Chapter Eleven

Of Similarities and Differences
A Study in Other Forms of the Same Tripartition
I. Introduction: an Appendical Chapter on Tripartition

It was suggested in the first chapter of this dissertation that a principal feature of Foucault's method is that of 'similarities and differences', or that the study of a particular formation has to be done, not only in terms of how differences crop up in an apparently unified episteme, but also how almost similar propositions arise from altogether different epistemic configurations. It would be thus worthwhile to see how the principal tropological device of Foucault, that of tripartition of domains of structuration into what I have called mentality, materiality and physicality, is also traceable in some other epistemes, quite distant both in time and space. Two things should, however, be made clear before I embark on such a project. First, as it follows from the Foucauldian methodological category on which it bases itself, such an attempt at finding 'similarities' in different epistemes is not at all intended to establish an exact correspondence among the same. The similarities hinted at in this chapter should not be taken, therefore, as evidences of the existence of 'Foucauldian' findings in unrelated epistemic configurations. The exercise is typological, and sufficiently ahistorical, to determine its objective as not aimed at tracing origins or teleologies, but simply at satisfying a necessary methodological prerequisite and elucidating the findings of Foucault. Secondly, as the title to this section of the chapter indicates, this search is much of the nature of an 'appendix', and the eclecticism involved in the different bodies of thought I look into, as well as my lack of depth in doing the same, should be taken in the spirit of an appendix at the end of a work. Accordingly, my study of quite unrelated modes of thought in this chapter is not all that elaborate, and its aim is, if not to simply name certain possible areas of future research, simply to show that the particular tripartition of domains that I have identified in Foucault can also be traced in a somewhat similar form in other periods and forms of thought too.

This chapter looks into four bodies of thought presenting a tripartition of domains. The first two concern the interstices of Western philosophy—medieval scholastic logic and Romantic thought—when between the dominant dichotomies of realism/nominalism and rationalism/empiricism for the first and rationalism/empiricism and idealism/materialism for the second, one can see appear a tripartition of mind, matter and the body. I discuss these two types of thought with special reference to the medieval philosopher Peter Abélard and the English Romantic poet John Keats, respectively. The third body of thought that I take up is that of 'structuralist' analysis of narratives, and I discuss some postulates of Algirdas-Julien Greimas and Roland Barthes to see how the same tripartition arises in their analyses. Finally, the fourth body that I choose, and which is even more unrelated to Foucault, is of Indian philosophy, wherein also I unearth the same tripartite mode. I would like to mention once again that this is not an exhaustive inventory of periods and forms of thought when tripartition appears, but a very eclectic and merely exemplary selection from thoughts I am familiar with.
II. Tripartition in Medieval Scholastic Logic

a. 'Conceptualism' as the Means to Tripartition

Medieval philosophy is generally thought to be operative in the period between St. Augustine (354-430) and William of Ockham (c. 1300-1349), and it is interesting to see how what characterizes the period is the development of a third epistemological category called 'conceptualism', which stands equidistant from realism and nominalism, and leads to the possibility of the first tripartition in Western thought. Peter Abélard (1079-1142) is surely the most important figure of the period from the current perspective because not only does he present different sorts of tripartition in his philosophy, and was also severely persecuted, excommunicated and even castrated for his radical views and actions, it is also with regard to him that Victor Cousin coins the term 'conceptualism', Abélard thereby becoming the central figure of conceptualism itself. However, before turning to analyse the presence of tripartite thought in Abélard, I would briefly mention the two extremes of the period, Augustine and William of Ockham, to see how tripartition defines the main 'current' of medieval thought.

The type of tripartition that is currently being looked for has two connected, though not identical, features. On the one hand, it needs to break through the epistemologically dual barrier of empiricism and rationalism and provide for a third category, which is ideational, and thus not objectively empirical, but which is also non-rational. On the other hand, it needs to break through the ontological dualism of mind and matter and introduce the third category of body within it. Augustine provides the possibility of fulfilling both these criteria. He shows how beyond the five external senses, there is also an 'interior sense' to which the reports of the external senses are referred. Augustine goes on to show that this interior sense is not reason, because even animals, whose difference with humans lies in their not being rational, possess an interior sense. Thus, one is already at a tripartition of modes of knowledge—external sense, interior sense, and reason—and Augustine's emphasis on the second, which is the domain of concepts, lays the foundation of the 'middle path' of conceptualism. Augustine also fulfils the second feature, when he asserts in his Sermons (CL, 3, 4) that the rationale of philosophy is to provide the means for a happy physical life. Accordingly, Augustine credits the soul with a trinity of capacities, memory of material objects encountered, a mental understanding of things and the physical will to live, corresponding roughly to the tripartition I am dealing with. Similarly, William of Ockham classifies terms of discourse into three categories: mental, spoken (i.e. physically articulated), and written (i.e. materially present). Moreover, Ockham shows himself to be a conceptualist, much in the line of Abélard, as for him, universals are not realities that exist outside the mind as objects or absolute rational truths, but are exclusively mental 'concepts'. It is with this outline of medieval philosophy in mind that I will now proceed to Abélard to see how he gives this tripartition its concrete form.
b. Abélard, ‘Universals’ and Language

Abélard’s foremost contribution is his revision of the Platonic category of universals. This problem, however, starts with Boethius (c.470-c.525), who in his Commentaries on the Isagoge of Porphyry quotes him to have raised the question whether genres and species subsist as such or if they are concepts. This debate leads, on the one hand, to the ‘ultra-realism’ of Remigius of Ossere (d. 908), John Scotus Eriugena (d. c.877-79) and St. Anselm (1033-1109), whereby all substances have behind them an ‘extra-mental’ unitary reality. On the other hand, it leads, through Abélard, to conceptualism, whereby universals can exist only as pluralistic mental concepts. Abélard formulates his theory by critiquing Boethius, for whom the universal can only be numerically ‘one’ and, therefore, as genres and species are common to a plurality, they cannot be numerically unique, and cannot have a universal ascribed to them. Boethius also shows that the numerical singularity of the universal is established out of these essentially plural concepts in three ways: either through the possession of common parts, or through a commonality developed diachronically, or through a commonality developed synchronically, at a given time. Abélard argues that the commonality in universals is of a fourth type, that of being simultaneously and entirely present in each of the singulars and constituting their very substance. Thus, for Abélard, the plurality of real things is the basis of the universal.

