Narratology: An Introduction

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Chapter One
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Narratology has emerged as a major discipline in recent times. In its early stages, narratology was virtually an offshoot of structuralism, though later, it seems to have outgrown the domineering impact of structuralist perspectives. As a result, narratology has grown into different schools, and this makes the task of defining it extremely difficult. My endeavour in this chapter is to trace its evolution and growth during the epoch of structuralism and to mention its later developments under the impact of poststructuralist theories. The focus, however, is on the potential of narratology and the range and scope of its application.

In an attempt to define narratology, an array of definitions and descriptions are brought under a single umbrella for better cognition. Narratology is described as "the analysis of the structural components of a narrative, the way in which those components interrelate, and the relationship between this complex of elements and the narrative's basic story line" (Murfin 232). In A Dictionary of Stylistics compiled by Katie Wales, Narratology is defined:
A term that has come into favour since the 1960s from French under the influence of STRUCTURALISM referring to the theoretical study and analysis of NARRATIVE and its structures. It embraces the manifestation of narrative in language and MEDIA, eg., film; and also covers a wide range of approaches. It is commonly applied to those studies which concentrate on PLOT structures, as in Narrative Grammar (315-316).

The definition given above assures that PLOT acquires great significance in this realm. More or less a similar definition is derived from Gerald Prince's work.

The (structuralist-inspired) theory of Narrative – narratology – studies the nature, form and functioning of narrative (regardless of medium of representation) and tries to characterize NARRATIVE COMPETENCE. More particularly, it examines what all and only narratives have in common (at the level of STORY, NARRATING, and their relations) as well as what enables them to be different
from one another, and it attempts to account for the ability
to produce and understand them (65).

But the monopolist sway exercised by structuralism over narratology
in the 1970s underwent a coup in the later decades. The poststructuralist
reaction has led to the neglect of structuralist narratology; as a
consequence, narratology has branched out into the realms of Gender
Studies, Psychoanalysis, Reader-response criticism etc. Thus narratology
has become a multi-disciplinary study of narrative, absorbing the insights
of other critical discourses. Many critics conform to the fact that
narratology has recently fled from the cage of structuralism, unfastening
its fetters. "Narratology must . . . be seen in relation to developments in
critical and cultural theory other than structuralism," (361) observes the
editor Michael Payne while concluding the remarks about narratology.

Despite the underestimate of structuralist narratology in the recent
decades, it is evident that for the comprehension of the discipline in toto, it
should be placed within the linguistic-semiotic-structuralist parameters.

A narrative is the semiotic representation of a series of
events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal
way. Films, plays, comic strips, novels, newsreels, diaries,
chronicles and treatises of geological history are all
narratives in this wider sense . . . Any semiotic construct, anything made of signs, can be said to be a text. Therefore, we can speak of many kinds of narrative texts: linguistic, theatrical, pictorial, filmic (Onega 3).

The above definition deals with narratology in its wider sense and embraces a good range of topics and sub-topics that come within the purview of narratology. Roland Barthes has put the same idea in clear-cut terms:

Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting . . ., stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; . . . narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural . . . (79).

But considering the narrow sense, 'narrative' may be rewritten as "an exclusively linguistic phenomenon, a speech act, defined by the presence of
a narrator or teller and a verbal text" (Onega 3). In the present study, narratology is treated as the study of verbal narrative in the fictional sphere.

