

Chapter- 1

What we talk about when we talk about time

“What is time? It is a secret- lacking in substance and yet almighty.”

-Thomas Mann

Time is a basic category of human existence. Yet we rarely debate its meaning. We tend to take it for granted, and give it common sense or self-evident attributions. We record the passage of time in seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, decades, centuries and eras, as if everything has its place upon a single objective time scale. Even though in Physics time is a difficult and continuous concept, we do not usually let that interfere with the common sense of time around which we organize our daily routines.

In this commonsense conception of time we assume that there is only one time-series, it does not speed up or slow down. It is as if we conceive of an irreversible ‘arrow of time’ giving a certain linearity and direction to any course of events, and thus to the way we think of life. We tend to apprehend time through its discrete measurements: days, weeks, years, as well as the way it is imposed on us - by the regularity of work schedules and railway timetables. We recognize, of course, that our

mental processes and perceptions can play tricks, make seconds feel like light years, or pleasurable hours pass by so fast we hardly notice.

As a practical matter, clocks and calendars regulate everyday life. Yet at the most primitive level, human awareness of time is simply the ability to distinguish which of any two events is earlier and which later, combined with a consciousness of an instantaneous present. Paul Davies, in his "That Mysterious Flow", talks about this common sense notion of time. "In daily life we divide time into three parts: past, present, and future. The grammatical structure of language revolves around this fundamental distinction. Reality is associated with the present moment. The past we think of having slipped out of existence, whereas the future is even more shadowy, its details still unformed. In this simple picture, the "now" of our conscious awareness glides steadily onward, transforming events that were once in the unformed future into the concrete but fleeting reality of the present, and thence relegating them to the fixed past"(Davies 40-41).

Time: A Scientific Perspective

The association of time with the mystical, the mental and the organic, undoubtedly served to hinder a proper scientific study of time for many centuries. Time entered science as a measurable quantity with the

work of Galileo and Newton. Before Galileo and Newton, time was an organic, subjective thing, not a parameter to be measured with geometrical precision. Time was part and parcel of nature. Newton “plucked time right out of nature and gave it an abstract, independent existence, robbing it of its traditional connotations” (Davies, *About Time* 17). Traditional Newtonian physics is consistent with the commonsense conception of time.

Isaac Newton, in formulating the basic concepts of classical physics, compared absolute time to a stream flowing at a uniform rate of its own accord. In everyday life, we likewise regard each instant of time as somehow possessing a unique existence apart from any particular observer or system of timekeeping. Inherent in the concept of absolute time is the assumption that the simultaneity of two given events is also absolute. In other words, if two events are simultaneous for one observer, they are simultaneous for all observers. In physics, the concept of absolute time and absolute space are hypothetical concepts closely tied to the thoughts of Issac Newton.

“Absolute, true and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature flows equably without regard to anything external, and by another name is called duration: relative, apparent and common time, is some sensible and external

(whether accurate or unequable) measure of duration by the means of motion, which is commonly used instead of true time ...” (qtd. in *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 805)

Using this definition, time runs at the same rate for all the observers in the universe and different measures of absolute time can be scaled by multiplying by a constant. In today's classical mechanics, the notion of absolute time is replaced by the idea of inertial frames of reference. The idea of absolute time has proved particularly controversial from Newton's time to the present. The views opposing absolute space and time may be seen from a modern stance as an attempt to introduce operational definitions for space and time, a perspective made explicit in the special theory of relativity.

Even within the context of Newtonian mechanics, the modern view is that absolute space is unnecessary. Instead, the notion of inertial frame of reference has taken precedence, that is, a preferred set of frames of reference that move uniformly with respect to one another. The concepts of space and time were separate in physical theory prior to the advent of special relativity theory, which connected the two and showed both to be dependent upon the observer's state of motion.

In Einstein's theories, the ideas of absolute time and space were superseded by the notion of space time in special relativity, and by dynamically curved space time in general relativity. The theory of relativity does not allow the existence of absolute time because of nonexistence of absolute simultaneity. Absolute simultaneity refers to the experimental establishment of coincidence of two or more events in time at different locations in space in a manner agreed upon by all observers in the universe.