This notion of plurality of the universal makes Abélard attack the view held by William of Champeaux (1070-1121) that there is one ‘material essence’ in all individuals of the same kind and also his ‘indifferentist’ doctrine, or that a universal is formed on the basis of the lack of difference between individuals of a certain kind. For Abélard, such a universal is not possible, because it being a collection of individual parts, it cannot be prior to the individuals, and thus not universal. This makes Abélard conclude that there is no universality extra-mentally, in the world of things, because extra-mentally one can only have individual substances, and only the mind can form out of them universal concepts through abstraction. His stance is thus of ‘moderate realism’, as opposed to the ultra-realism mentioned earlier, and adopted later by St. Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274). Abélard says in his Logica that this abstraction of plural substances into a mental plural universality can be attributed only to the ‘word’. It is through words that an individual conceives of and articulates individuals as universals. Abélard, however, makes it very clear that this word, which is the basis of the universal, and therefore the basis of cognition too, is not the simple vocal utterance of the word, but the word as significative and meaningful. This is why Abélard makes a distinction between the word as a physical being, as a sound, as a ‘vox’, and the word as significant, as a ‘sermo’, and credits the latter with the capacity to provide things with universal conceptual categories and make them articulable and cognizable. This leads one to the basic kinds of tripartition in Abélard, that of ideas, words and things, and the tripartite intellectual apparatus to cognize the same.
c. Two Basic Types of Tripartition in Abélard

This leads us to two basic types of tripartition in Abélard. The first is that of the material *res* (things), physically articulated *vox* (words), and the mental and significative *sermo* (words as ideas). When Abélard says that the universal lies in words, he does not mean word as a physical entity, *vox*, or mere vocalized breath, *flatus vocis*, but a *sermo* or *nomen*, a word or name expressing a logical content, a concept. While such a position very clearly introduces the ontological tripartition of mentality, materiality and physicality, it also brings in the epistemological tripartition of introducing a middle path between realism and nominalism. It can be appreciated that while the realist position saw the universal as an extra­mental material thing (*res*) and the nominalist saw it as a physical word (*vox*), Abélard sees it in mental images (*sermo*), thereby formulating the alternate mode of conceptualism. Thus, Abélard takes an intermediate position between Roscelin (c.1050-c.1125), for whom the universal is just physical vocalization, and William of Champeaux, for whom the universal is a material essence, to say that the universal is *vox significativa*, the conceptual word.

In addition to this tripartition, Abélard presents another tripartition of the human cognizing apparatus itself. In his *Tractatus de intellectibus*, Abélard shows how there are three faculties of human cognition: *sensus*, or the empirical sense organs, *imaginatio*, or the conceptual apparatus that receives and orders sense impressions, and the *intellectus*, or the rational category that forms universals out of these ordered impressions. Comprehension is thus a movement from sensations to intellection, and the initial sensuous experience of a thing is followed by its collection in the domain of imaginaire, with these collections finally classified and ordered in the rational intellectual domain. Since universals are formed in the domain of *intellectus*, and it is this that leads to verbal communication, Abélard shows that words are not related directly to things, but can reach them only through the mediation of imaginary associations. This is why, in his *Dialectique*, Abélard distinguishes between sounds which signify by nature, like the barking of dogs, and those which signify by convention, like human words, convention itself being nothing but the relative universality of intellection based on imagination of the sensation of a thing. What is to be really noted in this tripartition is that Abélard provides for a third intermediate path between the dual paths of empirical sensation and rational intellection. Though the *sermo* is ultimately formed in the *intellectus*, Abélard puts sufficient premium on the role of the *imaginatio*, in making cognition and communication possible. What is to be noted is that this *imaginatio* can easily be seen to operate in an embodied physical space, the embodied mind, as opposed to the essentially material sources of sensation, and the very ideational sources of intellection. It should also be noted that the way in which the *imaginatio* orders sensual information is considered by Abélard to be idiosyncratic, thereby hinting at its existential nature, something to be determined in accordance with the individual's actual physical existence.
d. **Two Further Types of Tripartition**

Apart from the two most fundamental forms of tripartition discussed above, Abélard introduces two more systems of tripartition. He shows that there are three modes in the domain of conception, the mode of being, *modus essendi*, the mode of intellecotion, *modus intelligendi*, and the mode of signification, *modus significandi*. Thus the mode through which signification is arrived at is different both from the mode of sensation and the mode of intellecction. Abélard shows, in this context, how there can be several objects from which a unique signification arises, just as there can be several intellecctions for the same discourse. This leads to the notions of division and abstraction, and the Abélardian theory of Negation. For Abélard, while there is always a conjoining tendency of affirmation in intellecction, whereby all perceived objects are attempted to be subjected to the same idea, signification rests in a negational role of intellecction, whereby ideas are differentiated and disjoined from each other. Thus, in the Abélardian tripartite schema, the apparently diametrically opposite means of division and abstraction go hand in hand in creating the third mode of signification, which bridges the dual modes of sensation of material objects and rationalist intellecction.