An investigation into the role of plot in the ancient and modern narratives is relevant. If the origin and evolution of plot in narratives is tracked, Aristotle's *Poetics* gains primary attention. Plot is the soul of narratives, according to Aristotle. But it becomes secondary to character in the plays of Shakespeare, especially, the major tragedies. With the advent of Romanticism, plot becomes almost invisible and irrelevant in literary works. Nevertheless, the Victorian Age permitted plot to regain its former status through the new genre, novel. But in the early years of the twentieth century, owing to the supreme influence of Freud's psychological treatises, the novels themselves deposed the well-knit plot, turning inward to the depths of the psyche and its crisis. To the temporary rescue of plot, discarded by the psychological novels, came New Critics and after them the Chicago Critics (also known as Neo-Aristotelians) who endeavoured to resurrect plot and place it in its former position. The Russian formalists and structuralists approached plot for a scientific analysis of it. Their attempts to dissect plot into its essential elements (as matter is segmented into neutron, electron and proton, in scientific analysis) like
motifs/motifemes or actions/functions etc. in order to discover the general pattern underlying narratives, received widespread accolade. But the truth is that the plot has lost its former royalty and magnanimity which it had possessed during the Aristotelian reign.

Until the second decade of the twentieth century, it was presumed that language is mimetic by nature, that is, language is capable of representing the external reality of the world. The relation between the author and the literary text was considered to be based on expression, that between the world and the text on mimesis or representation; and that of the text and the reading of it, on impression. Theory of art has been expounded as mimesis (imitation of life) by Plato as well as Aristotle. Victorian theorists of fiction regarded novel as serious narrative and insisted upon the aesthetics of verisimilitude. They distinguished between romance (light entertainment) and novel (true to life). The necessity of a coherent plot in a novel was their significant commandment. But psychological novels demanded only an inner realism of the characters. It was the New Critics who disregarded the mimetic considerations or fidelity to life in the realm of art. A remarkable transition occurred when the Russian formalists and the structuralist linguists challenged the mimetic
tradition of literary language, founding their argument on a revolutionized philosophical thought pattern.

Russian formalists like Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky etc. highlighted technique and formal patterns of literary works rather than their subject matter or the social values. They argued that the literary use of language is distinct from the practical use of it. Focussing or foregrounding of language has an effect of estrangement; it defamiliarizes the literary discourse. This kind of different application of language, other than its ordinary usage, enables the reader to get a newer and better perception. In "Art as Technique" Viktor Shklovsky remarks,

In studying poetic speech in its phonetic and lexical structure as well as in its characteristic distribution of words and in the characteristic thought structures compounded from the words, we find everywhere the artistic trade mark — that is, we find material obviously created to remove the automatism of perception; the author's purpose is to create the vision which results from that deautomatised perception. A work is created 'artistically' so that its perception is impeded and the
greatest possible effect is produced through the slowness of
the perception (25).

The concept that literary language is non-mimetic by nature,
reverberates in the theory of structuralism as well. Ferdinand de Saussure
is known to be the founder of the modern Structural Linguistics. His
posthumous publication, *Course in General Linguistics* challenges the
mimetic ‘nature of literary language. Primitive man came into a world
devoid of language or meaning; so he was compelled to undergo an entire
process of naming, labelling or throwing meaning on things around him.
His use of language was arbitrary. The world does not consist of
independent objects that can be comprehended and classified in absolute
terms. Things only really exist as much as man perceives them. His three-
dimensional viewing, project things in their tri-dimensionality before him.
In other words, one creates what one perceives; in no way, can man claim
what he perceives, to be the reality. What he can really know is the
relationship between the viewer and the thing viewed; this is the core of
reality. Only in the system of relationships or in the structure to which a
thing belongs, will man’s comprehension of it acquires relevance.
Structuralism may be defined as the system of relationships between the elements that constitute the structure which is whole in itself. Robert Scholes assesses:

At the heart of structuralism is the idea of system; a complete self-regulating entity that adapts to new conditions by transforming its features while retaining its systematic structure. Every literary writ from individual sentence to the whole order of words can be seen in relation to the concept of a system (10).

For a structuralist, individual signs acquire meaning only within a total structure. A work of art is a mere permissible variation within a system.

For a lucid understanding of the system of relationships one should be well aware of the langue/parole distinction pointed out by Saussure.

