

CHAPTER 7

LITERATURE: THE SLOWING FLOW OF TIME

> NARRATION

The last of the temporal arts, the one closest to the everyday reality at the middle of the spectrum, is the art that narrates a story through both time and space. Literature as well as film fit this description. Later on the spectrum, we come to another art, painting, that can also narrate a story, but in space alone. Whereas with painting, narration is optional, literature loses its identity without it.

Narration occurs when someone other than the person to whom an action happens (or the person to whom it happens - but at a later date) relates the action to us as if they were a witness to it¹. Literature narrates through the sounds of spoken words, relying passively on the images that the words evoke in our imagination. Film narrates directly through the use of external images, with or without sounds.

Narration causes the flow of time to slow down, as well as placing time more under the control of space. This is the result of an inherent paradox about narration: that it *takes time* to describe something, even when that something might be experienced first hand in but a single moment. Time flows, or endures, differently in the description of an action than in the action itself. An action which took five minutes may be described in five seconds or five hours. The flow of the action can at times almost come to a halt, and will come to a complete halt in the spatial arts. In general, the flow of time in literature is no longer clearly single as it was earlier on the spectrum when we witnessed an action directly.

> FROM THEATRE TO LITERATURE:

We can change a work of theatre into a work of literature by attempting to relate to a friend what went on during a theatre performance that we had attended but not our friend. To begin with we might convey something of the plot. It would help also if we could remember some of the actual words spoken by the characters, but if we can't we can paraphrase them to the best of our recollection. Since our friend cannot see the characters in front of her, we may add things to our description that while completely obvious to us in the theatre just by looking at the stage, cannot be known to our friend unless we specify them. We may describe the characters' physical appearance, the look on her face, where she was located in space relative to others, the feel of the space on the stage, the mood of the lighting, etc.. Since we are representing all the different characters in our own voice, we might describe their varying demeanors, dress, and voice qualities, to aid our friend in sorting one character from another. We also don't want to limit our description to the events alone but want to convey something of our own reaction to the performance. Step by step we have become a narrator. All the things that we have done in relating the play to our friend have taken time on their own, time away from the action. During this extra time, the time of the action on stage has to stop and wait.

> SEPARATE FLOWS OF TIME. THE SPATIALIZATION OF TIME

What occurred simultaneously to our senses in the theatre becomes sequential in literature². We must choose some order to this sequencing, which becomes part of the structure of our work. The flow of time of the action is stopped and started at will by our narration. In that the principal characteristic of time is that it flows and flows continuously, the time that *is* flowing through our description is no longer the flow of time in what we are describing, but of the time we have borrowed to describe.

Literature has not abandoned the action, it is still of primary importance, it is just that the action is never there to us outside the description of it, and the describer stands already outside of its flow. The narrator has created a split in the present tense of time. On the one hand there is the present tense within the course of the action being described, on the other there is the present tense of where we are within the description of the action. Once any ambiguity sets in about the present, it is no longer a uniquely defined moment of time. For there to be two presents at once, requires that the present lose some of its immediacy, i.e. some of its present-ness.

In one sense the narrator is like the hero of certain science fiction stories who by the push of a button can freeze time except for h'erself. S/he can wander around a room filled with people who have been frozen in mid action. For them time has stopped, only for the hero does time continue normally. In effect the narrator is aging more quickly than the world around h'er. This is not only a good description of the relation between narrator and narrated, but is surprisingly similar to the relativistic effects of space travel at velocities near the speed of light. The machine in this science fiction story can not only stop time, but can adjust its tempo to any factor slower or faster than the normal pace of consciousness. The people in the room can seem to be running around frantically or moving like snails. The narrator is also like a person watching a VHS tape. When s/he wants to pay particular attention to the details, she goes into slow-motion mode, or even proceeds frame by frame. At other times she rapidly advances through the tape to the next scene.

Time is flowing in two channels, one containing the action, one containing the narration. The stream of time that carries forward the narrator's description can bend like a giant oxbow around the a more direct segment of the flow of the action's stream. While on the oxbow the narrator can contemplate the original flow at leisure, taking note of anything that interests h'er. We are led by the narrator to appreciate the meaning and significance of an event before our awareness of that event is eclipsed by the impress of the reality of the next moment in the action, whose opaqueness in our consciousness occludes the past. Ultimately there will be the painter, who is able to contemplate h'er subject indefinitely. At that point on the spectrum, however, all that contemplation will fall entirely outside the experience time of the work. In literature this reflection remains within our experience of the work. The painter can lead us to contemplate an event in an action for an indefinite amount of time, but at the expense of that action never completing itself.

What occurs in a work of music lasting twenty minutes is simply twenty minutes of music. When we see things occurring in a work of animation, there is no implied date to their occurrence, they are simply present in time before us. There is no way to distinguish their time from our time. In theatre we witnessed, for the first time on the spectrum, time taking up an abode within the consciousness

of a character. Each person on stage has their own history. The time experience of the work and the character's (not the actor's) experience of their own time were not always the same. This discrepancy, however, was noted by us more through what was omitted on stage than through what was there. We didn't see Hamlet brush his teeth and go to bed. One scene ended and the next began, and it was already the next day. The character however has aged one day in their time while we have aged only several minutes. Unlike the artistic time, which resets itself to zero at the beginning of each performance (see chapter two), the character's or "historical" time is often in mid course as the play opens. Countries are already at war, or Hamlet's father is already dead and his mother already remarried.