The second tripartition brings in the notion of the Christian trinity. As opposed to traditional monist Christian theology, which, in spite of recognizing the trinity, dissolves the tripartition in the unitary godhead, Abélard attributes distinct capacities to the three elements of the trinity. He equates the Father with power (*potentia*), the Son with wisdom (*sapientia*) and the Holy Spirit with goodness (*benignitas*). What is to be mentioned is that this division of categories led to a lot of persecution of Abélard as a heretic, because it was argued in the orthodox circles, that Abélard’s tripartition necessarily meant that the Father does not possess any knowledge or goodness, the Son does not possess power and goodness, and the Holy Ghost has neither power nor knowledge. Though one need not go into the theological implications of this tripartition of Abélard, what can be easily observed is that on the one hand, the very persecution of Abélard brands him as a radical who cuts through dominant precepts of traditional philosophy to establish his tripartite system. On the other hand, one can also notice how the three categories that Abélard outlines here are quite close to the three categories of power, knowledge and desire that the tripartition that I have discussed in the dissertation talks about. Of course, in the Foucauldian type of tripartition, desire belongs to the physical domain, while the goodness of the Holy Ghost cannot but be somewhat spiritual, but one cannot help assuming that this final tripartition of Abélard poses a system ontologically much similar to the later tripartition I discuss. One thing which is however missing from all the tripartite typologies of Abélard is the notion of hierarchies and politics in tripartition. This surely marks this *episteme* as different from the tri-hierarchist one, but on the whole, one has to acknowledge some fundamental similarities between the two.
III. Tripartition in English Romanticism

a. Romanticism and the Alternate Epistemology

Just as medieval scholastic logic comes in an interstice between the dominant dichotomies of classical realism/nominalism and post-Renaissance rationalism/empiricism, Romanticism also occurs as a philosophy in the interstice between rationalism/nominalism and idealism/materialism. Accordingly, it can be expected that Romantic philosophy would also show both the features of scholastic logic: that of devising a third alternate epistemology which breaks through the dichotomy of sensation and ideation, and that of resorting to an ontological tripartition, introducing the body in the dual schema of mind and matter. This is precisely what one can notice in Romanticism, and though I have discussed the foregrounding of body in Romantic thought somewhat briefly in Chapter Two of this thesis, I can show here how this happens with reference to English Romantic poetry. The epistemological shift in Romanticism from both Cartesian rationalism and Lockean empiricism occurs in its construction of the third epistemological category of ‘imagination’. On the one hand, this should make one recall the Abelardian category of imaginatio. On the other, what is even more interesting is that imagination is ideational and therefore non-empirical, and also imaginary and therefore non-rational, it thereby breaking through both the stereotypical epistemic modes of Western thought. How Romanticism also leads to the ontological tripartition of materiality, mentality and physicality can be observed in any of the Romantic poets, but I choose one of them, John Keats (1795-1821) to examine the same because in his poetry it comes out in the most obvious way. Before proceeding to identify this tripartition in two of his celebrated odes, I would briefly sketch the basic poetical presuppositions of Keats.

b. The Poetical Presuppositions of Keats

One can notice in Keats comments like, as he says in an essay, ‘Poetry must be free! It is of the air, not of the earth’¹, and also in an 1818 letter where he says,

> We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us—and if we do not agree, seems to put its hand in its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great & unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one’s soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself but with its subject.²

It should be observed that this attempt by Keats to separate poetry from thought is not to give poetry an isolated selfsame existence, but to privilege the role of the senses in poetic composition. In an 1818 letter, Keats says, ‘we can judge no further but by larger experience—for axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses’.³

³ John Keats, Letter to J. H. Reynolds (3 May, 1818), in Ibid., 93.
In an 1817 letter, Keats shows this preference more clearly when he says, 'O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!' In fact, he shows in the same letter how reasoning cannot lead one to knowledge, saying, 'I have never yet been able to perceive how can anything be known for truth by consequitive [sic] reasoning.' However, if Keats was to simply privilege sensations over reasoning, he would have qualified as an empiricist, and not as a Romanticist. One can notice how, after demolishing reason as a means to truth, Keats shows in the same letter that sensation is only the point of departure, with the actual epistemic act being performed by 'imagination', which blends the empirical 'Beauty' to the rational 'truth'. He says, 'What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth—whether it existed before or not.' This makes one look for the main tools for this transformation.

The first tool is what Keats calls 'negative capability', whereby one can dissolve oneself in imaginary 'uncertainties' without striving for empirical or rational data. In an 1817 letter, Keats defines negative capability as 'when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason'. This first tool also means a dissolution of the identity of the poet himself or herself, the capability to negate oneself and to be able to, what Keats calls in an 1818 letter to 'annihilate' oneself:

As to the poetical Character itself...it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no Identity—he is continually in for—and filling some other Body... When I am in a room with People if I am ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of every one in the room begins to [for so] to press upon that, I am in a very little time an[ni]hilated...

Thus, for Keats, 'Happiness' lies in being able to make oneself 'free of space'. free of the co-ordinates that denote one's individuality, and reach what he calls the 'bourne of heaven', where beauty leads on to truth through the active working of the imagination. To explain this transformation, which involves the epistemic tripartition, Keats says in his *Endymion* (1817),

Wherein lies Happiness? In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine:
A fellowship with essence, till we shine
Full alchymized and free of space. Behold
The clear religion of heaven...

It is Keats's comments on these lines in an 1818 letter that introduces the reader to his second tool, that of what he calls the 'Pleasure Thermometer', whereby the stepping from beauty to truth via the imagination is not a single leap but a process concerning several steps:

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I assure you that when I wrote it, it was a regular stepping of the Imagination towards Truth. My having written that Passage Argument will perhaps be of the greatest Service to me of anything I ever did—It set me at once the gradation of Happiness even like a kind of Pleasure Thermometer... It is interesting to note that for Keats the steps that comprise this pleasure thermometer are three in number and correspond to the three categories that have been already identified and expected in constituting the ontological tripartition in Romantic philosophy.