(La) Langue refers to one of the senses of 'language' namely, the system of communication produced by a speech community, and is thus distinguished from language as the general faculty possessed by human beings (le langage), and language as the specific verbal behaviour of individuals in speaking and writing (la parole) (Wales 273).
In the same text, parole is defined as follows:

"... parole is more specifically the verbal behaviour or utterances of individuals in speech and writing, the individual instantiations of the langue" (Wales 339). Parole derives meaning only in the system of langue whereas the system of langue is relevant only in the presence of the parole. More than being contradictory, they are complementary to each other.

Another significant fact asserted by structuralism is that language is a system of signs, each sign consisting of a form and a concept, that is, the signifier and the signified. The former is a sequence of phonemes or graphemes and the latter is the mental image provoked by it. But Saussure gives us a warning:

The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Since I mean by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier and the signified, I can simply say: the linguistic sign is arbitrary (67).

Because the bond is arbitrary, and not inherent as such, it is transferable as well; and this change occurs through time. The colour 'red' which signifies 'danger' may mean something different if circumstances
alter. The sign makes sense only in the particular system to which it belongs.

Binarism is a fundamental principle in the functioning of the human mind. As the meaning of a sign is not mysteriously inherent in it, we are able to grasp its meaning only by our awareness of its difference from other signs. We build up our sense of structures from an observation of binary oppositions, the very basic contrasting relationships. 'Pin' is so, because it is not 'tin' or 'din' or 'bin'. An 'apple' means so, as it is not 'mango' or 'orange' or 'plum'. Binary opposition is the conditioning force in human perception.

Saussure also refers to the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations operating in language. Syntagmatic relationship suggests chain relationship, that is, it is the bond between the words in a sentence. Paradigmatic relationship denotes choice relationship, that is, it is the bond between the chosen word and the list of related words either similar or dissimilar to the selected one. Saussure says:

In discourse, on the one hand, words acquire relations based on the linear nature of language because they are chained together . . . . In the syntagm a term acquires its
value only because it stands in opposition to everything that precedes it or follows it or both (123).

Regarding paradigmatic relations he continues:

Outside discourse, on the other hand, words acquire relation of a different kind. Those that have something in common are associated in memory resulting in groups marked by diverse relations . . . . Those formed outside discourse are not supported by linearity. Their seat is in the brain; they are a part of the inner storehouse that makes up the language of each speaker (123).

Methods of language analysis include synchronic (descriptive) and diachronic (historical) approaches. Until the emergence of structuralist criticism, diachronic study remained predominant in the linguistic arena. But Saussure preferred to view a sign synchronically, that is, to study how a language works in a given time regardless of its past history or future destiny. This enables one to arrive at a concrete structure with definite rules and laws operating within itself; there may be arrangements or re-arrangements of the elements within the structure, but the structure always remains intact.
Thus structuralist criticism strongly negates the mimetic idea of language and therefore of literature. V.S. Seturaman opines: "Narrative is governed not by any relation to reality but by its own internal laws and logic" (25-26). As words are not simply the transparent names of things around, but form an autonomous entity governed by its own laws and codes, so also discourses are not governed by a correspondence with their referent but by their own laws and rules. Rightly does Roland Barthes sum up his "Structural Analysis of Narrative":

Narrative does not show, does not imitate; the passion which may excite us in reading a novel is not that of a 'vision' (in actual fact, we do not 'see' anything). Rather it is that of meaning, that of a higher order of relation which also has its emotions, its hopes, its dangers, its triumphs. 'What takes place' in a narrative is from the referential (reality) point of view literally nothing; 'what happens' is language alone, the adventure of language, the unceasing celebration of its coming (124).

Thus Barthes avers that 'the author is dead'; it is the language that speaks.

