emplotment. The details of an actual event can get transformed in the retelling, depending on the above factors. As modern theoreticians argue, there is no such thing as an ‘innocent’ or objective narrative. The teller always puts a ‘spin’ on the actual events while mediating it in his narrative. Every narrative is motivated, purposeful. The very structuring of a narrative implies a
certain purpose. Every narrative is conditioned by what Peter Brooks calls “desire”. “Desire as narrative thematic, desire as narrative motor, and desire as the very intention of narrative language and the act of telling all seem to stand in close interrelation” (54).

2.11. Fictional Narrative Evolution

The world itself is a narrative. And it is full of various forms of narrative. In the realm of artistic expression, fictional narratives occupy a centrality. Fiction can be of any kind. Fictional narrative implies any kind of made up story in whatever form or medium. In other words, fictional narrative is an umbrella term which includes epics, ballads, drama, films, cartoon strips, short stories, novels, romances, satires and so on.

In the ancient world, fiction consisted mostly of myths, tales of heroism, legends and folk stories widely prevalent among people of different cultures, including those who had not developed the art of writing. Even the historical works of the ancient world read like fiction by modern standards. The significance of these lies in the fact that such fictional narratives expressed the value systems of the respective peoples, their cosmologies, their customs and beliefs. Thus, consciously or unconsciously, fiction-making of various kinds was the chief method through which the world was comprehended, and the memories of a race and culture were preserved and transmitted to posterity.

When we look at the classical world, generally we notice that poetry was the chief medium of fiction. Writing came at a later stage of evolution and from that time onwards prose also begins to appear though in small amounts. Prose narrative was considered an inferior form by the classical world, a notion that prevailed till the
The post-Renaissance period saw the ascent of prose fiction in European literatures owing to a variety of influences – the growth of printing technology, the birth of mercantile capitalism and so on. It soon became the most representative form of the new age. By the turn of the twentieth century, prose fiction expanded in scope and influence, branching out into a bewildering array of forms, defying easy definition or classification.


Novelistic narratology has a (pre)history which can be traced even from the beginning of the modern novel in the 18th century. For the sake of convenience we may divide this evolution into three major periods: the realist period, formalist structuralist and the Post-structuralist.

Though the novel (in the sense in which Bakhtin uses the term) existed from classical times, a systematic theorization of the novel form is a modern phenomenon. Novel narratology began to be used in the structuralist context, though we can use it to describe earlier critical works also in this genre in a general sense. The classical novel was generally referred to as romance. It seldom found serious mention in critical discourse till the late twentieth century. It is evident that the classical cannons never took fictions of this kind to be worthy of serious critical consideration. The term ‘novel’ is a comparatively recent one particularly used in English to designate realist fiction. It was used to designate the kind of narrative prose fiction that emerged with Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding (Their contemporary, Sterne was generally excluded). Richardson, despite being credited as the creator of the modern novel, possibly never felt the need to expatiate on the form of his writing because he never thought of himself as the pioneer of a new fictional form. In writing the “first English novel”
Pamela, his purpose was to bring out a ‘conduct book’ for youth. Thus Pamela was advertised as being published “in order to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the youth of both sexes”. It was presented in the form of a series of letters, purportedly written by a girl who goes out to earn her livelihood in a wealthy household. But Richardson’s contemporary and rival Henry Fielding displays the self-consciousness of a pioneer concerning the form. This can be seen in the Prefaces that he wrote for Joseph Andrews and certain references in Tom Jones. Acknowledgedly under the influence of Cervantes and the prevalent mock epic tradition in poetry, he provides an apologetics to the new form of fiction calling it “a comic epic poem in prose” (Preface vi). This may be considered the earliest attempt at developing a critical approach to novel.

Through the 18th and 19th centuries, the novel established itself in English, showing amazing flexibility and versatility with regard to theme, structure and characterization. The critical approach to the novel was more or less muted, owing to a prevailing social prejudice. Henry James makes a note of this in his tract The Art of Fiction (1884), written in response to a lecture on the same subject by Walter Besant, Victorian novelist and historian. James notes that “the old superstition about fiction being “wicked” has doubtless died out in England; but the spirit of it lingers in a certain oblique regard directed toward any story which does not more or less admit that it is only a joke” (804).

James was the first to argue that the novel is one of the fine arts and should be classed with the other arts such as music, poetry, painting and architecture. This was indeed a groundbreaking approach. Novel criticism began to be undertaken seriously with the arrival of James.
In his later writings, mostly in the prefaces that he wrote to his novels, James displayed a keen sense of the art and craft of the novel. He argued that the artistry of the novel depended on its representation of “felt life”, and came to view the “treatment” (the technique) as even more important than the “subject” (characters and situations). More specifically, James had a preference for the technique of narrating from the consciousness of his central character(s). This was how he achieved the impression of felt life even as it allowed him to offer fresh ways of exploring his subjects. James's distinction between treatment and subject is a distinction between the “how” and the “what” of the novel that reappears in some form in every major theoretical approach to narrative. Afterwards, his followers codified his theories into a set of rules for good novelistic practice. The most significant among these rules were the use of scenes in place of summaries and the emphasis on a central narrative consciousness. James’s methods were intended to provide impersonality, objectivity and greater artistry. In other words, he was trying to attain for an intrinsically diegetic form like the novel, an approximation to the mimetic (showing instead of telling).

The efforts of the Anglo-American New Critics mark an important phase of pre-structuralist narratology. Their distinction of literary language brings them closer to the structuralists. They highlighted the imagery as a central narrative device holding the key to the meaning (the what) of the fictional texts. Their rivals, the Chicago School (neo-Aristotelians), provided more influential narrative theories of the novel. Among them, R. S. Crane developed the concept of plot that is similar to the fabula-sjuzet distinction of the Russians. His concept of “material action” and the “plot proper” are roughly equivalent to the fabula and sjuzet.
Wayne C. Booth, under Crane’s influence, re-examined the poetics of Henry James and refuted some of the Jamesian ideas of novelistic composition from a neo-Aristotelian perspective. In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) he argues that “showing” and “telling” are equally rhetorical devices designed to influence the audience. His approach is concerned with the form from the reception side and opened up an avenue for ideological and ethical discussion on narrative. He took into account a combination of non-formal elements, in with the formal ones developing the notions as the implied author, the unreliable narrator and fictional distance, but rejected the importance given to point of view as a methodological fault of the formalists. For him the keystone of narrative semantics is the identity and reliability of the narrator as a rhetorical device. His development of the concepts of implied author, unreliable narrator and fictional distance moved the novel theory closer to the structuralist approaches, though ideologically not in agreement with it.

After Henry James, the most influential figures of the early era of novel narratology were E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf, practising novelists both. If James is the theorist of the method of narration, Forster is the theorist of character, the major content of the story in the realist tradition. In *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), Forster introduces a distinction between “round” and “flat” characters (65) that is still frequently cited in novelistic discussions. Flat characters are “two-dimensional people” (71), while round characters are capable of “surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat” (75). Forster’s concept of narrative structure is implied in his distinction between story and plot. The shadow of Aristotle hangs over it. The emphasis on causality and the supreme importance afforded to character signifies his alliance to 19th century realism. Forster observed plot and character as engaged in
conflict because plot requires closure but character does not. “In the losing battle that the plot fights with the characters, it often takes a cowardly revenge” which results in “nearly all novels” to be “feeble in the end” (91). Forster’s ideal novel would be one in which plot and character are in balance, which seldom happens. It is interesting to note that he was writing this at a time when the modernist approach to fiction was gradually abolishing the realist idea of character and plot. Forster failed to understand the experimentalists and is consequently weak in his assessment of Proust and Joyce.