For Keats, when one perceives an object of beauty, one needs to achieve negative capability in it and find immortality in three of its domains, those of ‘nature’ (i.e. the material world around us), ‘music’ (i.e. the mental significational world), and ‘love’ (i.e. physical sensual affection). The Romantic blending of sensation and ideation can only be achieved when the two epistemological tools of imagination work with success on the three ontological categories. Keats makes this tripartition clear in Endymion, when he first mentions nature:

Fold
A rose leaf round thy finger’s taperness.
And soothe thy lips.11

He goes on next to show how music becomes the second category in the construction:

...hist, when the airy stress
Of music’s kiss impregnates the free winds,
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds
Eolian magic from their lucid wombs;
Then old songs waken from enshrouded tombs;
Old ditties sigh above their father’s grave;
Ghosts of melodious prophecying rave
Round every spot where trap Apollo’s foot;12

Finally, he moves on to the third category of the Romantic triad, that of love. He says,

...that moment have we slept
Into a sort of oneness, and our state
Is like a floating spirit’s. But there are
Richer entanglements, enthrallments far
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity: the crown of these
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
Upon the forehead of humanity.13

It can be shown that Keats’s poems deal with this ontological tripartition, and I now propose to study two of them—‘Ode to a Nightingale’ and ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ (both 1819)—to show how the epistemic bridging of sensation and ideation is attempted through the ontological triad, unsuccessfully in the first and successfully in the second. I must admit that my analysis is heavily indebted to Earl R. Wasserman’s book on Keats mentioned in Note 1.

12 Ibid., II. 783-90, p. 77.
13 Ibid., II. 795-802, p. 78.
c. Tripartition in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’

The movement from an object of sensual beauty to ideational truth via imagination concerns a cultivation of ‘happiness’. The opening lines of the ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ therefore forebode a failure of the enterprise because there is little in them of this happiness:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk.14

This pain and sadness can be explained by the fact that while the Romantic subject is supposed to achieve negative capability and completely dissolve the self into the object of beauty, here the profusion of the first person singular pronoun impedes the self. The self is not dissolved, and instead of the true happiness, the poet can only talk of ‘being too happy in thy happiness’,15 indicating once again the possible failure of his Romantic task. The poet does choose the three-fold path of nature, music and love after this but the initial failure to achieve negative capability makes him fail to ascend the pleasure thermometer, because the elements that he chooses to represent the three domains signify deviant mutable categories of the same, and not their immortal forms that can lead one from beauty to truth.

Nature, the representative of the material domain, and the first step in the triad, comes in this poem in the form of liquor. In his desire to ascend the pleasure thermometer, the poet seeks nature not in its original immortal form, but in a highly derivative and aberrant version, which is bound to intoxicate and not illuminate him. Thus, when he says,

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm south!16

one can expect this to lead to no ascension for the poet but only, as he says, ‘That I might drink and leave the world unseen’.17 Failing the first of the three steps in the pleasure thermometer, the poet tries to supplement it with the second step, that of music or poetry:

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy.18

However, the very word ‘viewless’ suggests the shallowness of this mental exercise too, and the poet has to admit that ‘the dull brain perplexes and retards’19 and instead of the desired

15 Ibid., l. 6, p. 230.
16 Ibid., ll. 11-15, p. 230.
17 Ibid., l. 19, p. 230.
18 Ibid., ll. 31-33, p. 231.
19 Ibid., l. 34, p. 231.
poetic illumination, he cannot but lament the fact that while there is a bright moon in the sky, 'here there is no light,' and has to be content with invisibility. Having failed in the second step of the triad too, Keats turns next to the final category of the pleasure thermometer, that of love. But once again, he chooses a deviant and problematic version of love—love for death:

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quite breath; \(^{31}\)

Thus, instead of cultivating happiness and immortality through this third step of the Romantic ontological triad, the poet talks of his morbid desire for death, and this sets him thoroughly in contrast with the 'immortal' object of beauty that he was pursuing. For Keats,

Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down; \(^{22}\)

Thus, the Romantic subject having failed to fulfil the task of negative capability, or of dissolving the self in the object of beauty, and also having failed to find immutable happiness through the three steps of the pleasure thermometer corresponding to its ontological triad, it gets totally disjunct from its object and fails to blend sensual beauty into ideational truth.

Thus, at the end of the poem, the narrator talks of being 'back from thee to my sole self', \(^{23}\) as the song of the nightingale 'fades / Past the near meadows'. In fact, the total failure of his attempt makes him admit that he had not used 'imagination' to its true end, but probably got stuck with 'fancy'. This recalls Coleridge's distinction between 'fancy', which is an imagination with no end, and true imagination, which has got the radical end of blending empiricism and rationalism. Disregarding his current experience as fancy, Keats says,

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf. \(^{24}\)

The poem ends with the poet not being sure about the status of his experience. Unable to fully utilize the potentials of pursuing an object of beauty to truth, the poet wonders,

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is the music:—do I wake or sleep? \(^{25}\)

Thus, 'Ode to a Nightingale' evokes the tripartition of categories into materiality, mentality and physicality, but in its not being able to stick to the prerequisites of Romantic epistemology, it fails to bridge the gap, through imagination, between sensation and ideation, a shortcoming which the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' undoes.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., l. 38, p. 231.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., ll. 51-54, p. 232.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., ll. 59-62, p. 232.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., l. 72, p. 232.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., ll. 73-74, p. 232.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., ll. 79-80, p. 233.
d. Tripartition in ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’

As opposed to the recurring images of death and mutability in the ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, Keats begins his ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ by calling the urn ‘unravished’, thus setting it within a paradigm of immutability. It should also be noted that the notion of the self, which comes in the way of establishing negative capability in the earlier poem is totally absent here, with the first person pronoun being never used except in the last stanza, and there too in the plural. These two features indicate right at the beginning of the poem that the Romantic task of equating beauty with truth through the mediation of imagination will probably be achieved here. The ontological triad is present in the current object of beauty, the urn too, with it bearing a ‘leaf-fringed legend’,26 images of a ‘mad pursuit’27 in love, and those of ‘pipes and timbrels’28, but what is to be noted here is that all these three elements are shown to have attained immortality in the frieze on the urn. Keats goes on to say,

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!29

It is this immortality that imparts ‘happiness’ on the three categories of nature, music and love represented on the urn, and connecting immutability to happiness, Keats says,

Ah, happy, happy boughs! That cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting and for ever young;30

Having fulfilled all the requisites of the Romantic blending of sensation and ideation—having undergone negative capability and dissolved the self in the object of beauty, having identified immutability and ‘happiness’ in the object of beauty, and having ascended the pleasure thermometer in the three required ontological stages of materiality, mentality and physicality, Keats is, therefore, in a position at the end of this poem to announce the Romantic truth:

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayst,
‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth. and all ye need to know.’31

This is how tripartition works in the Romantic arrival at ideational truth from sensual beauty.