Einstein's theory of relativity brings with it a collapse of Newtonian rigidities, introducing an intrinsically flexible notion of time, a time that is 'relative.' Even simultaneity becomes relative to a particular observer: it is not the same for different observers, unless they are at rest relatively to each other. Largely because of Albert Einstein, it is now held that time cannot be treated in isolation from space. Einstein "restored time to its rightful place at the heart of nature, as an integral part of the physical world" (Davies, *About Time* 17). Einstein showed that people travelling at different speeds, while agreeing on cause and effect, will measure different time separations between events and can even observe different chronological orderings between non-causally related events.

According to the Special Theory of Relativity, there is no such thing as absolute simultaneity. But if there's no absolute simultaneity,

then there is no objective fact about whether a particular event is in the present. Einstein's theories force human perception to unusual possibilities; "the possibility of the same event being future for me and past for you, the possibility of time slowing down and speeding up, depending on the motion of the body; of a time which can be closed like a circle by its reversibility" (Smith and Oaklander 164).

In his book *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*, Stephen Hawking discusses what he calls the "arrows of time" unleashed by the "big bang" and continuing in their multiple directions throughout our expanding universe (Hawking 143-53). Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* is really a brief history of the universe, based on the assumption that time began when the universe began. For the modern cosmologist, neither time nor space existed before the big bang. The origin of the universe means the origin of space and time as well as matter and energy. Hawking says that even if time did not begin with the Big Bang and there were another time frame before the Big Bang, no information from events then would be accessible to us, and nothing that happened then would have any effect upon the present time-frame.

Time: A Philosophical Perspective

The theme of time is one of the basic subjects around which much philosophical discussion has developed. Throughout the ages

philosophers have attempted to comprehend the enigmatic Time as a metaphysical entity. Philosophers have sought an understanding of time by focusing on the broad questions of the relation between time and the physical world and the relation between time and consciousness. Those who adopt an absolutist theory of time regard it as a kind of container within which the universe exists and change takes place, and believe that its existence and properties are independent of the physical universe.

In 5th century BC Greece, Antiphon the Sophist, in a fragment preserved from his chief work *On Truth* held that: "Time is not a reality (hypostasis), but a concept (noêma) or a measure (metron)" (qtd in Davies *About Time* 6). In Book 11 of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, he ruminates on the nature of time, asking, "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not" (qtd. in Davies, *About Time* 6).

The concept of time has been treated differently in different periods of time. In ancient Greece time was treated as a circle. But in medieval and modern times time has been treated as a linear process. According to the linear concept, time is an irreversible process. In the Christian concept, based on the Bible, time is linear, with a beginning, the act of creation by God. The Christian view assumes also an end, expected to happen when Jesus returns to earth in the Second Coming to judge the living and the dead. This will be the consummation of the world and time.

St Augustine's *City of God* was the first developed application of this concept to world history. The Christian view is that God is uncreated and eternal so that He and the supernatural world are outside time and exist in eternity. Ancient cultures such as Hindu, Buddhist, Jainist, and others have a concept of a wheel of time, that regards time as cyclical and quantic consisting of repeating ages that happen to every being of the Universe between birth and extinction.

Saint Augustine in his *City of God* favoured the linear concept of time and labelled the Greek cyclic time as a mere superstition. "To St. Augustine it becomes a recognition that 'time past, time present and time future' exist not just in the mind of man but as the essence of the mind of man, in the form of the interaction of memory, perception, and tradition of identifying time with the 'consciousness of time,' and with individual consciousness"(Davies, *About Time* 8).

The issue of time as a mental construct, not a pre-existing universal threads the history of human thought, Eastern and Western. "Time is nature's way of keeping everything from happening at once." This quote, attributed to Einstein, says that time is what separates cause and effect. The nature of time has been one of the major problems of philosophy since antiquity. The nature of time has proved deeply puzzling and paradoxical to human beings. It is in some ways the most basic aspect of our experience of the world. After all, "the very concept

of selfhood hinges on the preservation of personal identity through time” (Davies, *About Time* 16).