Edwin Muir’s *Structure of the Novel* (1928) closely followed the work of Forster not only in time but also in its basic approach. Muir divides typical fictional structures into three sorts. Novels of action that depend on time for their form, novels of character that depend on space, and “chronicles” that present significant movement in both time and space (Harmon 131).

In his *The Craft of Fiction*, Percy Lubbock describes in detail the use of point of view, scene and summary as the key issues in the novelist’s art. Writing under the influence of Jamesian ideas, he asserted that the novelist’s business was to think “of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself” (62) a method which involved the suppression of the authorial narrator.

He lays special emphasis on the scenic method – dramatic and pictorial. He finds in the works of the master novelists such as Flaubert, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Thackeray, Balzac and James a discriminate use of these two methods.

“It is the method of picture-making that enables the novelist to cover his great spaces of life and quantities of experience, so much greater than any that can be brought within the acts of a play”. “Most novelists” in Lubbock’s observation, “seem to betray . . . a preference for one method or the other, for picture or for drama”.
Fielding, Balzac, and George Eliot show a preference for the dramatic. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky prefer the “the scenic way” (119).

Apart from that of Forster the widely known and influential definitions of plot were those offered by R.S. Crane and Sheldon Sacks. They also based their definition on the same grounds as that of Forster – the 18th and 19th century novels, especially novels representative of the English tradition. Despite differences of emphases, these definitions assume the same premises about causality, linear sequence, aesthetic unity and denouement as ‘givens’ in the narrative tradition extending from Fielding and Richardson through James and Hardy. Henry James and Virginia Woolf experimented with the structure, but arguably, their theorizations remained close to the conventional approach – based on theme, character and plot. In the heyday of Modernism, novelistic narratology was extended in scope to accommodate modernist experimentation. Joseph Frank (“Spatial Form in Modern Literature”), A.A. Mendilow (Time and the Novel), and Frank Kermode (The Sense of an Ending) have provided new avenues of exploring modern novelistic narratives from the point of view of form and structure.

The theoretical approach to the novel remained well within the Aristotelian ambience till the coming of the structuralists. E. M. Forster’s definition of the plot, along with those of R. S. Crane and Sheldon Sacks were based on the realist paradigm that ruled the roost till the turn of the century. Forster’s famous distinction between plot and story is actually a distinction that operates within the notion of sjuzet. It is based on the realist paradigm. Ian Watt provides us with a clear framework of the realist paradigm in his classic study of the early British novels in his The Rise of the Novel.
2.12.b. The Formalists

Contemporary with Forster, Woolf and the American Formalists, the Russian group including Victor Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, Yuri Tynanov, Mikhail Bakhtin and Tzvetan Todorov developed new theoretical approaches to the novel, though these were to become influential in the West much later. Their approach was more formal and structural than that of the Western Europeans. The Russian formalist distinction between the fabula as the abstract chronological sequence identifying the events independent of their expression in the sjuzet – the actual presentation of those events in the novel’s text makes a clearer approach to the distinction between the what and the how in the novel. This distinction helps explain the possibility of the same narrative having different versions thereof. Consequently different narratives cannot come out of different sjuzets unless they are based on different fabulae. The formalists radically break away from the realists further in that they argue that the purpose of literature in general and the novel in particular is not to present a “slice of life” but to defamiliarize life, to create estrangement and renew or revise our perceptions: “to make the stone stony” (Shklovsky 20). This stance is further able to explain the logic of change and innovation in literature – especially in the “how” of the novel. It is built on the formal necessity of innovation. Fictional forms that once provided estrangement gradually lose that effect through familiarity, and necessitates the innovative novelist’s development of new narrative techniques which “recover the sensation of life” (20), create estrangement and refresh our experience of the world.

As the study of form, structuralist narratology has its antecedents in the concepts developed by G. E. Lessing whose theories on literature and fine arts
inspired Joseph Frank to formulate the concept of spatial form. It is to be noted in passing that Lessing’s formulations were entrenched in the Enlightenment realism which conceived space time realities in terms of Newtonian absolutes.

Frank, reflecting on Lessing’s _Laocoon_ notes how Lessing makes a distinction between temporal and spatial arts, and declares literature to be a “time art”. “Literature . . . makes use of a succession of words proceeding through time: and it follows that literary form to harmonise with the essential quality of its medium, must be based primarily on some form of narrative sequence . . . .” (Frank 7 – 8).

According to Frank, form is what the reader perceives and is inherent in its organization – spatial as well as temporal.

Form issued spontaneously from the organization of the art work as it presented itself to perception. Time and space were the two extremes defining the limits of literature and the plastic arts in their relation to sensuous perception; and following Lessing’s example, it is possible to trace the evolution of art forms by their oscillation between these two poles.(10)

Frank’s landmark essay was written with the purpose of applying “Lessing’s method to modern literature – to trace the evolution of form in modern poetry and, more particularly in the novel”(10). Frank saw the whole of “modern literature, as exemplified by such writers as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust and James Joyce, . . . moving in the direction of spatial form” (10) and continued to evolve in newer forms in the later period; such as the postmodernist Djuna Barnes’s remarkable book _Nightwood_ (10). According to Frank “all these writers ideally intend their reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence. And since changes in aesthetic form always involves major changes in the sensibility of a
particular cultural period”(10). This observation not only drew attention to the structural changes that happened in Modernist narratives but also the phenomenology of reading which involves many levels of temporality. Monika Fludernik supports Frank when she says that the

. . . . chronological reshuffling of the kind we have come to appreciate so much in Modernist fiction increases a narrative’s static quality since all stages of the development have to be viewed simultaneously as a kind of mosaic or puzzle before one can start to establish the vital (relative) chronology of the fabula. It is not temporality perse that ‘makes’ narrative; or if so, that temporality relates more to the reading process than the context of the story.(21)

The realist narratology that is exemplified in Forster and others was displaced by this approach. Frank’s notion of “spatial form” is at once a narrative technique and a method of reading modernist fictional narratives. Such a method becomes necessary in the context of the modernists’ and postmodernists’ attempts to mediate the new reality in their works.

The specifically structuralist narratology emerged with the growing interest in the pioneering linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure’s distinction between langue, (the abstract system of language that underlies any utterance and makes it intelligible) and parole, (actual utterances) provides an analogy for the structuralist project of describing the grammar of narrative that makes any given narrative intelligible. The basic analogy between Saussure’s langue/parole and
signifier/ signified relationships can be found in the histoire/ recit / story/ discourse/ fabula/ sjuzet/ recit/narration developed by the structuralist narratologists.

Vladimir Propp provided the prototype for a different approach to narrative in The Morphology of the Folktale (1929). Propp studied about two hundred Russian folktales and formulated a common structure that underlay their narrative patterns, identifying thirty-one “functions” that occur in invariable order in every tale. Propp’s identification of a single deep structure underlying the outward diversity is of great importance in structuralist studies. The later structuralist narratologists like Tzvetan Todorov, Claude Bremond, and, in one phase of his work, Roland Barthes, were greatly influenced by Propp and Ferdinand de Saussure in their attempts to identify the deep structures of narratives. However, in their studies few of these pioneers appear to have examined the temporality aspect of fictional narratives in detail despite its vital importance to fictional structures. These were crucial to Rimmon-Kenan, Genette and Bal.

2.13. a. Fictional Temporality

The handling of time in the modern novel has been one of the most complex aspects of novel study. From the time of the realists down to the present this aspect has been of vital significance. Recent theory has turned in this direction in a big way.