27 Ibid., l. 9, p. 233.
28 Ibid., l. 10, p. 233.
29 Ibid., ll. 15-20, pp. 233-34.
30 Ibid., ll. 21-27, p. 234.
31 Ibid., ll. 46-50, p. 234.
IV. Tripartition in ‘Structuralist’ Analysis of Narratives

a. From Structure of Narratives to Tripartition

Structuralist analysis of narratives concerns finding a general formula that can apply to all, or at least many, narratives. The search might be traced to Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* (English trans. 1975), where after studying several Russian folktales, Propp identifies thirty-one ‘functions’ that he claims to operate in a particular syntagmatic order in all narratives, constituting a canonical formula for the folktales. Propp also bundles together these thirty-one functions into seven ‘spheres of action’, which as ‘characters’ canonically control all narrative activity. A little later, Etienne Souriau, in his *Les Deux cent milles situations dramatique* (1950), formulates the general structure of plays and provides the categories of ‘subject’ and ‘object’ as syntactic units of the dramatic narrative. While both these ‘structuralist’ thinkers provide the foundations of a narrative grammar, it is with Georges Dumézil that this structuration gets a tripartite ontological form. Dumézil in his *Mythe et épopee* (3 vols., Gallimard, Paris: 1968, 1971, 1973) talks about the functional tripartition of Indo-European ideology, so that its folktales get articulated with one of the three archetypal forms as their protagonists: a warrior, a man of knowledge, or a king. The title of Vol. II of this book—*Mythe et épopee: Types épiques indo-européens: un héros, un sorcier, un roi*—makes the tripartition clear and the three parts of this second volume have been translated as *The Stakes of the Warrior* (University of California, Berkeley: 1983), *The Plight of a Sorcerer* (University of California, Berkeley: 1986), and *The Destiny of a King* (University of Chicago: 1973). It can be observed how these three ideological forms conform to the three domains I have already identified, the warrior restricting him to the domain of physical prowess, the sorcerer to the domain of mental knowledge, and the king to material socio-political power. The ontological tripartition thus arrived at gets a syntactic form in Algirdas-Julien Greimas (b. 1936) and his actantial model, where the categories of the triad are given paradigmatic forms of desire, knowledge and power in the narrative syntax. For Greimas, all narratives can be conceived as the action of three primary syntagmas in the three domains I have already mentioned. The tripartition thus formalized gets a more radical political form in Roland Barthes (1915-1980), who in his analysis of the ‘classic text’, takes up these three categories as the very domains in which dominant ideology works to set up its normative narrative forms, and in a subversion of which lies an unearthing of the limit of such dominant ‘classic’ forms. Thus, within the structuralist analysis of narratives, the problematics of tripartition of domains of structuration arises and it also gets a somewhat historical and political orientation to make it ‘similar’ to the Foucauldian principle of tri-hierarchization. While the attempt in this section of the chapter is not all to claim an absolute identity between Foucauldian and structuralist thought, I discuss the basic formulations of Greimas and Barthes in this line to indulge in the appendical game I have outlined.
b. The Actantial Model of Greimas

In his Structural Semantics (1966), Greimas constructs the actantial model as a basic structure for all narratives, to found narrative grammar on a solid basis. He says,

Here, then, the hypothesis of an actantial model is proposed as one of the possible principles of organization of the semantic universe, too vast to be grasped in its totality, in a microuniverse accessible to man.\textsuperscript{32}

Aiming to provide the study of narratives with this principle of organization, Greimas shows how all previous studies in the direction two sets of basic actantial oppositions:

The permanence of the distribution of a small number of roles, as we were saying, is not simply fortuitous: we have seen that the number of actants was determined by the a priori conditions of the perception of signification. The nature of the distributed roles seemed more difficult for us to articulate: it seemed at last necessary to...[list]

Thus, a deduction from the works of Propp and Souriau leads Greimas to four syntactic units of a narrative, or actants, paired up in two basic oppositions. Taking up the subject-object dyad first, Greimas shows how this opposition operates in the paradigm of ‘desire’:

A first glance allows us to find and identify in the two inventories of Propp and Souriau the two syntactic actants which constitute the category “Subject” vs. “Object”. It is striking...that the relationship between the subject and object which we had so much trouble defining precisely, and never succeeded in defining completely, appears here with a semantic investment identical in both inventories, that of “desire”.\textsuperscript{34}

Similarly, Greimas shows how the sender-receiver dyad operates in the paradigm of ‘communication’ and bringing together these two actantial categories of a narrative, he says,

It seems that the two actantial categories appear, so far, to constitute a simple model revolving entirely around the object, which is both the object of desire and the object of communication.\textsuperscript{35}

Greimas shows how there is also a third category, comprising the helper and the opponent, which in spite of not forming a syntactic unit, and thus not being as important as the earlier two units of desire and communication, is an actantial category all the same. He says,

It is much more difficult to be sure of the categorical articulation of the other actants if only because we lack a syntactic model. Two spheres of activity, however, and, inside those, two distinct kinds of functions are recognized without difficulty.

1. The first kinds bring the help by acting in the direction of the desire or by facilitating communication.
2. The others, on the contrary, create obstacles by opposing either the realization of the desire or the communication of the object.