The literature on the philosophy of time commonly distinguishes Platonist and relationist understandings of time. For the Platonist, time is like an “empty container into which events may be placed; but it is a container that exists independently of whether or not anything is placed in it” (Davies, *About Time* 18). Thus it is possible to conceive of all change ceasing throughout the universe for a period of, say, one year. For the relationist, on the other hand, discourse about time and temporal relations can be reduced to talking about events and the relationships between them. Without change (events), there can be no time.

The philosophy of time focuses on a number of basic issues, including whether or not time and space exist independently of the mind, whether they exist independently of one another, what accounts for time's apparently unidirectional flow, whether times other than the present moment exist, and questions about the nature of identity over time. Many of these problems are first posed in Aristotle's *Physics*, in the form of paradoxes or problems about the very existence of time. The primary issue concerning the relation between time and consciousness is the extent, if any, to which time or aspects of time depend on the existence of conscious beings.

Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, described time as an *a priori* notion that, together with other *a priori* notions such as space, allows us to comprehend sense experience. For Kant, neither space nor time is conceived as substances, but rather both are elements of a systematic framework we use to structure our experience. For Kant “time is the fundamental way in which the mind understands reality” and to Heidegger’s existential thinking “time is the meaning of Being itself” (qtd. in Smith and Oaklander 3).

Since the late nineteenth century, how human beings perceive and experience time has changed dramatically. As the twentieth century began, “the new public institution of world standardized time was countered by a profound awareness of the diversity of private time” (Heise 3). A revolution in thinking about temporality was fostered by the development of history and psychology as disciplines. The theories of Henri Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger, Jaspers and Sartre, have provided the conceptual framework for the psychological interpretations of temporality.

Jorge Luis Borges’ essay, “New Refutation of time” is formulated as a playful philosophical argument: extrapolating from the idealism of Berkeley and Hume, Borges argues that if matter, spirit and space have no reality except as they exist in the mind of the one who perceives, there

are no grounds for claiming that time exists beyond each individual instant of perception, and hence no reason to attribute continuity over time to either matter, spirit or space. Therefore Borges concludes, time itself cannot be claimed to exist: “each instant is autonomous... each moment we experience exists, but not their imaginary combination” (qtd. in Heise 11). Borges proposes a paradox that mediates between the existence of a temporal universe and the existence of the receiver; “Time is a river which sweeps me along, but I am the river” (qtd. in Heise 11).

The idea that events in time are laid out “all at once” motivated many writers and poets and it is explicitly captured by the words of William Blake: “I see the Past, Present and Future existing all at once, before me” (Jerusalem, 15:6). The same fascination is eloquently echoed in the lines of T. S. Eliot:

And the end and the beginning were always there

Before the beginning and after the end.

And all is always now. (Burnt Norton, 189)

The Indian conception of time is very different from what the Western mind regards as intuitively obvious. In Indian thought, time, like other phenomena, is conceived statically rather than dynamically. It is, of course, recognized that the things of this world are always moving and changing. But the substance of things is seen as basically unchanging, it's

underlying reality unaffected by the ceaseless flux. In Indian thought, as in the Sanskrit language, it is the idea of Being which receives central consideration. Indian philosophers in general replace the concept of Becoming by three aspects of temporal existence: Appearance, Extinction, and Continuance. All three states are clearly conceived as static. They are referred to early in the Upanisads and are generally accepted by the orthodox schools of Brahmanism and Jainism.

Narrative

Narrative is one of the most problematic terms bobbing along in the swift currents of postmodern cultural debate. The word narrative can be etymologically traced back to the Latin *narrare* (“to relate”) and *gnarus* (“knowing”) or the Sanskrit root *gna* (“to know”), leading to a possible definition, “to relate in order to know” (Ashok 4). All narratives present a story. A story is a sequence of events which involves characters. Hence, a narrative is a form of communication which presents a sequence of events caused and experienced by character. The narrative orders events in a linear sequence (linearity) based on the logic of cause and effect (causality). It is the narrative which brings shape and coherence to all experience. “Whereas description frequently depicts spatial links in writing, narration represents time relationships in language” (Beach 21).