“The peculiarity of verbal narrative is that in it time is a constitutive both of the means of representation (language) and of the object represented (the incidents of the story). Thus time in narrative fiction can be defined as the relations of chronology

1. Histoire and recit are the terms that Genette uses as approximately parallel terms to Fabula and Sjuzet. The English translation renders them as story and discourse. In the translation the term narration used in place of the French narrative (which represents “the act of narrating”). Rimmon Kenan uses text in place of discourse, other terms being the same.
between story and text” (Rimmon-Kenan 44). To put in structuralist terms, we may say that temporality is the management of time experience in the sjuzet in relation to the chronology and sequence of the fabula. A linguistic narrative constructs an order of signs whose function is ‘iconic’ in the sense that they perform as ‘signifying’ units to point to a ‘signified’ which is a sequence of events. These events need not always be exactly parallel to the chronological order or the temporal order in which they can be imagined as having happened in the real world. Thus, there often occurs a new temporality in the sjuzet which can be understood and measured in terms of the fabula which represents the chronological or natural order. We shall take the chronological order of representation as the standard, unmarked one.

Through narrative an individual creates meaning out of daily happenings, and this narrative, provides the basis for remembering the past, understanding the present and anticipating the future. In other words, the comprehension of time is done through the narratives that organize experience; it thus is related to questions of human identity. Temporality refers to how actions in time are structured into narratives. All stories are told in time. All stories embody time. Time and space coordinates form the basis of any type of story telling. Narratology pays serious attention to the way time and space are utilized in the novel. But in the narratives that we create, this actual experience of time is reconstituted in various ways. This retelling of time in any narrative may be called its temporality. In the telling of a story, there is always distortion of the cosmic or real time.

This disproportion that happens between the time of the narrative(sjuzet) and the actual fabula time is called temporality. We can put temporality simply as “time versus narrative”. In fact the temporality of a work of art has a vital role in the making
of its meaning, since it controls the structural organization. Consequently, “from a critical point of view, . . . time has emerged as one of the central issues that need to be grappled with in contemporary fiction” (Morrison 26).

It is also important to note that in modern novel theory “the problematisation of conventional assumptions about time has arisen not simply in a vacuum, but in the context of wider cultural transitions” (26). These cultural transitions have happened over a long period of time and have gained acceleration during the 20th century under a variety of influences that we have already noted in the previous chapter.

The philosophical formulations on time and temporality in narratives received greater attention in the latter half of the 20th century through efforts of the phenomenological philosopher Paul Ricoeur. The tools for analysis of temporal structure were developed by Gérard Genette in his Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method (1980). His application of structuralist narratology to the analysis of Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu (1913 – 1927) offered a consistently rigorous and systematic method for the structural analysis of narratives.

Though, earlier, Roland Barthes had spoken of a code of actions that names a sequence of events, he did not pay due attention to the complexities of time involved in the novelistic discourse. Citing the works of Lévi-Strauss, Greimas, Bremond, Todorov, Propp and even Aristotle, he observed that the tendency of structuralist analysis was to “dechronologize” and “relogicise” narratives. He observes:

. . . . one could say that temporality is only a structural category of narrative (of discourse), just as in language [langue], temporality only exists in the form of a system; from the point of view of narrative, what we call time does not exist, or at least only exists functionally, as
an element of a semiotic system. Time belongs not to discourse strictly speaking but to the referent; both narrative and language know only a semiotic time, “true” time being a “realist,” referential illusion, as Propp’s commentary shows. (270 – 271)

In short the temporal structures and their relevance to narrative semantics remained a matter of passive interest only. Gerard Genette stepped into this gap, providing the most systematic structural analysis of narrative time.

2.13.b. Different levels of Temporality

Traditionally, prose fictional narrative uses three types of verbal representation: narration, dialogue and description. They differ only in degrees of temporality – that is to say, in whatever mode of telling, the relation between the diachronic flow of language and the synchronic focus of attention can be manipulated. There are at least three temporal levels involved in the reading of fiction: story time, narration time, and reading time. A major part of the technique of novelistic narration is concerned with these. When it comes to the reading of a book there is a ‘threefold temporality’. We can see that in general narration reports occurrences in a reading time considerably less than the actual time of their occurrence in real time. Very large segments of time could be covered in a single statement of a few words (e.g. “Two years after his wife’s death, he left England and settled in Australia”). This can be referred to as “temporal compression”. Dialogue brings the representation close to drama ‘a real time’ experience (approximately). There is an approach to the ‘zero degree’ when reading time is roughly congruent with actual time (of the fabula as well as the sjuzet. Here the disproportion of duration between the fabula time and that
of the sjuzet are dissolved. For example a sequence like the following from *The Old Man and the Sea* given below.

‘What do you have to eat?’ The boy asked.

A pot of yellow rice with fish. Do you want some?’

‘No. I will eat at home. Do you want me to make the fire?’

‘No . I will make it later on. Or I may eat the rice cold.’

‘May I take the cast net’

‘Of course.’(11)

In cases of descriptive passages, the reading time and the time of the discourse can be wide apart. In such cases reading time can often be considerably greater than actual time. This can be particularly incongruent in the case of thoughts or dreams experienced by the characters in a story. This can be called “temporal expansion” which often is the case with many sequences in stream of consciousness novels. In actual practice writers do not usually resort to one mode only. They make use of all the three modes in varying degrees. This is a matter of individual style and choice contingent on the purpose of the author. It is practically impossible to measure with any degree of accuracy the congruence and divergence between the three fold temporality of a work of fiction. Reading time, for example, is highly variant from person to person. Therefore there can be no common standard by which reading time can be determined for any purpose. In the mediation of reality through the narrative form, interweaving of the three modes of narration, dialogue and description, a narrative defamiliarizes the subject matter and exercises a kind of control on the reader’s consciousness through the rhythmic patterns of correspondence between reading time and actual time. The alterability of the sequence of events in the fabula
while being mediated into the sjuzet creates the complexities of temporality. Patterns of complex temporality are created by the way in which the narrative orders the events and organizes its directions. Rhythm also has got to do with the speed of narration.

The question of temporality arises when there is disjointedness between the verbal icons and the things that they represent, in terms of the time they seem to encompass. In narratives the dominant temporal relation is situated between fabula time (the time of the events told) and sjuzet time (the time of the telling). There are seven major categories of temporal relations that can be derived from narrative fiction: they are order, speed, duration, frequency, simultaneity, extent and reach. Other relations of this category may also be identified, but not relevant to our purpose. These apply not only to novel and other forms of narrative literature, but also to the medium of visual narratives, especially cinema.

Events can be presented in a narrative without following the exact sequence in which they actually happened, imagining that the narrative is a retelling of what actually happened. Most of the time story tellers take liberties with the sequence of the fabula in which events happen chronologically, one after the other. In the actual retold version – the sjuzet –, the narrator rearranges, expands and contracts, edits and omits certain elements for his own purpose, consciously or unconsciously. Besides, it is possible to include “inset tales” within a narrative which may not be directly connected to the main story. The story teller can repeat certain events, include commentary or events in the distant past before the beginning of the story and even anticipate events that are to take place, and so on. The versatility of the novel medium can allow for disproportion between the story and the narration and create structures
of great complexity at will. In this context, a major concern in narratology is the way temporalities are organized in the narrative.

2.13.c. Paul Ricoeur—Time and Narrative

Paul Ricoeur provided the new philosophical foundations for a narratological approach to time and temporality in fictional narratives. In his *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur examines the way time conditions the nature of all narratives: “there can be no thought about time without narrated time” (3:241). His hypothesis is that “temporality cannot be spoken of in the direct discourse of phenomenology, but rather requires the mediation of the direct discourse of narration” (3:241).