These two bundles of function can be attributed to two distinct actants, that we will designate under the name of

33 \textit{Ibid.}, 198-99.
34 \textit{Ibid.}, 203.
35 \textit{Ibid.}, 205.
36 \textit{Ibid.}, 205.
Greimas shows how these two actants are mere ‘aspectual categories’ or ‘circumstants’ in the narrative syntax, because they, and their systems of disjunctural power, function only in relation to the two other actantial categories, in promoting them or impeding them:

What is... striking is the secondary character of these two actants... These could be justly considered as aspectual categories... there seems to be no reason why one could not admit that the aspectual categories could be considered as circumstants, which would be the hypotactic formulations of the actant-subject. In the mythical manifestation which concerns us, it is well understood that the helper and opponent are only projections of the will to act and the imaginary resistance of the subject itself, judged beneficial or harmful in relationship to its desire.37

Thus, one comes to three basic syntagmas in a narrative, and Greimas arranges them in a particular fashion to give rise to his actantial model of narrative structures. According to the actantial model, a narrative consists of an object being communicated by a sender to a receiver, which not being possible by itself requires the intervention of the subject, who desires the object, and who gets aided by a helper and opposed by an opponent in the process:

... it is entirely centered on the object of desire aimed at by the subject and situated, as object of communication, between the sender and the receiver—the desire of the subject being, in its part, modulated in projections from the helper and opponent:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sender} & \rightarrow \text{object} \rightarrow \text{receiver} \\
\text{helper} & \rightarrow \text{subject} \rightarrow \text{opponent}\n\end{align*}
\]

Having given the diagrammatic version of the formula for narrative grammar, Greimas shows how the three syntactic units of this model operate in the three paradigmatic domains of knowledge, power and desire. Labelling the sender-receiver contradiction as C1, the helper-opponent contradiction as C2, and the subject-object contradiction as C3, Greimas says,

1. In the case of C1, the object of communication is a message, a type of “congealed” speech... Constituting the key of knowledge and recognition, the message-object could be considered as a formulation, on the plane of mythical manifestation, of the modulation of “knowledge”.
2. In the case of C2, we are dealing with the transmission of the power which deprives the man of the energy necessary for action or, on the contrary, confers it on him. The power object would be the mythical equivalent for the modality of “power”.
3. In the case of C3, communication consists in the transfer of the object of desire, which corresponds, consequently, to the modality of “wish”.

Thus, one is back to the same tripartition that this thesis has tried to elaborate—that of ‘power’, as especially manifest in socio-politico-economic materiality, ‘knowledge’, as a mental category, and ‘desire’, or the physical want of a person. While no attempt is being made here to endorse Greimas’s reductionist formalism with all narratives, what is interesting is the recurrence of the triad in this schema too. However, the way in which Greimas rules that the status of power in this tripartition is merely aspectual, makes it necessary to study the status Greimas accords history and ideology in his actantial model of narratives.

37 Ibid., 206.
38 Ibid., 207.
39 Ibid., 241-42.
c. **Narrative Grammar, History and Ideology**

Greimas shows how the actantial model, though it may appear to be absolutely
formulaic and thus disjunct from subjective and social concerns, actually takes into
consideration the individual, 'interindividual' and social domains, because it is intended for

...setting in correlation two orders of fact belonging to two different domains:
1. The social domain: the order of the law, of the contractual organization of society.
2. The individual or the interindividual domain: the existence and the possession, by
means of interhuman communication, of individual values.40

Thus, for Greimas, narrative grammar consists of two models—the 'constitutional model' of
the actantial model, which is formulaic, and the 'transformational model' of the semiotic
square, which is ideological and takes into account acceptance or denial of the present order:

It is apparent that the narrative (and more particularly the Russian folktale), subject
to a functional analysis attempting to determine the nature of the relations between
the functions within its discursive manifestations, is susceptible, finally, to a double
interpretation, making the existence of two types of immanent models appear: the
first suggests a constitutional model, which seems to be a highly conventional form... the second, in the opposite way, makes explicit a transformational model, offering an ideological solution... It seems possible to us...to group this genre of
narratives in two large classes: the narratives of the accepted present order, the
narratives of the denied present order.41

Greimas shows in an essay included in his *On Meaning*, how therefore, narrativity is
connected to values, and calling the type of narrative syntax he wishes to develop as the
'evenemential syntax', he shows how it is essentially connected to an anthropomorphism:

Narrativity, considered an irruption of the discontinuous into the discursive permanence of a life, a story, an individual, a culture, disarticulates that discursive permanence into discrete states between which it sets transformations. This allows us to describe it, in the first instance, in the form of utterances of doing that affect utterances of state... These latter are the guarantors of the semiotic existence of subjects that are in a relation of junction with objects invested with values. The evenemential syntax we are trying to develop here is, whether we like it or not, of an anthropomorphic inspiration. It is, after all, a projection of the fundamental relations mankind has with the world—or, it does not matter, the converse.42

There is thus a distinct interface between literature and history, especially in terms of the
social and cultural roles they perform, and Greimas says in another essay in the collection,

...these two disciplines have much in common. Among other things they share the
responsibility, at different levels of education, of transmitting cultural experience and
presumably of training future scholars.43

This is why Greimas talks of taking his studies 'Toward a Historical Syntax',44 and though it
is not all that obvious in Greimas himself, the actantial model does have a historical potential,
which is realized to the full by Barthes in his analysis of the 'classic text'.

40 Ibid., 240-41.
41 Ibid., 245-46.
44 Ibid., 212.
d. Barthes on ‘Readerly’ and ‘Writerly’ Texts

To analyse how Barthes takes up the tripartition of domains in structuralist analysis of narratives, and gives it a political turn, I would discuss his formulations in only one text—S/Z (1970)—where he undertakes a semiotic analysis of a novella Sarrasine by Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) to establish the same. Barthes begins by ruling out the reductionist and globalizing tendencies of the first structural analysts of narratives, who rule out ‘difference’:

...the first analysts of narrative were attempting...to see all the world’s stories (and there have been ever so many) within a single structure: we shall, they thought, extract from each tale its model, then out of these models we shall make a great narrative structure, which we shall reapply (for verification) to any one narrative: a task as exhausting (ninety-nine percent perspiration, as the saying goes) as it is ultimately undesirable, for the text thereby loses its difference. 45

Moreover, as Barthes maintains, the differential evaluation of individual texts cannot come from totalizing structures like morality, aesthetics, politics, or ethics, but from literary practice itself, i.e. each reader has to become a writer in his or her dealing with a text. He says,

The primary evaluation of all texts can come neither from science, for science does not evaluate, nor from ideology, for the ideological value of a text (moral, aesthetic, political, alethiological) is a value of representation, not of production (ideology "reflects", it does not work). Our evaluation can be linked only to a practice, and this practice is that of writing. 46