“A narrative is an account, in any semiotic system, of a subjectivised and often entirely or partly fictionalised series of events. It involves a narrator - whether explicitly or implicitly self-referential, always a ‘first person’ - a focaliser - the implied subject who ‘colors’ the story - and a number of actors or agents of the events” (Bal 308).

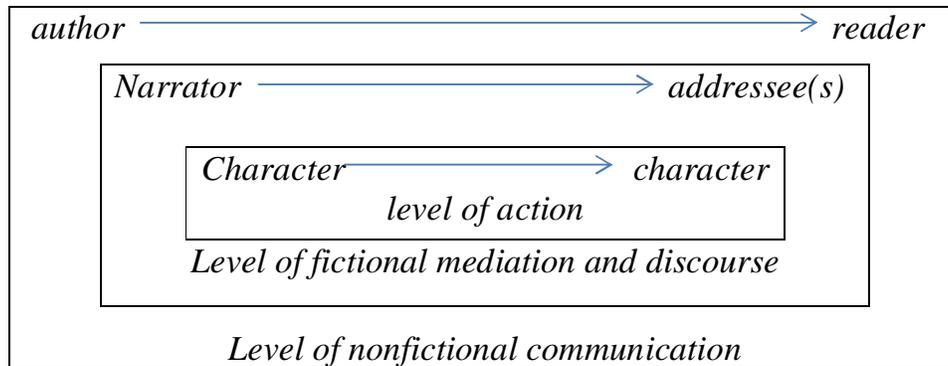
"Narrative theory," writes Andrew Gibson, "has repeatedly constructed the space of the text as a unitary, homogeneous space, determined by and organised within a given set of constraints" (7). Narrative fiction is dynamic, mutable, subversive, and, above all, dialectical. "In its more innovative forms, its convention is to alter convention, its essence is to elude a fixed essence, and its nature is to seek out the unnatural" (Gibson 8).

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. To quote Peter Brooks, "we live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed"(9).As Hayden White puts it, "far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural

messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted"(17). "Making sense" of narrative textuality is a matter of identifying, describing and interrelating individuals in respect to "their existence, individual properties, uniqueness and continuity" in the domain of the narration (i.e. the narrator/s) and the domain of the narrated (i.e. the narrative agents, the characters) (Margolin 183).

A "narrative constructs a communicative situation in which someone speaks a specific discourse in a specific time and space in a specific textual world to one or more persons" (Hantzis 38). It involves an identification of who is speaking to whom, when and where, about what and why. "Delineating these elements specifies the individual components of narrator, narratee, character, reader, the language that constructs them as well as their inter-relationships" (Hantzis 39). A literary narrative communication involves the interplay of at least three communicative levels. Each level of communication comes with its own set of addressers and addressees (also 'senders' and 'receivers'). Basically, communicative contact is possible between (1) author and reader on the level of nonfictional communication, (2) narrator and audience or addressee(s) on the level of fictional mediation, and (3) characters on the level of action. The first level is an extratextual level, levels two and three are intratextual.

The standard structure of fictional narrative communication can be represented through a 'Chinese boxes' model.



This model distinguishes between the levels of action, fictional mediation, and nonfictional communication, and establishes useful points of reference for key terms like author, reader, narrator, and narratee/addressee.

Narrative time is a phrase that is sometimes used to describe the relationship between story time and discourse time. The different facets of Narrative Time are commonly split into three areas, Order, Duration and Frequency. Order examines differences in the order of events between story time and discourse time. In story time, the order of events is fixed: 1-2-3-4. However, in discourse time, the order of events is selective, and may be changed by the narrator: 2-1-3-4 (for example). This changing of the order of events is called Anachrony. Duration examines the differences in time itself between story time and discourse time. In story time, time is fixed, like a clock. However, discourse time

can be flexed and stretched to be faster or slower. Frequency is the position of the Narrating Instance (the point in time the narrator is telling the story) relative to story time.