An artist evokes through his art only the reality of the language.
Literature follows the pattern of the language system, though within that system it creates its own grammar. The structure of a literary text can be analyzed on the model of the syntax in a well-formed sentence. According to Jonathan Culler, the aim of structuralist criticism is "to construct a poetics which stands to literature as linguistics stands to language" (257). Certain elementary linguistic analogies are worked upon, in the structuralist narrative theory. Syntax is the basic model for the rules of narratives. The basic syntactic division of the sentence unit is between subject and predicate. "Ravi stabbed Raju on a stormy night" – this sentence which comprises a subject and a predicate may be the core of an episode or even a story. Different substitutes if used instead of the subject and the predicate given here, will not alter the essential structure. As verb is the nucleus of a sentence, "function" is the kernel of the story. Function is "an act defined in terms of its significance for the course of the action in which it appears, an act considered in terms of the role it plays at the action level; a MOTIFEME" (Prince 36). Put in simpler terms, functions are crucial units of a story; that is, the acts of a personage which push the story forward. Similar to the protons, neutrons and electrons – units within the atom – the motifemes or functions in a story get assembled themselves into varieties of patterns. An illusion of reality is created by such combinations. Each function (like kill, eat, write) is amoral and has
no currency by itself. Individual occurrence when separated from its total structure and objectively referred to, is devoid of any value system. It acquires meaning and value only in the totality of narration.

The Russian formalist, Vladimir Propp's, *Morphology of the Folktale* is a pioneering work in this field, because it attempts a scientific analysis of tales in the structuralist pattern, thereby providing a model to the future structuralists. Propp's primary object was to disclose the common pattern governing a selected number of Russian folktales, finding out the major functions that constitute them. He succeeded in deciphering thirty-one distinct functions in them. These follow a logical sequence, and although no tale includes them all, in every tale the functions always remain in sequence. Even similar functions in different stories are found to convey contrasting meanings when placed in the particular contexts they appear.

The French structural anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss has applied a similar method to myth, asserting that the narrative structures of individual myths relate to a universal structure which provides the matrix for all of them.

Propp's analytical tool was handled by many more structuralists in the field of literature. While Propp focussed on a single genre, A.J. Greimas aims at the universal 'grammar' of narrative by applying to it a
semantic analysis of sentence structure. He proposes three pairs of binary oppositions: Subject/Object; Sender/Receiver; Helper/Opponent. Greimas's application of Propp is in the direction of the "phonemic" patterning as in Levi-Strauss. He thinks in terms of relations between entities rather than of the character of entities in themselves.

Tzvetan Todorov sums up Propp, Greimas and Bremond, applying all the syntactic rules in narrative terms – rules of agency, predication, adjectival and verbal functions, mood and aspect. According to him the minimal unit of narrative is the 'proposition' which is either an 'agent' or an 'action' (subject or predicate). The two higher levels of organization are the sequence and the text; the sequence is made up of a group of propositions, the minimum number being five. Todorov writes:

We shall understand narrative better if we know that the character is a noun, the action a verb. But we shall understand noun and verb better by thinking of the role they assume in the narrative. Ultimately language can be understood only if we learn to think of its essential manifestation – literature. The converse is also true: to combine a noun and a verb is to take the first step
toward narrative. In a sense, what the writer does is to read language (119).

Roland Barthes contrasts the perspectives and methods of the linguist and the narratologist in "Structural Analysis of Narratives". "The linguist does not go beyond the sentence because there are only its multiplications to be found. . . . [H]aving described the flower, the botanist is not to get involved in describing the bouquet" (83). Structurally, narrative shares the salient features of a sentence. But there are different levels of description for a sentence even linguistically – phonetic, phonological, grammatical, contextual etc. According to Barthes, "To understand a narrative is not merely to follow the unfolding of the story, it is also to recognize its construction in storeys . . ." (87). He distinguishes between Functions and Indices. ". . . [F]unctions involve metonymic relata; indices, metaphorical relata; the former correspond to a functionality of doing, the latter to a functionality of being" (93).