He also declares that “what is ultimately at stake in the case of the structural identity of the narrative function as well as in that of the truth claim of every narrative work is the temporal (1:3) character of human experience. . . . time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal experience” (1:3,1:52). This circular argument points to what he calls “the circle of narrativity and temporality . . . , whose two halves mutually reinforce one another” and explains “the reciprocity between narrativity and temporality”(1:3). Ricoeur argues that the mysteries of temporal experience are embodied in “poetic” form in narrative. Conversely, narrative is a poetic response to the experience of temporality. Further, he explains that the narrative process is constituted of an “act of configuration,” in a neo-Kantian sense.

Ricoeur’s thesis encompasses both metaphysics and aesthetics because his concept of the act of configuration renders the experience of “time as narrative” as well as “time and narrative”. In other words, Ricoeur proposes that the question of time and temporality cannot be understood in purely narrative terms.
Ricoeur puts narrative side by side with metaphor in that “the meaning – effects produced by each of them belong to the same basic phenomenon of semantic innovation”, “produced entirely on the level of discourse, that is, the level of acts of language equal to or greater than the sentence” (Preface ix).

Ricoeur develops his answers to the question of time in the context of some of the problems raised by the German philosophers Immanuel Kant and Edmund Husserl. He sets his idea of time and consciousness in opposition to what they had conceived, attempting to develop a theory of narrative identity which refers to those kinds of practical identities whose explication takes the form of “emplotted” narratives.

Ricoeur brings together two classical thinkers, St. Augustine and Aristotle as complementing each other in this regard. These two thinkers approach the problem of time and temporality from opposite directions and thus complement each other. Augustine’s speculative thinking leads him to the existential sense of ‘discordance’ whereas Aristotle finds through his idea of mimesis the “concordance in discordance”.

Ricoeur develops the notion of aporia as a key to understanding the epistemological problems associated with time. He notes that “the most exemplary attempts to express the lived experience of time in its immediacy result in the multiplication of aporias, as the instrument of analysis becomes ever more precise. It is these aporias that the poetics of narrative is able to resolve. Narrative thus can be approached as the articulator of time to the extent that time cannot be conceived without it being narrated. Narrated time is the only time that can be thought of. Aristotle’s notion of time was not free of the notion of movement though he did not believe that time was constituted of movement. Ricoeur observes: “Aristotle had
refuted the idea that time is constituted by the movement of a body and affirmed that, “without itself being movement, time was “something of movement”, namely that time is the measurement of movement in as much as the latter can be counted” (1:15). It is here that Augustine’s thought is clearer. Augustine’s thought arrives at the conclusion that “movement can stop, not time” (1:15).

St. Augustine was the first thinker to dissociate time from movement and conceive of “pure time” as it were. His concept is ontological. “Augustine alone dares to allow that one might speak of a span of time – a day, an hour – without a cosmological reference (1:14 –15). He is also the first thinker to speak of the interpenetration of the past, present and future as the “three-fold present”. This reflection on the mystery of time leads on to further problems which help us see that time is an irresoluble conundrum. In his famous passage on time he reflects: “the present of past things is the memory: the present of present things is direct perception; and the present of future things is expectation” (Confessions). He is intrigued by the thought of time “as a being without being and the extension of a thing that has no extension and finally concludes that “the extension of time is a distension of the soul” (distentio animi) (1:16). Ricoeur notes that this “notion of distentio animi will serve, precisely, as a substitute for . . . cosmological basis for the span of time” (1:15).

According to Ricoeur, the whole of Augustine’s Book II “is directed at establishing this connection between the two basic themes of the investigation: between the thesis of the threefold present, which solved the first enigma, that of a being that lacks being, and the thesis of the distension of the mind, summoned in order to resolve the enigma of the extension of a thing that has no extension. What
remains, then is to conceive of the threefold present as distension and distension as the distension of the threefold present” (1:16).

Augustine demonstrates “the dialectic of expectation, memory, and attention, each considered no longer in isolation but in interaction with one another. It is no longer a question of either impression-images or anticipatory images but of an action that shortens expectation and extends memory” (1:20).

There is also the problem of measurement. How can time be measured if “the soul “distends” itself as it “engages” itself – this is the supreme enigma. But it is precisely as an enigma that the resolution of the aporia of measurement is valuable, Augustine’s inestimable discovery is, by reducing the extension of time to the distension of the soul, to have tied this distension to the slippage that never ceases to find its way into the heart of the threefold present – between the present of the future, the present of the past, and the present of the present. In this way he sees discordance emerge again and again out of the very concordance of the intentions of expectation, attention, and memory.

Ricoeur demonstrates that the poetic act of emplotment replies Augustine’s enigma of the speculation on time (1:21). “But Aristotle’s Poetics does not resolve the enigma on the speculative level. It does not really resolve it at all. It puts it to work – poetically – by producing an inverted figure of discordance and concordance” (1:22).

Ricoeur’s resolution to the aporias of time starts with his persistent argument “that speculation on time is an inconclusive rumination to which narrative activity alone can respond” (1:6), not in the sense that it “solves the aporias through substitution”, but “in a poetical sense and not a theoretical sense of the word” (1:6). Narrative does this through the act of “emplotment” (1:6).
Ricoeur has recourse to Aristotle, who expounded his theory of mimesis in *Poetics*. Ricoeur redefines mimesis as the dynamic process of emplotment and demonstrates how emploted narratives perform a “threefold mimesis” which brings about a concordance to the temporal discordance of lived experience. Narratives, through the threefold mimesis, organize the apparently separate events of the lived reality into an organized and coherent whole. The act of emplotment provides meaning and significance whereby the kronos events (events in time) become kairos events (significant events), infusing time with meaning. Only through narratives can this feat be performed. Ricoeur’s notion of narrative thus becomes applicable not only to fictional narratives, but also to the ‘identity-narratives’ that lend meaning to individual lives, and to historiography.

According to Aristotle, various arts are forms of imitation (mimesis), tragic poetry being the imitation of action. Ricoeur brings to focus once again the Aristotelian terms *muthos* and *mimesis*, of which the latter term is a literary commonplace nowadays, though the former is usually not much thought of. In Ricoeur’s view, these two terms have been attributed a static quality which is contrary to what they really are. *Muthos* means the dynamic activity of organizing the elements in a narrative. *Mimesis* is not merely the imitation or representation of those events but the *active process* of imitating or representing in human expression. It is on this premise that he constructs his narrative theory. “I see in plots we invent the privileged means by which we re-configure our confused, unformed, and at the limit mute temporal experience” (Preface xi). And these plots involve what he describes as a “three-fold mimesis”.

Ricoeur attributes a mediating role to emplotment in order to establish the bond between time and narrative. Emplotment is a dynamic, poetic act. The mediating function of the plot “derives from the dynamic character of the configurating operation that has led us to prefer the term emplotment to that of plot and ordering to that system”(1: 65). Why does Ricoeur characterise emplotment as a dynamic act? “The dynamism lies in the fact that a plot already exercises, within its own textual field, an integrating and, in this sense, a mediating function, which allows it to bring about, beyond this field, a mediation of a larger amplitude between the preunderstanding and . . . the postunderstanding of the order of action and its temporal features”(1: 65).

Ricoeur uses the term emplotment precisely to make us aware of the fact that it is not a finished act but a process. The mimetic act possesses a three stage dynamics or three-fold mimesis – mimesis¹, mimesis² and mimesis³. This three stage mimesis consists of prefiguring, configuring and refiguring respectively. Only one of these is emplotment itself. He notes: “As such they give the full meaning of the concept of concordant discordance …. In this respect, we may say of the operation of emplotment both that it reflects the Augustinian paradox of time and that it resolves it, not in a speculative but rather poetic mode”(1: 66).