A narrator presents a narrative. A character in this main narrative maybe a narrator, a voice of the second narrative, but within the main narrative. In the second narrative another narrative voice may come up with a third narrative. Rimmon-Kenan explains:

...There may also be narration of the story. Characters whose actions are the object of narration can in turn engage in narrating a story themselves. Within this story there may of course be yet another character who narrates another story, and so on in infinite regress. Such narratives create a stratification of levels whereby each inner narrative is subordinate to the narrative within which it is embedded. (91)

It is such a possibility of narratives within a narrative that motivated Gerard Genette to create the concept of narrative levels. The Genettian concept of narrative levels deals with how narrative texts exists within other narrative texts. Genette uses the concepts metadiegetic, extradiegetic and diegetic as measures of classifying the narrative levels.

The researcher has drawn on Genette's categories of diegesis for analyzing the narratives under study. Genette distinguishes between three "diegetic levels." The extradiegetic level is the narrator's level, the level at which exists a narrator who is not part of the story he tells. The diegetic level is understood as the level of the characters, their thoughts and actions. The metadiegetic level or hypodiegetic level is that part of a diegesis that is embedded in another one and is often understood as a story within a story, as when a diegetic narrator himself/herself tells a story. "Narrative fiction is a 'patchwork' of both mimetic and diegetic parts, mainly to be divided into a 'narrative of words' and a 'narrative of events'" (Genette 43).

Time and Narrative

A narrative satisfies a philosophical need - the desire to escape from the tyranny of space and time. The novel as an art form has, from its early stages attempted to find innovative ways of dealing with time. Philosophic ideas of time have exercised tremendous influence on the novelist's art. "Theories of psychology put forward by Freud and the rest, together with the findings of physical science, the philosophy of Bergson and Spengler's concept of history revolutionized the way in which time was narrated in fiction" (Heise 3).

The critics of narrative generally agree that time is one of the most fundamental parameters through which narrative as a genre is organized and understood. Time is central to the way all narratives function. Although we constantly think about events and actions in terms of time, time is not simply a natural phenomenon but is socially made and moulded. Even our most basic ideas about space and time - up is up and not down, seconds pass and don't stand still, each second is new and different from the others - can suddenly be altered or challenged. So not only do authors use time to structure and organize their work, but our understanding of time is also produced, reinforced and occasionally challenged by texts.

People experience multiple aspects of time in their lives. There is the lived time of one's daily existence, the time of memory (our own personal memories and the memories recounted to us by the persons around us), and there is the time, often at odds with conscious, lived time, of our unconscious mind, a time of dreaming and involuntary memory. At any given moment in our lives, we operate at the intersection of these multiple temporal modes. Any one moment in cultural history provides, in terms of memory, influence, and orientation toward both past and future, multiple experiences of time and therefore complex modes of

representing and recounting experience. Multiple narratives, from oral culture to archival record, are therefore generated.

In the decades since Mann proposed in *The Magic Mountain* that "time is the medium of narration, as it is the medium of life" (541), European and North American literary criticism about time and narrative has largely been shaped by four related approaches: stream-of-consciousness, point of view, narratological, and temporal/spatial.

Stream-of-consciousness criticism, the earliest of these approaches, draws upon the theories of Bergson, William James, and Sigmund Freud in order to explain the modernists' deliberate violation of conventional realism. It argues that attention to the flow of consciousness and the persistence of memory necessitates fragmented literary forms, and that these innovations are essential for any "real" representation of life

Critical studies of point of view assess numerous different perspectives through which narratives take shape. These critics distinguish between narrative viewpoints on formal grounds, including whether the text is in the first, second, or third person; whether characters' speech is represented directly or indirectly; whether the vantage point of the narrative is simultaneous or retrospective; and whether the voice of a

narrator or implied author is evident. These distinctions provide a useful critical vocabulary for “identifying multiple points of view in narratives, and thus for tracing the interplay of differing ‘temporal stances’ and languages in a specific text” (Lanser 198-99).

