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THE STRUCTURE OF NARRATIVE AND ITS KEY COMPONENTS: TIME, ORDER, AND FOCALIZATION

Farida Khamraeva
Senior Teacher at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the structures that emerge during the process of narration, particularly focusing on the distinctions and interrelations between the concepts of text, fabula, and story. It discusses how narratives are subjectively presented to the reader, examining how aesthetic and semantic effects are created through focalization, temporal structures, and event sequencing. Through various examples, the internal temporal systems of narratives, anachronies, and the semantic "games" played with the reader are analyzed. This paper aims to uncover the deeper layers of narrative theory and pertains to the fields of literary analysis, semiotics, and narratology.
KEYWORDS: *Narrative, Fabula, Text, Focalization, Anachrony, Temporal Structures, Narratology*

Narrative is considered one of the oldest and most significant expressions of human thought. It exists not only in literary works but also in everyday life, historical documents, cultural transmissions, and media. In the process of storytelling, the concepts of text, fabula, and story each play a distinct role. The *text* refers to the written form shaped by linguistic means, while the *fabula* represents the logical, chronological sequence of events. The *story*, on the other hand, is the subjective arrangement of these two layers, delivered to the reader through focalization and other aesthetic manipulations. This article examines the structure of narrative and its main components—time (temporality), order (sequencing), and focalization. It aims to demonstrate how semiotic and aesthetic strategies function in the storytelling process and how they influence the reader's perception.

The art of storytelling, with its complex structures, invites the reader into deep reflection and emotional engagement. In this process, elements such as *time*, *order*, and *focalization* hold significant importance. This article analyzes how each of these components is applied in English literature and how they affect the reader's reception.

Time determines the manner in which events are presented in a narrative. The concepts of *fabula* and *plot* introduced by Gérard Genette are particularly important in this context. *Fabula* is the chronological sequence of events, while *plot* refers to how these events are presented within the narrative. For example, in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the elasticity of time and the connection between events and internal time become evident. The events that occur within a single day are deeply portrayed in such a way that the passage of time becomes almost imperceptible to the reader. This alters the reader's perception of time and determines the rhythm of the narrative.

Additionally, *reverse chronology* is another method where the narrative begins from the end and events are presented in reverse. In the film *Memento*, for instance, the main event is shown at the end, and the preceding causes are revealed in reverse order.

Order defines the sequence in which events are presented. It determines how the reader experiences the unfolding of the story and when they receive specific information. In his work *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp emphasizes that events in folktales follow a specific order. According to him, stories develop based on a particular structure, and this structure constitutes the essential components of the narrative. Moreover, techniques such as *flashback* and *flashforward* are also employed. In *flashback*, past events are presented within the current timeline, helping the reader understand causes and background. In *flashforward*, future events are revealed, thereby heightening the reader's curiosity.

Shifting focalization is a technique in literature where the author changes the narrative point of view. In short stories, as in other genres, shifting focalization can be used to create richness and deeper meaning within the narrative.

In a novel, the author may shift between different characters to express their own thoughts, emotions, and inner world. This allows the reader to more fully understand the emotional states of events and characters. For example, in a short story, *moving focalization* may be used to depict a situation first through the eyes of one character and then through another. This helps the reader to see different perspectives and understand how various characters perceive the same event.

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Shifting focalization can also be used to create suspense and surprise within the narrative. The author may intentionally withhold information from the reader by switching between perspectives and gradually revealing the details of the story.

Overall, **mobile focalization** in a novel enables the author to construct a deeper and more multi-dimensional narrative, allowing the reader to view events and characters from various points of view, while also making the reading experience more engaging and dynamic. It further helps the author convey their ideas and emotions more effectively.

New philological insights in the field of **narratology** have shaped the terminology used in analytical processes. Foremost among these is *focalization*, which V. Shmid, based on his "point of view" theory, describes as "the central category of narratology." Drawing upon the works of Gérard Genette (the scholar who introduced the term *focalization* in 1972), V. Shmid proposes the following classification:

1. **Zero focalization** – the narrative is presented from an omniscient narrator's point of view, who knows everything.
2. **Internal focalization** – the story is told from the perspective of a character.
3. **External focalization** – the narrator observes from the outside, without access to the inner thoughts or feelings of the characters.

Semiotic (system of signs) and **aesthetic (artistic and stylistic)** strategies also play a crucial role in storytelling. These strategies determine how events are presented, what linguistic tools are used, and how the reader's emotions are shaped. For instance, in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the use of interior monologue and unconventional language structures serves to reveal the character's inner world.