Until the advent of the structuralist thought pattern, the literary writer was in a highly privileged position – even assumed to be equivalent to the creator. Challenging this sovereign status of the author, Barthes has made a shocking revelation that 'the author is dead'. Before him, the New Critics had demolished the power of the author, but it was merely
with a view to rejecting the authorial intention behind the artistic work. Structuralism obliterates the autocratic author and emphasizes the fact that a story narrates itself; i.e., it is self-reflexive by nature. Because of the self-interest of the story, its only concern is to become the story. The story's sensationalism is its selling value. Its storyness being of paramount importance, story handles and manipulates any concept which comes within its purview, not excluding even the concept of God. In other words, it could be said that God is incarnated in the story. A God outside the realm of the story is not accessible or intelligible to man. In the beginning was 'Logos' and God was revealed to man through 'Logos'. Primitive stories evolved with a purpose to witness the presence of God. Later, story began to portray substitutes for God, that is, goodness along with its counterparts. Girish Karnad's Nāgamandala subtitled 'Play with a Cobra' serves as a striking evidence of how the story unwinds itself. Story as a woman character asserts a separate existence from the text. It narrates the story of the play victimising the writer to become a patient and passive listener under the compulsion that he is to repeat this story to another person. The writer who becomes a mere puppet in the hands of the story admits to the audience, "So now you know why this play is being done. I have no choice" (Karnad 5). The story boasts herself to be "a self-respecting story".
The double climax of the play – the tragic end which is later transformed into a happy ending – is effected just by the shifting of a few elements in the story. The disappearance of the character Story at the final stage may be just to emphasize that the closure of the story is no concern of her at all. She only revels in the narrativity of herself, similar to the experience evoked by the peeling of an onion. No core is located; the process is all the more important. This is what Barthes signifies when he professes that "meaning is not 'at the end' of the narrative; it runs across it" (87). Reversibility of the story is an indication of its vacuous nature.

In Nāgamandala perhaps Karnad is exploring the paradoxical nature of stories in general; they have an existence of their own, independent of the teller; but at the same time they can prevail only if they are passed on from one story-teller to the other. Art of narration is hardly the skill of the writer. Events are not real happenings but mere play of language. The role of the author is only an act of assembling or organizing the elements which form different patterns as in a kaleidoscope, creating an illusion of varieties of stories. The self-reflexivity of the story can be ascertained by the following remark:

... [O]ne can say that the 'content' of the narrative is its structure. This is equivalent to claiming that the narrative
is in a way about itself: its 'subject' is its own internal relations, its own modes of sense-making (Eagleton 96).

Narratology deals with three broad constituents of narratives – Plot, Narrator and the Narrative Act. Under the major branch of plot come the distinctions between Story/Plot (pointed out by E.M. Forster); Fabula/Syuzhet (propagated by Viktor Shklovsky); Plot/Plotting (introduced by Peter Brooks). The function of the narrator pertains to the concept of Implied Author who is definitely distinct from the Narrator. There are different varieties of narrators like Dramatised/Undramatised; Reliable/Unreliable; Single/Multiple; Self-conscious/Unself-conscious etc. The third constituent, the Narrative Act (Narrative is the consequence of the narrative act of the narrator) involves the story of Narratee who is differentiated into Inscribed Narratee and Vague (General) Narratee. Again, there are the various types of Narrative Act which merit serious consideration. They are the literary devices like digressing, framing, intertextuality etc. (Booth, Rhetoric 67-374). As the objective of this project falls within the purview of plot, only factors related to it are examined in detail.

Fabula and syuzhet are the binary pair of terms adopted from Russian formalism. The fabula is the basic story arranged in chronological
and causal order. The syuzhet is the transformed fabula as a narrative discourse of artistic design following a dechronologized order. Although the terms Fabula/Syuzhet are mentioned in this project, the synonymous terms used by the following writers are given below:

- *Histoire/Discours*  
  Tzvetan Todorov
- *Histoire/Recit*  
  Gerard Genette
- *Story/Discourse*  
  Seymour Chatman
- *Story/Text*  
  Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan

The chronologized order of events in fabula and the dechronologized order in syuzhet can be examined in detail, along the lines suggested by Gerard Genette. While other structuralists endeavour to generate a grammar of narratives, Genette is concerned with the aesthetic of narratives, even though he also commenced his theories linguistically, founding on the three qualities of the verb: tense, mood and voice. Genette surveys the aesthetic of narrative time, under three categories: Order, Duration and Frequency. Genette's obsessive preoccupation with the aesthetic of narrative time, can be supplemented with an aesthetic of narrative space in the light of Patrick O'Neill's definition of narrative. "... [S]tories essentially amount to the doings of particular actors involved in various events at particular times and in particular places..." (33).
Narratology provided significant contributions to the study of literature, during the heyday of structuralism. Russian formalists like Viktor Shklovsky and Vladimir Propp, French structuralists like Roland Barthes and Gerard Genette, German theorists like Franz Stanzel, and American critics like Wayne Booth have altogether offered new perspectives on the nature and orientation of narratives. Claude Bremond, A.J. Gréimas, Tzvetan Todorov, Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman, Gerald Prince, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Wallace Martin, Cohan and Linda M. Shires, James Phelan are narratologists who have complemented the research.

This project seeks to explore the fictional works of Ruskin Bond, an Indian writer from a narratological vantage point. Ruskin Bond (1934 - ), noted for his popular and profuse fictional works, rose to prominence in the literary arena as a novelist at an early age of seventeen, with the publication of his first novel, The Room on the Roof which fetched the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957. Without many time lapses appeared, Vagrants in the Valley, the sequence of the first novella. In due course of time, he confirmed his position as a major writer in Indian Fiction in English, producing numerous short stories, travelogues and books for children. In 1992, he won the Sahitya Akademi Award for the collection of
short stories entitled, *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. He was also selected for the International Hans Christian Award in 1996. In 1999, the Government of India honoured him with "Padmasree" for his notable achievements. As a whole, his works exhibit great variety and dexterity in the art of story telling.

On making a general survey of Bond's narratives, I was able to discern certain specific patterns evolving out of them. There is ample evidence of Embedded Narrative (narrative within a narrative, that is, Chinese box structure) such as "The Good Old Days" in *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (67-69); "A Case for Inspector Lal" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (116-21); "The Bent-Double Beggar" in *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (17-23); "His Neighbour's Wife" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (48-51) and "A Face in the Night" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (122-23).

In certain narratives the shift of Focalization is deployed very effectively. "He said it with Arsenic" from *Time Stops at Shamli* (123-29) is a typical example. Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (67-374) distinguishes between the Real Author and the Implied Author. Among the narratives he differentiates between Omniscient and Participant narrators; the former narrates without being a participant while the latter participates in the events. In the narrative, "He Said it with Arsenic"
(Shamli 123-29), the narration is begun by an Omniscient narrator but from page 124 onward, after an asterisk mark to demarcate the change, the focalisation is suddenly shifted to a Participant narrator. The objective mode of narration abruptly gets transformed into the subjective mode, thereby enhancing the element of suspense and horror. Another example is the story "Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright" (Shamli 158-80). Here the story begins and continues with Omniscient narration. But there are intermittent passages throughout the narrative where the focalization is shifted to that of the tiger. A human focalizer gives way to an animal focalizer very often, the narration thereby subtly revealing varying nuances of the predicament presented.

Another striking variety observed in Bond's narratives is the blending of two stories into one; a new name is given to the major character when he is presented in the combined story. The narratives "The Summer Season" (Shamli 92-97) and "The Last Truck Ride" (Shamli 74-79) are combined to form "Dust on the Mountain" in The Ruskin Bond Children's Omnibus (129-54). Visni and Nathu in the former stories become Bisnu in the latter story. Some of the stories have their sequences either in the same collection of stories or in a different one. "The Bent-Double Beggar" (17-23) has a sequence in "What's Your Dream?" (46-47) in the same
anthology entitled *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* while the narrative "Love is a Sad Song" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (210-37) continues in the narrative "Time Stops at Shamli" (35-36) which appears in the anthology bearing the same title of the story.