Narratology also develops a critical apparatus, one that allows critics to describe texts with analytical precision, differentiating carefully between literary convention and reality. Like other formalisms, narratology works in the spirit of Victor Shklovsky's early assertion: "Literary time is pure convention. It's laws do not coincide with the laws of time in real life" (qtd. in Ehrlich 242). The narratologists differentiate between ‘narrating time’ and ‘narrated time’ and describe in great detail the varied ways the structures of narrative discourse rearrange, distend, shorten, and occasionally reiterate the ‘real life’ experience of time

Critics involved in the debate over the relation between time and space in literature also emphasize form, but in a different way. Taking on Lessing's notion of literature as a "time art," Joseph Frank and subsequent spatial critics argue that modernist fiction, unlike that of earlier centuries, tends toward spatiality. By violating narrative conventions about time, it demands of readers a simultaneous perception of the whole. ‘Spatial form’ thus refers both to narrative technique and to a way of reading

unconventional texts; for some critics, the term includes any aspect of fiction that is not absolutely linear or chronological.

Paul Ricoeur sets out his account of “human time” in *Time and Narrative*, Volume 3. Central to Ricoeur’s defense of narrative is its capacity to represent the human experience of time. He points out that we experience time in two different ways. We experience time as linear succession, we experience the passing hours and days and the progression of our lives from birth to death. This is cosmological time—time expressed in the metaphor of the “river” of time. The other is phenomenological time; time experienced in terms of the past, present and future. “As self-aware embodied beings, we not only experience time as linear succession, but we are also oriented to the succession of time in terms of what has been, what is, and what will be” (Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 102).

Ricoeur analyses diverse variations of time produced by the interplay of a three tiered structure of time: the time of narrating; the narrated time; and the fictive experience of time produced through “the conjunction/disjunction of the time it takes to narrate and narrated time” (Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 77).

In much discussion of time and narrative, even the meaning of the word “time” remains vague; often relying on an unwritten premise that

time is a unitary, explicable phenomenon. In formalist criticism time is something that can be diagrammed, a way of giving linearity to texts that slide between past and present and between various points of view almost continuously. Ricoeur's claim about the connections between narrative, temporality, and human experience is worth mentioning here: "I take temporality to be that structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity and narrativity to be the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent. Their relationship is therefore reciprocal"(169).

Jens Brockmeier in his discussion about narrative and memory talks about how any discussion of "narrative" will also imply "time" (lived historical time as well as temporal dimensions of various kinds of narratives). Collapsing the two terms together, he proposes a new coinage: "narratime." "Narratime" in fact yokes together three concepts: knowledge (the Latin *narrare*, meaning to know), time and story (Brockmeier 117).

The argument proposed in the thesis focuses on narrative as the literary genre that is most directly dependent on its deployment in and as time. Time in fiction has proved amazingly "malleable and elastic" and can impregnate its structure with significant messages concerning the theme or themelessness of the narrative. The thesis discusses how

assumptions about time condition narrative forms, how narratives reconstruct experience, how characters' temporality shapes their perceptions, how multiple senses of time can be at play in a single text, and how the process of reading reshapes texts.

Time in Postmodern Fiction

Postmodern fiction refers to texts primarily from the 1960s and '70s that emphasized narrative experiment and introduced new ways of handling character, description, dialogue and plot. In the pre-modern era orienting stories with a definite beginning, middle and end were prevalent. Conflicts in fiction arose from the individual's inability to find –his /her place in the unifying, orienting structure. These conflicts were resolved, when the individual finally adjusted his self to the unifying pattern, locating his place in the world with the aid of a religion or ideology.

This limiting pattern of closure was replaced by modernist fiction- they replaced single objective reality with divergent subjective realities. But even then these were seen only as aberrant individual variations, behind which there is always the single, accepted pattern. Postmodernism shatters all this limiting closures and conveys the reality it sees through a number of disorienting stories. The postmodern world is a world of the

interweaving of many stories. There is a transition from the protection of singularity to the celebration of disruptive plurality.

Like modernism, postmodernism has many definitions and is applied to diverse objects. Jean-Francois Lyotard describes the postmodern condition as a collapse of narratives of legitimation, as "that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable," yet remains "undoubtedly part of the modern"(Lyotard 2).

Susan Suleiman gives a particularly useful definition. In the introduction to *Subversive Intent* she writes: "I interpret [postmodernism] as that moment of extreme (perhaps tragic, perhaps playful) self-consciousness when the present -our present-takes to reflecting on its relation to the past and to the future primarily as a problem of repetition. How does one create a future that will acknowledge and incorporate the past - a past that includes, in our very own century, some of the darkest moments in human history - without repeating it?"(3).