This leads to the distinction in Barthes between lisible or ‘readerly’ texts, where the meaning has been fixed by the dominant order of the time and the reader cannot re-write it, and scriptible or ‘writerly’ texts, which can be actively appropriated and re-written by the reader:

On the one hand, there is what it is possible to write, and on the other, what it is no longer possible to write... What evaluation finds is precisely this value: what can be written (rewritten) today: the writerly. Why is the writerly our value? Because the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text... Opposite the writerly text, then, is its counter-value, its negative, reactive value: what can be read but not written: the readerly. We call any readerly text a classic text. 47

The readerly text is thus the ‘classic text’, the canonical text whose meaning has been frozen and position fixed in a culture once and for all. Barthes observes, however, that such limited texts can be distinguished from the ‘limit-text’, a classic text where the formative categories are problematized, and in unearthing how the system of connotation works in such a text, the reader can decode the polysemic underlining of its apparent unity. Barthes says,

...if there are readerly texts, committed to the closure system of the West...they must have a particular system of meaning, and this meaning is based on connotation. Hence, to deny connotation altogether is to...make the limited text equal to the limit-text, to deprive oneself of a typological instrument. Connotation is the way into the polysemy of the classic text, to that limited plural on which the classic text is based. 48

It is with this objective in mind that Barthes proceeds to analyse Balzac’s Sarrasine.

46 Ibid., 3-4.
48 Ibid., 7-8.
The Tripartition in Sarrasine

The story *Sarrasine*, provided by Barthes in its entirety as an appendix to *S/Z*, is a very intriguing one. It begins at a party thrown by the newly arrived and extremely rich de Lanty family, with all the guests speculating about the source of their riches. The mystery surrounding the de Lanty fortune is further heightened by the presence in their household of a most enigmatic old man, whose identity is generally unknown. The narrator of the story, however, claims to know the secret of this man as well as the source of the de Lanty fortune, and promises to narrate it to the woman he is courting in return for a pledge from her of love. The narrator goes on to narrate to the lady the story of a famous sculptor Sarrasine who fell in love with a beautiful opera singer Zambinella only to know later that 'she' was not a woman but a castrato. Enraged, he attempted to murder Zambinella, to get murdered himself by the singer's protectors. After narrating this story, the narrator states that the old man whom everyone saw at the party was this famous singer of yore, a grand-uncle of the de Lanties and the whole of their fortune comes from the incomes of this castrato. Disgusted at such a narrative, the lady breaks off her pledge at the end of the story after hearing the whole of it. Barthes shows how, while dominant ideology tries to impose order in the classic text in the three domains physical desire, material power and mental contracts of knowledge, these very three categories are problematized in this text. Desire is problematized through the indeterminate sex of Zambinella, money is problematized through the dubious sources of the de Lanty fortune, and communication of knowledge is problematized because the lady breaks off her antithetical contract. Barthes speaks about this problematization of the 'three routes':

Now we can enter this symbolic field by three routes, no one of which is privileged... The rhetorical route discovers the transgression of the Antithesis... The route of castration, strictly speaking, discovers the pandemic voice of desire, the collapse of the creative chain (bodies and works). The economic route discovers the disappearance of all fake currency... These three routes are all conducive to stating the same disturbance in classification: it is fatal, the text says, to remove the dividing line, the paradigmatic slash mark which permits meaning to function (the wall of the Antithesis), life to reproduce (the opposition of the sexes), property to be protected (rule of contract).49

The text represents a collapse of the carefully constructed tri-hierarchization of 'readerly art':

In short, the story represents (we are in a readerly art) a generalized collapse of economies: the economy of language, usually protected by the separation of opposites, the economy of genders (the neuter must not lay claim to the human), the economy of the body (its parts cannot be interchanged, the sexes cannot be equivalent), the economy of money (Parisian gold produced by the new social class, speculative and no longer land-based—such gold is without origin, it has repudiated every circulatory code, every rule of exchange, every line of propriety...)... *Sarrasine* represents the very confusion of representation, the unbridled (pandemic) circulation of signs, of sexes, of fortunes.50

Thus, for Barthes, an economy of signs, sexes and fortunes determines the normative structure of a narrative, and one can see the similarity of such a position with tri-hierarchization.

49 Ibid., 215.

50 Ibid., 215-16.
V. Tripartition in Classical Indian Philosophy

a. The Epistemological Tripartition

While one can observe a general duality in Western thought, where epistemic validity is ascribed either to sensual perception or to ideational inference, it is interesting to note that in ancient Indian thought, most of the philosophical schools believe in the simultaneous and equal validity of not only these two epistemologies, but also of a third one—that of verbal testimony. Almost all the nine schools of classical Indian philosophy admit that pratyakṣa, or perception, anumāṇa, or inference, and āgama, or testimony are equally valid as epistemologies. Among the different schools, it is only the materialist Carvāka that believes in the legitimacy of perception alone, and only Nyāya, which believes in the validity of a fourth epistemology—upamāṇa, or illustration—too. Overall, all the schools accepting a tripartition of epistemic modes, what can be noted is that in classical Indian philosophy, the duality of mind and matter of Western philosophy is dissolved in a tripartition, and what one can expect is that this tripartition would also have its effect on ontology, to provide a tripartition in that domain too. Incidentally, this is precisely the case, and I discuss below how right from the intra-individual qualities to the elements of cosmology, ancient Indian thought shows the tripartition of domains into the triad of mentality, materiality and physicality.