Another device deserves attention; the same narrative in one anthology re-incarnates with a different title in later anthologies. For example, "Sita and the River" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (177-209) appears as "Angry River" in *The Ruskin Bond Children's Omnibus* (83-127); "A Face in the Night" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (122-23) reappears as "A Face in the Dark" in *Delhi Is Not Far* (137-38); "A Case for Inspector Lal" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (116-21) is a re-make of the novelette *An Axe for the Rani*; "The Eyes Are Not Here" in *Contemporary Indian English Stories* (30-33) derives the title "The Eyes Have It" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (34-37).

The Stringed Narratives which appear under the title "The Road to the Bazaar" in *The Ruskin Bond Children's Omnibus* (207-327) invoke considerable attention. The different sections in this long narrative belong to other anthologies which are already published. The following chart will bear out this argument.
"The Road to the Bazaar" in *The Ruskin Bond Children's Omnibus* consists of:

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There are many more illustrations that merit to be hinted at. The narrative "The Photograph" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (21-23) is inserted into "Grandfather's Private Zoo" in *The Ruskin Bond Children's Omnibus* (155-206) under the title "A Photograph" (201-06).

Most of the narratives introduce the narrator as a writer by profession. Hence they all acquire the mood of metafiction where the fiction is about fiction itself. A good case in point is "The Room of Many Colours" which appears in *Time Stops at Shamli* (15-34).

There are also synonymous narratives rendered in different settings. The narrative "The Leopard" in *The Night Train at Deoli* (171-76) locates the story in the jungles and the den of the leopard; an identical narrative
"A Tiger in the House" in *Time Stops at Shamli* (154-57) situates the story in the zoo and the cage of Timothy, the tiger.

The craft and diversity in the patterning of Bond's narratives has impelled me to explore them in terms of the actions and functions, time schemes and modes of opening, climax and closure. It seems to have ended up as an attempt to generate a grammar of narratology through the reading of his selected stories.

Functions like "kill", "hunt" or "sell" are amoral by themselves, when treated objectively. Meaning is generated only in the system or context in which they appear. Considering the positive and negative values of such functions in the particular contexts in which they are placed, I have endeavoured to reach a general consensus with reference to the fictional world laid bare by Ruskin Bond. With this purpose in view, I have chosen eight stories from each of the three categories to examine the functions in each context, and systematically arrive at a general estimation about his stories.

In the "who-dunit" or detective narratives, the writers keep the agent of the murder or robbery mystified and hidden until the closure of the text. The primary story of murder or burglary is revealed step by step in the latter story of investigation (Todorov, *Poetics*, 42-52). The curiosity and
suspense is sustained till the last page. Such is the basic pattern of these stories. Fairy tales follow a common structure (Propp, Morphology 3-116); so also the narratives designed by most of the regional writers. A great number of narratives are modelled on the Cinderella type. Three hundred and forty-five versions of it have been discovered by one of the folklorists (Cox bxxi-bxxii). Just as R.K. Narayan's Malgudi stories portray a common structure Bond's narratives are suggestive of having a basic pattern at the deeper level. Only specific combinations are visible in Bond's narratives; for only such combinations can uphold certain values which the writer would yearn to propagate. The target of this project is to discover the predominant motifemes in his stories and through inferences, arrive at the basic model. Convergence of time, space and action generates a particular value system. How far does the variation in the temporal, spatial ordering affect the pattern of the narratives and how are values created by certain permutations and combinations? - these investigations are central to my project.

In trying to evolve a plan and methodology for this exploration of Bond's narratives I have relied essentially on western theories especially those of Gerard Genette, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes, Gerald Prince and Mieke Bal. It would, however, be a serious omission if I do not
acknowledge here that classical Indian aesthetics had evolved a methodology for the analysis of narratives right from the time of Bharata. To be sure Bharata comes out with concepts such as Prārambha, Prayatna, Sambhava, Niyataprāpti, Phalayōga, Bījam, Bindu, Patāka, Prakari, Kāryam, etc. (166-172). Since it is not possible to mix the eastern and the western traditions in this field I too have followed the beaten track viz., the western theories.