Prefiguring (mimesis¹) is “a reference back to the familiar pre-understanding we have of the order of action” (Preface xi). Mimesis¹ – “a mediation between the individual events or incidents and a story taken as a whole (Aristotle’s pragmata) or that it transforms the events or incidents into a story the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession. The story refers to the actual world of action or the “imitated” events. It is without beginnings and endings in the way narratives
create beginnings and endings. It is in the prenarrative state but possesses a structure of its own carrying symbolic and temporal value. In other words, Mimesis $^1$ is the preunderstanding of the practical field or world of action.

The second stage (mimesis $^2$) is “an entry into the realm of poetic composition” (Preface xi). It is that which “brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results” (1:65) manifest in Aristotle’s “plot, characters and thought” along with “fearful incidents, sudden reversals, recognition and violent effects” (1:65). It is part of the dynamic process of “emplotment”, which is the “configurating operation” the semantic innovation of narrative –“meaning effect” – as arising from its affecting a “synthesis of the heterogeneous”(1: Preface ix). Through this process “goals, causes, and chance are brought together within the temporal unity of a whole and complete action” (ix). Mimesis $^2$ mediates between mimesis$^1$ and mimesis$^3$.

Real Mimesis is more than the emplotment, more than the level of mimesis$^2$. It not only incorporates a reference to the world of action (mimesis$^1$), but also to the reader’s act of reading (mimesis$^3$). The reader’s reading of the text completes the mimetic structure. Mimesis$^3$ is refiguring “a new configuration by means of this poetic refiguring of the pre-understood order of action” (xi). Thus “plot is mediating in a third way, that of its temporal characteristics. These allow us to call plot, by means of generalization, a synthesis of the heterogeneous”(1:66). Here the approach is
phenomenological. It is the practical noesis\(^2\) which has “action” as its noematic correlate. Mimesis\(^3\) is the reconfiguration of that practical field.

The key to Ricoeur’s structural analysis lies in the premises summarised above. His analysis helps to clarify the radical methods of narration used in modernist and postmodernist texts.

How does Ricoeur’s theory help in the analysis of fictional narratives? He explains that the “configurational act consists of grasping together” the detailed actions or . . . the story’s incidents. It draws from this manifold of events the unity of one temporal whole. I cannot overemphasize the kinship between this “grasping together,” proper to the configurational act and what Kant has to say about the operation of judging . . . . The act of emplotment has a similar function inasmuch as it extracts a configuration from a succession. (1.66)

The focus is on the notion of plot. As he says; “the plot of a narrative . . . “grasps together” and integrates into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events, thereby schematizing the intelligible signification attached to the narrative taken as a whole” (Preface x).

**2.13.d. Critique of Ricoeur’s Theory**

Jago Morrison explains how Ricoeur’s analysis helps in understanding the disjunctive strategies of contemporary fiction.

Like other theorists . . . Ricoeur argues that time should not be seen as a linear continuum, but rather as a multi-level construction. Between the vast scheme of cosmic time, the public plane of historical time and the private,

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\(^2\) Noesis an “intentional” act of consciousness that is correlated with an object. The act is termed noesis (adj. noetic) and the object is termed noema (pl. noemata, adj. noematic). The correlation is termed noetic-noematic to indicate the unitary structure of act and object.
fluctuating experience of personal time, he suggests, our experience of time can easily be discordant and unsettling. Narrative’s function then is to mediate between these different levels of time consciousness, creating a sense of comforting continuity.(34)

In Morrison’s view Ricoeur posits the role of narrative as fundamentally a conservative one.

Arising from ‘a preunderstanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources’ . . . and mediating between these and the experience of the reader or viewer, what narrative is supposed to do, over and over again, is to rehearse the coherence of conventional time. Its duty is to ensure a comfortable continuum between our understanding of the cosmic or absolute, our sense of our historical placing and the texture of our everyday experience.(34)

It can be argued that Ricoeur does not consider the fact that narrative time is also a product of a configurational process. The temporality of this configurational act itself seems to have been overlooked. His likening of the configurational act to the Kantian act of judgment also appears to be tenuous, especially considering his notion that narrative effects a “synthesising of the heterogeneous”. We may conclude from Ricoeur’s proposition of the kinship that exists between the configurational act and the Kantian act of judgment that, for Ricoeur the configurational act is atemporal.


The way in which time is narrated in the modern novel can be understood by a detailed analysis of the temporal structures created by the novelists. The concept of the nature of temporality in narratives has already been established. In recent times
there have been several attempts to define and analyse the temporality of novels. Mikhail Bakhtin may be credited as the pioneering spirit. The structuralists took the cue from him. It was “Bakhtin(who) developed the notion of the ‘chronotope’ to open up the complex exploration of time that is possible in literary texts” (Morrison 36).

Prominent among the structuralist theoreticians of fictional temporality are Miecke Bal, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and Gerard Genette. Genette’s attempt has been the most thoroughgoing, since he developed his tools in the context of his analysis of Proust’s monumental work. He speaks of the peculiar nature of fictional temporality thus:

The temporality of written narrative is to some extent conditional or instrumental; produced in time, like everything else, written narrative exists in space and as space, and the time needed for consuming it is the time needed for crossing or traversing it, like a road or a field. The narrative text, like every other text has no other temporality than what it borrows, metonymically, from its own reading. (34)

This makes it clear to us that “this complex arrangement of temporal relationships in narrative exists primarily in space”, that is,“the material space of the lines of the text”(Morris 106). The time of the actual reading of the book is “the only real time involved”(106).

Miecke Bal points out that the elements of the fabula “are organized in a certain way into a story3. Their arrangement in relation to one another is such that they can produce the effect desired, . . . . Several processes are involved in the ordering of

3. The term ‘story’ is not used in the ordinary sense. Forster uses the term in place of the fabula. Bal uses the term to denote the sjuzet. To avoid confusion we continue to use the terms sjuzet or narrative for our purpose.
the various elements into a story”(7). Of these, the most important to our discussion is the organisation of the time-space elements.

Of the six elements of narrative structure that Bal identifies, three are of interest to the argument made in this thesis. They are:

1. The events are arranged in a sequence which can differ from the chronological sequence.

2. The amount of time which is allotted in the story to the various elements of the fabula is determined with respect to the amount of time which these elements take up in the fabula.

3. The question of space is also considered. The locations where the events occur are also given distinct characteristics and are thus transformed into specific places (8).

Temporal devices are important because “playing with sequential ordering is not just a literary convention; it is also a means of drawing attention to certain things, to emphasize, to bring about aesthetic or psychological effects, to show various interpretations of an event, to indicate the subtle difference between expectation and realization, and much else besides”(Bal 82).

Gerard Genette’s *Narrative Discourse* (1972) is an epoch-making work in the field of structuralist narratology. Genette made full utilisation of the resources of narratology and provides a close study of *À la recherche du temps perdu* in terms of temporal structure. His study stressed the importance of time over the spatial aspect in narratives. This is justified when we consider the fact that a story can be told without reference to space but not without reference to time one way or the other. Even if the spatial locations are not specified, the story can make sense but “the temporal
determinations of the narrating instance are manifestly more important than its spatial determinations” (215)

Genette’s work is a path-breaking one for those who came after him in the closing decades of the 20th century and beyond. His comprehensive theory of narrative provides a systematic method for examining the constitutive elements of temporal structures in their dynamic interaction during the process of reading. “For Genette, the metaphorical time-stamp is a basic component of literary structure and intelligibility” (Stern 236). For the purposes of his work, Genette developed a new set of terms which now have become part of the regular terminology of structuralist narratology. Genette sees Proust’s narrative strategies as a form of rhetorical figuration, the analysis of which affords deep insight into the Proustian vision of time experience; a theme that was influential throughout the modernist heyday. Proust as we know, was the standard bearer of the Modernist experimentalism.