b. Tripartition in the Individual Domain

Though there are, as I have stated, nine different schools of Indian philosophy, which differ considerably in many of their postulates, an outstanding commonality may be noticed when it comes to how the different schools consider the processes of individuation. At the most atomistic level of intra-individuality, classical Indian philosophy believes that every individual is equipped with three basic guṇa-s, or qualities. The first of these three qualities is sattva, or the propensity to knowledge, whereby every individual is propelled towards a mental pursuit. The second quality is rajas, or the propensity towards material accretion, as a result of which, people tend to accumulate riches and power around them. The third guṇa is tamas, or the propensity to physical luxuriation, whereby individuals nourish their bodies through food, rest, exercises or sex. Thus, there are three basic drives in any human being, propelling him or her in the domains of mentality, materiality and physicality. Accordingly, classical Indian philosophy envisages four puruṣārtha-s, or goals in an individual life, three of which correspond to three basic propensities, and the fourth to a means to escape the excesses of these three. The first goal in one’s life is dharma, or the pursuit of knowledge and the generally accepted code of moral ethics; the second is artha, or the pursuit of wealth and material power; and the third goal is kāma, or the following of the needs of the body, which include health and sexual activities. In addition to these three basic goals in life, there is also the provision of mokṣa, or the means to liberate oneself from the vagaries of tripartite needs.
c. **Tripartition in the Inter-Individual and Social Domain**

Thus, there are three basic drives and three basic goals for an individual, corresponding to the tripartition of mentality, materiality and physicality. Though these three drives and goals act simultaneously, normally, any one of them gains primacy over the others, leading to three basic types of individuals: the *sāttvika* type, dedicated to knowledge and mental pursuits, the *rājasika* type, dedicated to material well-being, and the *tāmasika*, or the physically indulgent type. Furthermore, classical Indian philosophy shows that the domains of interaction of the individual are also tripartite: there is the *ādhyātmika* domain of interaction with one’s own physical body, the *ādhibhautika* domain of interaction with the material world around oneself, and the *ādidaivika* domain of interaction with spiritual and mental constructs. Connecting these two types of tripartition, it can be observed how inter-individual interaction is itself conceived of as tripartite by classical Indian philosophy, so that in the social domain, it provides for three upper castes dedicated to mentality, physicality and materiality, respectively, with a fourth lower caste operating as labour in all the three modes of production thus delineated. Thus, there is in classical Indian stratification of society the *brāhmaṇa*, dedicated to knowledge, the *kṣatriya*, dedicated to warfare and acts of physical prowess, the *vaiśya*, dedicated to business and material pursuits, and the *śūdra*, who labours for these three classes. It is thus established how the same tripartition works in the domain of inter-individual interaction and social structuration too.

d. **Tripartition in Classical Indian Cosmology**

The tripartition of domains of structuration into mentality, materiality and mentality, which begins from the concrete atomistic level of the self and is taken to higher levels of social abstraction, is taken by classical Indian philosophy to an even higher degree of abstraction in its constructs on cosmology. In Hindu cosmology, the creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe are credited to a trinity, which itself consists of a set of three feminine and three masculine principles and deities. Thus, one has three goddesses—*Sarasvatī*, the goddess of knowledge, *Lakṣmī*, the goddess of material wealth, and *Kālī* or *Durgā*, the goddess of physical prowess and fertility—corresponding to the three poles of the triad, and three gods as their respective consorts—*Brahmā*, credited with creating this world (creativity being associable with knowledge and mentality), *Viṣṇu*, who sustains the world (sustenance being a material act), and *Śiva*, who destroys the world (the destruction being essentially physical). Therefore, the trinity of deities and the triad of cosmological principles that classical Indian philosophy cultivates—that of *sṛṣṭi* (creation), *sthiti* (sustenance) and *tāraya* (destruction)—is also connected to the basic tripartition of modes of structuration into the domains of mentality, materiality and physicality. Classical Indian philosophy thus also shows the ‘same’ tripartition that I have been talking about in this thesis.
VI. Conclusion: of Similarities and Differences

In discussing the Foucauldian method of archaeology, it was discussed earlier how one of its key features is to study similarities in differences and differences in similarities. Therefore, it was imperative to see if the tropological tool of tripartition of domains of structuration into the broad paradigms of what I have termed mentality, materiality and physicality occurs in totally unrelated *epistemes* too. Accordingly, this chapter, which was not supposed to be exhaustive but merely ‘appendical’, probed the possibility of such a similarity in the absolutely ‘different’ epistemic configurations of medieval scholastic logic, Romantic poetry, structuralist analysis of narratives and classical Indian philosophy. The result, one might say, is spectacular, because in all the four bodies of thought thus studied, one notices the categorization of domains of structuration in terms of the very three areas I have delineated. However, as the Foucauldian demand, on which this study was initially based, itself states, one needs to find differences within similarities too. Therefore, one cannot stop at merely identifying similarities and points of conjunction in apparently unrelated *epistemes*; one needs to see the differences they posit in spite of their similarities too.

This is how it also becomes imperative to see how the unrelated *epistemes*, within which one could spot a semblance of tripartition, are different from the Foucauldian sort. It should be observed that in identifying Foucault’s tropological tool as ‘tri-hierarchization’, I have taken into consideration two features. On the one hand, it involves the tripartition of domains of structuration into mentality, materiality and physicality, but on the other, the very fact that I prefer to call the trope ‘tri-hierarchization’ and not just tripartition indicates that it is connected to a concern for hierarchies. It is precisely in relation to the second feature that the epistemic configurations discussed in this chapter differ from Foucauldian thought, because though they talk about a similar tripartition, they do not politicize it, they do not aim to unearth the hierarchies that lie at the basis of tripartite structuration. The Abélardian or Keatsian tripartition may have performed a radical epistemological task in breaking through the dominant dichotomy of Western thought, but ontologically, their formulations do not take games of power into consideration. Structuralist analysis of narratives does aim at history, and with Barthes it even takes a radical turn in adopting the critical role of commenting on how dominant ideology forecloses a text, but yet, it remains largely formalistic and a far cry from active political practice. Similarly, classical Indian philosophy does relate tripartition to social hierarchization, when it shows how the caste hierarchy is based on tripartition, but the stance it adopts is merely descriptive and not radically resistant. Thus, the key feature that distinguishes these bodies of thought from Foucault’s is resistant political practice, or the Foucauldian ethics of what I have called ‘dehierarchization’, and it is towards this conclusive political category that I take my thesis in the next and its last chapter.