The postmodern theory attempts to wrangle with given binarisms: subject/object, space/time, idea/material, mind/body, nature/culture, essence/context (to name just a few). In each case, where there used to be

a clear-cut distinction we find a collapse. Yet within the collapsed structure lies a field of differences. Kermode in his *The Sense of an Ending* argues:

The new novel repeats itself, bisects itself, modifies itself, contradicts itself, without even accumulating enough bulk to constitute a past—and thus a 'story' in the traditional sense of the word. The reader is not offered easy satisfactions, but a challenge to creative co-operation. (19)

Kermode identifies the main issue facing postmodern narrative here. Readers are "challenged" to interact with the text, to "create" the text by tying together the multiple aspects of its narrative structure. When readers interpret a text, they are engaging in a potentiality of possible meanings that are open-ended until they process the clues of the text and try to establish the range of possible meanings.

Frederic Jameson describes postmodern temporality in terms of schizophrenia. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, schizophrenia is a failure on the part of the subject to accede into language. Schizophrenia is thus a "breakdown of the relationship between signifiers. For Lacan, the experience of temporality . . . is also an effect of language. It is because language has a past and a future, because the sentence moves in time, that

we have what seems to us a concrete or lived experience of time. But since the schizophrenic does not know language articulation in that way, he or she does not have our experience of temporal continuity either, but is condemned to live a perpetual present with which the various moments of his or her past have little connection and for which there is no conceivable future"(Jameson 119).

An effect of this schizophrenic temporality is that "the experience of the present becomes powerfully, overwhelmingly vivid and material" (Jameson 119). By increasing the speed of communications, new technologies participate in a collapse of spatial distances. As schizophrenia, the postmodern condition is both a problem of space-time and a crisis of subjectivity.

Developments in transportation, communication, and information technologies have led to the emergence of a new culture of time in the Western societies. Elizabeth D. Ermarth in her *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time* analyzes the problem of temporality within the general framework of poststructuralist theory as well as the more specific one of narrative structure. The three theoretical chapters that constitute the bulk of her book explore the ramifications of her central thesis: postmodern theory and postmodern art replace the historical temporality which has dominated Western thought

since the Renaissance with the concept of rhythmic time. In her first chapter titled "Time Off the Track," she defines historical temporality as a convention that emerged in the Renaissance and came to inform all the most important forms of Western knowledge. As a "realistic" or "representational" device,

...historical time [is] a convention that belongs to a major, generally unexamined article of cultural faith . . . : the belief in a temporal medium that is neutral and homogeneous and that, consequently, makes possible those mutually informative measurements between one historical moment and another, that support most forms of knowledge current in the West and that we customarily call 'science.' History has become a commanding meta narrative, perhaps the metanarrative in Western discourse. (Ermarth 20)

Postmodernism radically subverts this convention by relying on a "rhythmic time" which is no longer a transcendent and neutral medium in or on which events take place as in a container or on a road stretching to infinity. Rather, rhythmic time is coextensive with the event and does not allow the subject to distance itself from it, but collapses the two and binds both of them in language. It is a "time of experiment, improvisation, adventure":

...because rhythmic time is an exploratory repetition, because it is over when it's over and exists for its duration only and then disappears into some other rhythm, any "I" or ego or cogito exists only for the same duration and then disappears with that sea change or undergoes transformation into some new state of being. What used to be called the individual consciousness has attained a more multivocal and systemic identity. (Ermarth 53)

Rhythmic time, according to Ermarth, manifests itself in narrative as a structure that no longer consists of linear plot development, but the repetition of identical motifs, details and descriptions with slight but disturbing variations, or as repeated and incompatible accounts of what the reader must take to be the same events. These variations and distortions make it impossible for the readers to construct a rational, representational picture of the novel's world and events. Rather, they are invited to perceive the text as a figural pattern of elements which can be arranged and rearranged, "emphasizing what is parallel and synchronically patterned rather than what is linear and progressive" (85). Thus, Ermarth argues, the structuring principle of the postmodern novel is paratactic rather than syntactic, relying on a style which "thrives by multiplying the valences of every word and by making every

arrangement a palimpsest rather than a statement, rather as poetry does when it draws together a rhythmic unit by means of repeated sound or rhythm" (85).