The concept of **manipulation** originally meant "to handle" or "to treat" and, although it now carries a negative connotation, its original sense is closer to "operation" or "treatment." The *fabula* is "treated," and the reader is "manipulated" through this treatment. Such manipulation occurs not only when actors are shaped into distinct, fully formed characters and placed in specific symbolic or situational contexts but also when the sequence of events is transformed into a narrative.

The main tool of manipulation is the **traditional point of view** or what is often called "perspective." The elements of the *fabula*, as seen from a particular viewpoint, can be crucial in determining how the reader interprets the narrative. This is true even in the simplest situations. For example, to properly assess a conflict, one must understand how each party sees the events—that is, hear each of their narratives.

Thus, **focalization** is a technical term that refers to defining or assigning a point of view, often through a particular agent. It is the key mechanism through which a narrative is subjectivized. However, many other aspects also participate in this process. Despite its contemporary negative association, **manipulation** is often seen as an essential element in storytelling, as it helps guide the reader's reception of events. Through narrative presentation, the author controls how the story is understood, shaping the reader's emotional and intellectual response.

In literature, manipulation is carried out through various techniques—such as the selection of details, the sequencing of events, and perspective. For instance, a shift in perspective can drastically change the reader's understanding of a character's motives or the significance of an event. The structure of the narrative, its pacing, and the order in which events unfold all play a critical role in managing the reader's response.

In narrative structure, **manipulation** refers to the author's or narrator's method of deliberately organizing events, details, and character actions in a way that influences how the reader understands and responds to the story. This technique plays a crucial role in shaping the reader's emotional engagement with the narrative and its characters.

One common form of manipulation is **foreshadowing**—the subtle suggestion or indication of future events. It prepares the reader emotionally and cognitively for what is to come. A classic example of this can be found in *Romeo and Juliet*, where early references to fate and star-crossed lovers guide the reader toward an awareness of the tragic ending long before it unfolds, creating emotional anticipation.

Another significant type of manipulation is the **carefully constructed twist ending**, where the story leads the reader toward one expectation, only to subvert it at the conclusion. This technique causes the reader to reinterpret everything previously understood. A brilliant example is the film *The Sixth Sense*, where the audience initially believes that the protagonist is helping a troubled child. However, in the final scene, it is revealed that the protagonist himself is dead, forcing a re-evaluation of all prior events and perspectives.

Narrative structure plays a fundamental role in literature and cinematic art. It governs how the story is shaped and how it connects with the reader or viewer. Through narrative design, readers are drawn into the emotional dynamics of the story, form new

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understandings, and ultimately come to grasp its meaning. The arrangement of the narrative, the order in which events are revealed, and the interplay between conflict and resolution all contribute to this effect.

To understand narrative structure, one must first grasp its key components. Typically, a narrative includes an **introduction**, **rising action**, **climax**, and **resolution**. In other words, a well-formed story follows a specific structure: exposition, development of events, conflict, challenges, and final resolution. These structural elements not only aid the reader in comprehending the story but also shape their emotional and cognitive responses.

Analyzing the manipulations within this structure allows us to better understand how the narrative controls the interaction between the story and the audience. In literature, manipulation refers to the subtle control of plot, character development, and emotional cues.

Foreshadowing, for instance, often appears through minor details introduced early in the narrative that hint at future developments. Such manipulation increases the reader's emotional investment and guides their expectations. In *Romeo and Juliet*, allusions to fate and impending doom are strategically placed to help the reader emotionally prepare for the tragic outcome.

On the other hand, manipulation can also be realized through **unexpected endings** or **twist conclusions**, which are among the most effective narrative strategies. These endings deliberately mislead the reader's interpretation until the final moments, when a revelation forces them to reassess the entire story. *The Sixth Sense* exemplifies this with its sudden reversal, where the protagonist's true condition is only revealed at the end, fundamentally changing the meaning of earlier scenes. Additionally, **character development** plays a central role in narrative structure and manipulation. The internal struggles of protagonists, external conflicts, and the balance of their decisions are all key to narrative progression. Conflicts between characters, especially those rooted in contrasting goals or ideologies, are necessary drivers of the plot. Characters who undergo transformation through inner turmoil often stand at the center of complex narratives, serving as conduits for thematic exploration and emotional depth.

In conclusion, narrative structure is not merely about arranging events in chronological order; rather, it is a complex system that governs how a story is delivered to the audience and how it is interpreted. Through manipulation techniques such as **foreshadowing** and **twist endings**, narratives can introduce readers to alternative perspectives and challenge their assumptions. Such structuring does not only serve to clearly convey the plot but also **engages the reader emotionally**, compelling them to re-evaluate their understanding of the events. This capacity to evoke emotional and intellectual responses is one of the defining strengths of both literature and cinematic art.

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