Genette’s terms of structural analysis substituted certain terms used before by others. This needs to be clarified before we proceed further.

In the place of the fabula / sjuzet distinction, Genette uses the story (histoire)/ discourse (recit) distinction. In addition he adds the act of narration too, designating it as narrative (narration). Characters, events and settings comprise the story which he defines as “the signified narrative content” (Introduction 27). Discourse implies all the methods deployed by the author to render the story in a certain way he chooses to create specific effects. Genette uses the “word narrative (recit) for the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself”(27) but distinguishes this from the word “narrating” stating that he prefers to “use the word narrating for the producing
narrative action and, by extension the whole of the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place” (27).

Genette’s structural analysis is “essentially, a study of the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and …. between story and narrating”(29). He groups the narrative devices used in fiction into three main kinds, based on Todorov’s classification. These “three basic classes of determinations” identified by Genette are “Tense”, “aspect” and “mood”( 31). Tense includes the categories “dealing with temporal relations between narrative and story” (31). Mood deals with “modalities (forms and degrees) of narrative “representation” (31). Voice deals with “the way in which the narrating itself is implicated in the narrative. . . .that is, the narrative situation or its instance”(31).

Genette begins by making a clear distinction between story time and narrative time. In this context “story time” refers to the abstracted chronological chain of events upon which the actual spoken or written narrative is based, whereas “narrative time” refers to the handling of that story chronology in the specific telling of the tale (35). Genette reminds us that this complex arrangement of temporal relationships in narrative exists primarily in space: the material space of the lines on the page, the reading of which is like “crossing or traversing it, like a road or a field”.

2.14.b. Genette’s Idea of Temporality

Genette refers to the borrowed temporality of the narrative text derived from its reading as “pseudo time”(34). Analysis of time relations in fiction should “accept

4. The other two categories are aspect (“the way in which the story is perceived by the narrator” and mood (“the type of discourse used by the narrator”) (introduction.29).
literally the quasi fiction of *Erzählzeit*, this false time standing in for a true time and to be treated— with the combination of reservation and acquiescence that this involves— as a pseudo-time”(34).

His analysis of temporality centres mainly around three key concepts; that of (1) Order, (2) Duration, (3) Frequency.

**Order**

Order involves the relations between the temporal sequence of story events and the order of their actual presentation in the discourse. Those relations may be congruent, or may entail various kinds of anachrony (analepsis, prolepsis, and syllepsis). Order may also be described as the sequencing of the events in the sjuzet compared to that in the fabula, or the “discrepancy between story-order and text-order” (Rimmon-Kenan 46).

We usually expect a story to start from one point in time and move forward without interruption to the end with an unmarked order. In such a scheme the representational time serves as an icon (a pictural sign) of the represented time. In other words, the time sequence of the discourse and the chronology of the events in the story run parallel. If a discourse relates its events in the chronological sequence (or historical order) in a linear progression from beginning to end, then we may consider it as a standard chronological narration.

But as we know, this is observed often in the breach. Story tellers use temporal shifts or distortions of various types to create various effects. Events are simply described, reminisced, anticipated, repeated, summarised, omitted, expanded or compressed as the case may be. This creates different significations through

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5 narrative time.
anachronies. It is here that we speak of order. In other words it is about the question of “When?”.

If a narrative arranges the events without following the beginning-middle–end linearity of chronology, then we have a deviant form of chronology which is called anachrony. Anachrony is divided into three types: Prolepsis (flash forward), and analepsis (flashback) and achrony (in which the events violate all norms of chronology by presenting a sequence of “cut up” narratives defying any kind of order). This is a method frequently used in postmodernist novels. Bal remarks that “the best known, and perhaps easiest to grasp, principle of ordering is the presentation of events in an order different from their chronological order” (79). This ordering depends on what the author is trying to achieve through his narration. “The fabula is ‘treated’, and the reader is being manipulated by this treatment . . . . It is basically at this level that suspense and pleasure are provoked, and that ideology is inscribed” (79).

If the anachrony is presented as factual it can be called an objective anachrony. If it is presented as a character’s memory of a past event or a dream or expectations of the future it is a subjective anachrony. When certain events are repeatedly narrated, it becomes repetitive anachrony. Then there are the so called complective anachronies that narrate events which are omitted in the main story for whatever reason.

Anachronies are also divided into two types based on whether the events narrated fall within the span of the main story or outside of it. If it falls outside the main story (the now-span) that is to say, it “evoke(s) a past which preceded the starting point of the first narrative” (Rimmon-Kenan 48) then it is an external analepsis. If it is an event that falls within the now-span of the story then it is internal
analepsis. Such analepses “may conjure up a past which ‘occurred’ after the starting point of the first narrative but is either repeated analeptically or narrated for the first time at a point in the text later than the place where it is ‘due’. Such analepses often fill in a gap created previously, sometimes a gap which is not felt as such until it is filled-in retrospect” (Rimmon-Kenan 48, Genette 35-85). Anachrony cannot be determined in terms of the story time as the standard. Story being abstracted from the text, the reference point for anachronies is the ongoing story-time (the “main story” or the “first narrative”), or the immediate events narrated before the anachrony is introduced. Note that this reference point is not the moment of narration, the moment in which the narrator speaks. Similarly, we know that the anachrony is over when the interrupted sequence is resumed, and we return to the normal unfolding of the events in the “first narrative”. Genette defines the first narrative as “the temporal level of narrative with respect to which anachrony is defined as such” (48). In a standard narrative, the beginning of the story usually marks a significant moment in the action, although later on we may go backwards for expositional information, the main chain of events is usually tightly knit from the point marked by the beginning of the story. In traditional realist narratives, there will always be a coherent first narrative which would provide a structural framework within which these anachronies can be subsumed. For example in Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*, the first event of Lockwood’s strange experiences at Wuthering Heights is explained to us through a long analepsis (the embedded story narrated by Nelly Dean) which provides the main story.

The conventional epic that begins “in medias res” generates a sense of suspense and then unravels the story through the analepsis. Homer has used this in his
Iliad. Sophocles’s *Oedipus Rex* creates suspense and dramatic tension through the cleverly apportioned retrospective narrations in the play narrated through dramatic dialogue. The events leading to the current state are thus brought home to the audience. A classic case of such dramatic analepsis is the scene in *The Tempest* (I.ii) where Prospero’s dialogue with his troubled daughter explains to the audience the rationale of the current situation in which they are. This device has its disadvantages too. It can create interruptions in the smooth forward flow of the tale and if too frequently used, can confuse the reader, especially if proper markers of the time sequence are not given.

Analepses are created in different ways by the authors through a character’s memory provoked by a stimulus of one kind or the other, in which case it is a subjective one. In the so-called authorial narratives, the omniscient voice can shift from the past to the present at will in which case it is objective. An example of objective analepsis can be found in Homer’s famous episode of Achilles’ quarrel in the opening sequences of the Iliad. These usually appear as stories within stories. This is a usual device in tales of suspense where the “hermeneutic” code is relied upon for narrative interest. Sometimes called intercalated stories, these are rendered through the mouths of characters within the story. In modern novels the tropes of the analepses change and the past and the present can come together in a single sentence and not as separate segments within the tale as in some of the novels of Sartre and Dreiser.