Chronotopes

The Russian literary philosopher M.M.Bakhtin used the term chronotope to designate the spatio-temporal matrix, which governs the base condition of all narratives and other linguistic acts. The term itself can be literally translated as "time-space." The term is developed in Bakhtin's essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel."

Bakhtin defines the chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (*Forms* 84) and "the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" (*Forms* 250). Each narrative genre has its own way of understanding time, a specific 'density and concreteness.' In each genre, time "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movement of time, plot and history" (*Forms* 84). Significantly, the chronotope combines spatial and temporal factors with an evaluation of their meaning, as Holquist has observed: "time and space are never merely temporal or spatial, but *axiological* as well (i.e. they also have *values* attached to them)" (152).

Thus, the chronotope transcends the boundaries of fiction, involving also the perspective of the reader, both in time and space.

Bakhtin scholar Michael Holquist states that the chronotope is “a unit of analysis for studying language according to the ratio and characteristics of the temporal and spatial categories represented in that language” (110). Specific chronotopes are said to correspond to particular genres. To this extent, a chronotope is both a cognitive concept and a narrative feature of language.

The distinctiveness of chronotopic analysis, in comparison to most other uses of time and space in language analysis, stems from the fact neither time nor space is privileged by Bakhtin, they are utterly interdependent and they should be studied in this manner. The chronotope serves as a means of measuring how, in a particular age, genre, or text, real historical time and space as well as fictional time and space are articulated in relation to one another.

Bakhtin believed that the emergence of a recognizable chronotope within a narrative offers audiences an opportunity to invest the causal chain with their own values. In narratives frequently intersecting with the chronotope of random contingency, internal time takes precedence over historical time as a general shift from time to space takes place, a space

infected with the apocalyptic ideology of a "time out of joint." As Bakhtin insisted, chronotopes, even within a single text, are always multiple and relative.

Any literary text, according to Bakhtin, is spatially localized, i.e. occupies a definite place in space, but its creation and recreation or reading take place through time. The author, the originator of the text and the text are located in some real time-space. The readers who interact with the text are also located in some real time-space and very often the real time-space of the author- originator and of the reader are not the same but separated by centuries and by large spatial distances, but the three: the text, the author and the readers are "located in a unitary and unfinalised historical world which is separated from the world portrayed in the text by a sharp and real boundary" (Bakhtin, *Forms* 112).

The world that creates a text, i.e. 'the creating world,' is constituted by the reality reflected in the text, the author, and the reader. The creating and the portrayed worlds of a literary narrative always interact with each other. Every literary work has its formal beginning and ending and so do the events described or recreated in the text but the two beginnings and the two endings, according to Bakhtin, belong to two different worlds, two different time-spaces, i.e. two different chronotopes. The most significant aspect of the relation between the two worlds, the creating and

the created world, is that their time-spaces, i.e. the chronotopes can never be equivalent.

We can distinguish at least three different levels of the usage of the term chronotope: at the first level, restricted to a particular literary text, the chronotope is used to highlight its narrative structure. At the second level it is used to characterize the genre of a literary narrative, expressed by the term 'generic chronotope.' On the third and more general level Bakhtin invokes this concept to define the relation of a literary text to the extra textual reality.

We can discover new, rich concepts for exploring time and narrative through Bakhtin's theories about discourse. Bakhtin opens ways to discuss how assumptions about time condition narrative forms, how narratives reconstruct experience, how characters' temporality shapes their perceptions, how multiple senses of time can be at play in a single text, and how the process of reading reshapes texts. By working out crucial connections between time, perception, and language, he suggests that questions about time are fundamental for studies of both texts and experience. His chronotope proposes rather creative ways to understand heterogeneous experiences of temporality and their re-creation in narrative. A chronotopic analysis entails a theoretical and methodological focus on the construction of space and time in and through texts that are

never unmediated or natural. The researcher has employed Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope in the fifth chapter to study the multiplicity of space-time relations in the proposed texts.