

Fascination with the riddle of time is as old as human thought. The puzzles and paradoxes of time have confused the world's greatest thinkers throughout the ages. The creative process is always a struggle with time and an attempt to create different time patterns. Time is one of the fundamental parameters through which narrative as a genre is organized and understood. The relationship between time and narrative has been much discussed both in narrative theory and in philosophy. But the radical transformation in the understanding and experience of time affected the structure of the postmodern novels and the postmodern narratives break up plot into a spectrum of contradictory story lines.

The coexistence of these competing experiences of time allows new conceptions to emerge and opens up comparisons with recent scientific approaches to temporality. In the analysis of postmodern narratives the problem that occupies central position is whether narrative 'elicits' a structure from events or 'imposes' a shape on events that are themselves shapeless. As authors carve forms from time, time assumes a variety of 'shapes,' which are adjuncts to meaning in the work.

The structure of the completed work comes from how the author decides to handle time. Just as fictional kinds demand and encourage

different uses of language, characterization and theme, so do they require different treatments of time. In an attempt to create different time patterns, the author distorts the temporal pattern in different ways. Gerard Genette calls this distorted temporality 'pseudo time.' The pseudo-time is once again rearranged and restructured at every reading by every reader in his/her own way by a super imposition of his perception. And thus a new pattern emerges with every new reading of the text. These temporal patterns go on interacting, giving newer and newer meanings to the text.

In Postmodernist narratives, temporality becomes a problem, in which time ceases to progress in a predictable linear way and begins to behave in strange ways that are difficult to understand. "Whether it is the demise of identifiable character that causes time to fracture, or the fragmentation of time that sets an end to character, is not easy to decide. What is clear, however, is that the time of the individual mind no longer functions as an alternative to social time" (Heise 7). The thesis tries to analyze the philosophy of time that underlies the narrative organization of postmodern novels and the clever manipulation of time shapes which gives the narrative its desired structure.

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. This research is designed to show how the narrative organization of postmodern novels recognizes temporality and how this temporality in turn shapes the narrative. Through the analysis of two postmodern novels the research aims at showing the relationship between their innovative structures and time.

The narratives under study are Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, and David Lodge's *Small World*. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* is a novel that consists of a metafictional narrative that frames the beginnings of ten unique novels. On the other hand *Small World* is an academic novel which traces the hilarious adventures of Persse McGarrigle, a dreamer and idealist, lost in a rather prosaic world. In *Small World*, Lodge marries the pre-novelistic romance with the campus novel to produce a delightful farce.

Although these texts may not seem to have many elements in common, both of them are 'auto reflexive' – it draws attention to the literariness of a narrative text. The two narratives work through the problem of the encoding and the decoding of meanings. Both are postmodern novels

which are self-conscious of the literary and reading process. Both the texts deal with the poststructuralist concerns of the production of meaning in a condition of intertextuality. As both these writers indulge in the ‘murky waters’ of intertextuality, these texts pose self-reflexive resistance to the realist conventions of storytelling like linear time and causality.

Both the texts construct their own time structures and space within the narratives often self-consciously. Both the writers create complex patterns of aesthetic experience through the medium of prose by manipulating time, space, voice, and perspective. An amalgamation of the theoretical views of Genette, Bakhtin, Ermarth and Ricouer will provide a reliable model of narrative analysis for these texts that display an extraordinary richness of temporal representation.

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. When we talk of the time experience “in and of” the narrative, our focus will be on time as the events unfold the plot and the experience of time the reader derives from the meta fictional loops in the proposed novels.

Temporal experience and intellectual perceptions of time are profoundly important in both of these texts: they shape not only the narratives' preoccupations, forms, and themes, but also the processes of reading to which they lead. The proposed research aims at showing the relationship between the innovative narrative structures and the various time shapes employed by Italo Calvino in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* and David Lodge in *Small World*.

The two texts are discussed for their transgression of the conventions of linear narrative, their experiments with time and their self-reflexive reworking of fictional form. The study tries to reveal how 'time' in its 'amazing malleability and elasticity' (Higdon 1) as a mental construct serves the particularities of art expression. The study also proposes to show how "Authors pursue it (Time) forwards, trace it backwards, fragment it into slivers of varying duration, or arc it gracefully in circles, ellipses and even spirals" (Higdon 1). The research aims to find out how temporality becomes the deciding factor in shaping these two narratives.

The approach to time in this study has less to do with the grammatical aspects of language than with language seen as a system of action and of interaction. The present study views time in a more global,

textual and situational context rather than focusing on the explicit markers, such as tense or adverbials only.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The introductory chapter outlines the research problem. The first chapter is an attempt to look at time through both scientific and philosophical perspectives. It tries to analyze the relationship between time and narrative, especially in postmodern novels. It discusses the Genettian concept of narrative levels, Paul Ricoeur's three-tiered structure of time, Elizabeth Ermarth's concept of rhythmic time and Bakhtin's chronotopes.

The second chapter analyzes the techniques used by Calvino in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* to distort the linear temporality, thereby creating a unique temporal pattern. The chapter explores the postmodernist strategies employed by Calvino for temporal disintegration and how he tries to defamiliarise time through the clever manipulation of time shapes.

The third chapter analyzes David Lodge's *Small World* as a narrative which superimposes several temporal patterns through intertextuality. Analyzing the intertextuality enables us to reveal how the time structure of a single story is linked to other discourses both horizontally and vertically.

The fourth chapter is an analysis of both these texts through a chronotopic lens as envisaged by M.M.Bakhtin. Since the texts are dominantly temporal and engage in the representation of time and space, Bakhtin's notion about the forms of time and the chronotopes provides a suitable strategy for reading the texts. The chapter tries to analyze the dominant chronotopes employed by Calvino and Lodge in their respective works.

The fifth chapter is an attempt to explore the conflict between the public and private temporality in both these narratives. The fascination with time runs through both these works and the study explores how the narratives interweave the perceptive time with the tyranny of clock time.

The final conclusion to this thesis offers how by paying close attention to the time shapes in a narrative, we can pave the way to a more comprehensive understanding of the structure of the narrative. The thesis proposes that a study of the time shapes can act as an effective tool in the understanding of the fictional structure of the novels which employ the postmodernist textual strategy of disrupting the traditional convention of representation.