**Prolepses**

Less common than flashbacks are the flash forwards or prolepses. They give the reader glimpses into the future. This device may be a spoiler of suspense as to
“what happened” but it surely increases the anticipation raising the question of why and how.

Mark Currie identifies three types of prolepses which he calls 1. Narratological, 2. Structural, and 3. Rhetorical (Currie, *About Time* 30 – 31). Of these the first two are what apply to the novel. Narratological prolepsis is “a form of anticipation which takes place within the time locus of the narrated. It is the anticipation of, or flash forward to, future events within the universe of narrated events” (30). The second one, namely structural prolepsis is described as “a form of anticipation which takes place between the time locus of the narrated and the time locus of the narrator. It is among other things, the relation between narrated time, and the time of narration which is inherent in the preterite sense of classical narration” (30). The third type is “a form of anticipation which takes place between the time locus of the narrator and the time locus of the reader” (31).

In the classic tradition, a method that the early novelists also followed, the “argument” or summary given at the beginning of each section of the narrative is a method of prolepsis. Prophecy as in the case of the witches’ meeting with Macbeth (*Macbeth* I iii) or Father Mapple’s Sermon (46 – 54) and the prophecies of the mysterious Parsee Fedalla (454-455) in Melville’s *Moby Dick* serve as examples of this kind of prolepsis.

Foreshadowing or prefiguration is a covert form of prolepsis. The narrator /author would give direct or indirect hints about the future events. This is sometimes worked out through indirect statements in the case of authorial narratives or suggested through foreshadowing incidents or images which bear symbolic import. Flaubert used this in his *Madam Bovary*. The death of Charles Bovary’s first wife Heloise in
the opening part (14–15) following her financial disaster looks forward to the death of Emma towards the end of the novel. Similarly in the first chapter of Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*, Achenbach’s chance encounter with the stranger in front of the funeral chapel in Munich foreshadows two similar encounters later in the story, symbolizing the protagonist’s moral and physical decline and impending death.

In a more recent example of an opening statement, Gabriel Garcia Marquez begins *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: “Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. At that time Macondo was…” (9). This direct statement in the authorial voice creates a sense of the fluidity of time in the whole novel at the very beginning as well as tells us beforehand the death of the Colonel even before he is introduced to us.

Syllepsis belongs to a slightly different category since it involves “taking together” “of anachronic groupings” based on “kinship” of “temporal, spatial or other” (Genette 85). These are often inset stories or the so called “digressions” that can appear in various tales such as the classical voyage narratives or frame-work narratives. Syllepses may not have any direct thematic bearings on the main story.

When we come to postmodernist narratives, there may not be a master narrative within which the anachronies can be fixed. The temporalities will be radically different when there are many narratives claiming equal status providing a temporal constellation in which each narrative would appear to stand separately and at the same time can be understood only in relation to the others because they share the same fabula. The chronological and causal connections may overlap or may remain
ambiguous, and the absence of a main story to serve as a vantage point would deny the reader the possibility of determining anachronies consistently.

**Duration**

Duration refers to the time of the fabula as compared to the time of the sjuzet; the question of “how long?”. It refers to the dynamic relations between the overall time span and tempo of the story, on the one hand, and on the other the amount of textual space used to present them. This aspect of a narrative is the most difficult to monitor in a novel. Still, the notion is vital to our understanding of the structure and rhythmic patterns of narration in the novel. As Rimmon-Kenan points out:

> The difficulty inherent in the notion of text time is perhaps more disturbing in connection with duration than it is in connection with order and frequency. The last two can be easily transposed from the *time* of the story regardless of the conventional nature of this time, to the linearity (*space*) of the text is next to impossible to assess the proportion between the *duration* of the text and that of the story, for the simple reason that there is no way of measuring text duration (52).

Rimmon-Kenan points to the impossibility of describing varieties of duration because “of an inaccessible ‘norm’ of identity between story and text”(52). Therefore she proposes “a re-definition of the relations between the two ‘durations’ and posits a different type of ‘norm’ accordingly”(52). These relations are, “not between two ‘durations’ but between duration in the story (measured in minutes, hours, days, months, years) and the length of text devoted to it (in lines and pages), i.e. a temporal/spatial relationship. The measure yielded by this relation in general is
pace (or speed)” Thus the duration is measured as a “temporal/spatial relationship” (52).

There are two extremes of duration possible: ellipsis and descriptive pause. Theoretically, between these two poles there is an infinity of possible paces, but in practice these are conventionally reduced to summary and scene (Rimmon-Kenan 53). An author would deal with events in such a way as to highlight the particular theme that he has in mind or reveal a certain approach to the character experiencing an event or to the particular event itself. Normally the events of great significance will be treated in decelerating narration.

It is understood in terms of speed and tempo. The zero degree or the standard by which we measure speed and tempo is by starting with the notion of isochronous narration. Isochrony effect is achieved in cases where the speed of the event presented is equal to the speed of the text (that is, the reading of the text). Examples are cited where “scenes” are presented and characters are made to talk directly to each other instead of someone reporting their actions. But some critics are of the opinion that “although dialogue is the purest form of scene, a detailed narration of an event should also be considered scenic. For example the Agricultural fair scene in Flaubert’s Madam Bovary makes use of scenic description coupled with dialogue to create a scenic effect (105 – 124).

Acceleration happens when an event or events that must have taken a longer time in the fabula appear to be over in a much shorter period of time in the sjuzet or “by devoting a short segment of the text to a long period of the story, relative to the ‘norm’ established for this text” (Rimmon-Kenan 53). “The pace is accelerated
through a textual ‘condensation’ or ‘compression’ of a given story-period into a relatively short statement of its main features” (53). A very widely used method of time-compression, it is usually called “summary” which in Genette’s words, “is the narration in a few paragraphs or a few pages of several days, months, or years of existence, without details of action or speech” (95 – 96).

The opposite of summary is deceleration (Rimmon-Kenan 53). Rimmon-Kenan notes that “acceleration and deceleration are often evaluated by the reader as indicators of importance and centrality” (56). These are greatly dependent on the genre and the intentions of the narrator.

Ellipsis, sometimes considered to be a form of acceleration, is a mode of editing out certain events or cutting (as in the case of film editing) and jumping across a certain segment of time; “an omission in the story of a section of the fabula” (Bal 102), “story time elided” (Genette 106). Genette speaks of it as part of duration; one of the four basic forms of narrative movement (the other three being descriptive pause, scene and summary). “An ellipsis cannot be perceived: according to the definition, nothing is indicated in the story about the amount of fabula-time involved” (Bal 103). In the case of ellipsis the narrative time is zero ($N T=0$) (Genette 94 – 95). In such cases the story time moves forward, but a gap is present in the sjuzet which may or may not be later filled up for various reasons.

Genette has a clearer idea with regard to the types of ellipses mentioned. He speaks of two types: “temporal ellipsis and paralipsis” (106). He divides the temporal ellipses into two types: They are:

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6 “lateral omissions”
1. Explicit ellipses – again divided into “definite” and “indefinite” depending on whether the duration is indicated or not (106).

2. “Implicit ellipses that is, those whose very presence is not announced in the text and which the reader can infer only from some chronological lacuna or gap in narrative continuity”(108). This kind of ellipsis is the only true ellipsis that Miecke Bal admits. What Genette refers to as explicit ellipsis for Bal is “pseudo-ellipsis, or mini-summary” or “summary with maximum speed”, as demonstrated in a statement like “Two years passed”(103).

(Descriptive) pause is another time device in which the action part of the story may be held up for a while in order to describe scenes or objects or person, before taking up with the story again. Here the narrative time is highly variable (NT=n) (Genette 95, 99 –106, Rimmon-Kenan 53, Bal 103 – 4).

Miecke Bal divides duration into two kinds analogous to the acceleration and deceleration principles. The “…general distinction might be that between crisis and development: the first term indicates a short span of time into which events have been compressed, the second, a longer period of time which shows a development. In itself neither of these two forms has clear advantage over the other” (209). In classical tragedy the crisis form is used whereas in epics or narratives of other kinds the development form dominates. The form can be chosen according to the suitability without following rigid rules.” Certain types of fabulas are specifically appropriate for either of the two types of duration, or even dependent upon it” ( 210). Ideally in fabulas of shorter time span the narrative will have a comparatively short duration and will not allow the use of ellipses, descriptive pauses and summaries. Novels in general make use of all such devices.
Speed

Speed is defined as “the amount of time covered by the fabula . . . . juxtaposed with the amount of space in the text each event requires: the number of pages, lines, or words” (Bal100, Genette 87). Genette Speaks of it as “the relationship between a temporal dimension and a spatial dimension . . . . the speed of a narrative will be defined by the relationship between a duration (that of the story, measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years) and a length (that of the text, measured in lines and in pages)” (87 – 88). A hypothetical isochronous narrative is assumed as the standard unit. It is “a narrative with unchanging speed . . . . where the relationship-of-story/length-of-narrative would remain steady” (88).

Precise calculation of speed is not always possible and is a dubious and apparently mechanical and useless pursuit. What we can have is actually a certain sense of the story’s general movement. The incorporation of certain musical structures in modernist novels is at best an approximation. But it does serve a metaphorical value.

In the traditional novels of the realistic genre, a conscious use of variant speeds is seldom seen. This is something that the modernists consciously introduced into their novels which create musical effects. Musicalisation of texts have been pointed out as one of the recurrent structural devices of the modernists. For Genette, the narrative devices used to create different temporal patterns are akin to the use of musical devices. It is possible to arrive at a sense of rhythm by looking at these temporal devices but as admitted it is “a most elusive aspect” (Bal 100) as far as a literary narrative is concerned. It is synonymous with the speed of narration.
“Rhythm analysis begins with drawing up a general survey of the course of time of the fabula. Once a survey has been drawn up of the amount of time covered by the various events or series of events, episodes, it becomes possible to use these data to determine the general rhythm”(101).

Moreover, “whether or not the attention is spread more or less evenly across the fabula, there will always be an alternation of sorts between extensive and summarizing presentation. This alternation is generally viewed as the most important characteristic of the narrative genre; be that as it may, it is clearly an important marker”(102).

**Scene and Summary**

Scene and summary were originally used by Percy Lubbock in his analysis of the novel, later adopted by structuralists. Bal defines scene as a segment of the text in which \( T_F = T_S \). Both summary and slow-down are to be viewed relatively, in relation to each other (102). To establish this relationship a norm tempo, a zero line (102) has to be established. Real isochrony, a complete coincidence of \( T_F \) and \( T_S \), cannot occur in language (102).

Bal lists five different tempi possible, as shown below:

1. Ellipsis \( T_F = n, T_S = 0 \)
2. Summary \( T_F > T_S \)
3. Scene \( T_F < \leq T_S \)
4. Slow down \( T_F < T_S \)
5. Pause \( T_F = 0, T_S = \alpha \) thus \( T_F < T_S \)

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7 .TF- Time of the Fabula T S -Time of Sjuzet.
Genette observes that there is theoretically, a continuous gradation of speeds “from the infinite speed of ellipsis, . . . up to the absolute slowness of descriptive pause”, possible in the novel (93 – 94). However the novel’s tradition, has reduced that liberty, or at any rate has regulated it by effecting a selection from all the possibilities: it has selected four basic relationships that have become – in the course of an evolution that the ( as yet unborn) history of literature will some day start to study – the canonical forms of novel tempo, a little bit the way the classical tradition in music singled out, from the infinitude of possible speeds of execution, some canonical movements (andante, allegro, presto etc)\(^8\) whose relationships of succession and alteration governed structures like those of the sonata, the symphony, or the concerto for some two centuries.\(^{94}\)

The musical analogy is indeed enlightening and is helpful in charting the rhythms of the novels that we come across. This is of great significance since one of the features of the modernist novels has been what is often referred to as “musicalisation” of texts.

**Frequency**

Frequency, a temporal component not treated in narrative theory before Genette, is the relation between the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated (or mentioned) in the text.

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8. Andante is supposedly the slowest speed and presto the fastest. But there is a variety of speed variations possible within this range depending on the effects that the individual musician wants to create and also their skill. Prestissmio is the highest. But these terms can only be understood relatively. There is no exact measurement possible.
Frequency, then, involves repetition, and repetition is a mental construct attained by an elimination of the specific qualities of each occurrence and a preservation of only those qualities which it shares with similar occurrences. Strictly speaking, no event is repeatable in all respects, nor is a repeated segment of the text quite the same, since its new location puts it in a different context which necessarily changes its meaning. (Rimmon-Kenan 57, Genette 33 – 85, 87 – 112, 113 – 160, Bal 111 – 14)

Frequency has to do with the relations between the repetitive capacities of both the story and the discourse. It deals with the question of “how often?” or, different ways in which events and actions are presented in singular or repetitive narrative patterns or “the relation between the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated or mentioned in the text” (57). There are three types of frequency commonly found in all narratives. They are:

1. Singulative frequency recounting once what happened once.(narrating once in the sjuzet what happened only once in the fabula) 2. Repetitive frequency (narrating many times in the discourse what happened once in the story), and

The Question of tense occurs in all narratives. The generally assumed mode of tense is the preterite tense. All events are presented as having already happened. Hence the distance between the narrated time and the time of narration is the basic narrative duality in time. But within a narrative, tense can also be freely changed to create effects. And if there are inset narrations within a story, the problem of tense is still more complicated. A consistent use of one tense is often not available, especially in the modernist and postmodernist narratives. Unlike spatial location, the temporal location cannot be done without. As Genette points out:

I can very well tell a story without specifying the place where it happens, and whether this place is more or less distant than the place where I am telling it; nevertheless, it is almost impossible for me not to locate the story in time with respect to my narrating act, since I must necessarily tell my story in present, past, or future tense. (215)

Hence the use of tense in narration has great significance in guiding the reader into the temporal order of the story. In the traditional narrative methods there would be clear indicators of these, either by specific cues suggesting the time of the action and then presenting it as a scene in the present tense, with a narrator presenting it as happening before his eyes, or in the form of conversations.

The choice of such temporal effects in the novel depends on the author’s design and purpose with regard to the narrative. The discriminate use of these devices helps create a sense of multidimensionality for the narrative and create dramatic impact. Such techniques create deep aesthetic experiences for the reader. The different modes used to create particular patterns provide rhythmical patterns of
reading experience and also create an unconscious level of synchronicity in the reader’s mind.

These effects cannot be generalized easily because they differ from novel to novel. The use of temporal devices in modernist and postmodernist narratives clearly evoke different senses of time which they wanted to express. The time consciousness of Faulkner and Durrell have created unique narrative structures which extend the possibilities of novelistic narrative. Their similarities and dissimilarities will become clear when we look at some of the representative works of both in the following chapters.

A justification for such a study is offered in the words of Jago Morrison: “In contemporary fiction, it is useful to consider Ricoeur’s analysis of narrative’s classic function as a healer of time, because it helps us see the extent to which this function has been abandoned in recent writing”(34).