Though between scenes the artistic and historical times could be out of step in theatre, what we could take for granted was that, during the evolution of a single scene, the historical and artistic times proceeded in tandem. As an event transpired on stage in front of us, there was an identity between the time the action took to occur and the time it took us to see it occur. The words spoken by the actors came from *within* the action. Only secondarily might we chance to notice that a luncheon, for example, occurred more quickly on stage than it would have at our home. This identity breaks down in literature. The words describing an action (other than the words spoken by the characters) come from *outside* the action. Within the depiction of what would have occurred within a single scene in theatre, the time of the literary narration proceeds at a different rate than the time of the events being narrated. There is a temporal strain between the time it would ordinarily take an event to transpire and the time it takes to describe it as transpiring.

Narration opens up a new dimension in time, the time of the description, which can be filled deeper and deeper. It is as if a river divided, one channel flowing swiftly and in a geodesic from point A to point B, and the other channel flowing slowly and meandering between the same two points. Throughout the story the two channels repeatedly split and then rejoin further downstream (ultimately the second channel may no longer empty back into the first channel, and then we are at painting). As in a photograph, which captures but one moment in time, an entire novel can describe but a moment from what could be a more extended happening in time. Even when the rate of the flow of the description and the transpiring action are the same, they are still in two different channels, that happen for the moment to have the same tempo.

If we add back to these two channels of time the historical time which first arose in theatre, which would include the duration of the events left out of the narrative (sleeping, eating, brushing the teeth), we have in fact three times in literature. We can make it four if we include the indeterminate moment in the narrator's personal history when s/he is doing the recounting, something that may have occurred after or during the events described. Only one of these times continues to flow in its accustomed way: own conscious time, which is also the truest artistic time of the work. Any of the other streams can slow down or speed up relative to any of the others.

With the original unity of time thus divided, its ineluctable forward force is weakened. It loses its unity and enters a delta, meandering confusedly in different channels, flowing sometimes one way and then another, ultimately reaching a timeless sea. The notion of *separating* is spatial. Time is now controllable, and no longer controlling. It has lost the use of an ongoing action to provide the grounds for defining an absolute present. With the destabilizing of the present, no particular event within the flow of the narrative is obliged to relate to any another in terms of before, during or

subsequent. It is up to the narrator whether what occurs on the next page is meant to have occurred before, during or after what occurred on the previous page³. In music, for example, there is not much meaning to the notion of jumping ahead or jumping back in time, there is only one flow to the work's artistic time. There is no flow to leave and reenter via another flow. In theatre, two battle camps can appear on opposite sides of the stage. In between is an unused space whose width must be greater than its literal extent along the stage or the armies would already be clashing. This in between space on the stage represents a break in the artistic space, or rather a breakdown in the point to point connection of that space between the two camps. If an actor were to walk across that space on the stage, a temporal anomaly would occur measuring artistic time against artistic space. How would we evaluate the relationship in time between something said in the first camp just as the actor was leaving it and something said in the second camp just as s/he arrived at it. The continuity of time breaks down over a discontinuity of space. This is a power of space over time that had not appeared earlier on the spectrum. Literature can create an anomaly in time without an ambiguity in the intactness of space. The spatial notion that time can flow in many directions supersedes the purely temporal sense of time's arrow. With film, even the performance is not present to our present, but in the past. In literature we suspect the narrator's performance is in the past but trust that our own performance as the reader appropriates the narrator's present.

Once the main stream of time is divided, the subsidiary streams can proliferate. In Joyce's "Ulysses", when several people are in conversation, we can be, at different times, in the mind of each person. The strands are occasionally tied together when words are said out loud, but then become untied again. Between these points of confluence we realize that each perceives the flow of time within the outward conversation differently. In theatre, to know what was going on in a character's mind, the character had to speak out loud. In literature the narrator can tell us all of this without the character saying a thing.

> A STORY TELLING ART

Where the word *action* seemed appropriate for theatre, the word *story* seems suited for literature. Poetry, animation, dance, and theatre can all tell a story *if they choose*, but in none of these cases are they themselves the story, but this is the case with literature. The spatial arts can also tell a story, painting most among the three⁴, but again it is just an option.

In theatre we are a witness to an action. In literature we become the witness of a witness - though if the narration is effective we can lose some of the feeling of being at a second remove. Just as the musical performer takes on the identity of the creator of the work, so whoever is reading the book takes on the identity of the narrator. We are lending our voice to someone else, whose voice we will never hear. A mirror is held up in front of whoever is reading the story and the character who is speaking or being described is reflected back to h'er. The voice of the playwright is never heard except through the characters. The voice of the author of the work of literature is heard frequently in h'er own voice. The narrator is a necessary presence without whom the characters are unavailable, and whose personality often becomes a part of what is happening to the characters.

> AN AURAL ART. THE PRINTED PAGE

At an earlier date, when literature was performed out loud in a group setting, a work's form was never final, it evolved from telling to retelling. Writing down the work may have initially served the purpose of insuring that something important would not be lost forever, but secondarily it caused a curtailment of the evolution of the work. The author Julian Jaynes, in his book "The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind" says that before the final emergence of consciousness, it was probably common to hear voices that seemed to originate from within, but which were at the same time outside of the control of the person's will. Similarly, as we read aloud a work of literature, the voice comes from within ourselves though the choice of words is outside our will.

On the printed page the eye already sees on the page the future of the work. In contrast the ear withholds and creates anticipation. The aural reader by molding sounds molds ideas. If we do not read out loud, we are more at passively repeating something that already exists, while when we read out loud we are more at choosing the words ourselves. Reading out loud is important if we are to retain the temporal qualities of literature. Unlike the appearance of musical notation, the arrangement of the words on a page conveys no information regarding timing, tempo, separation or joining of sounds, loudness or emphasis. It provides only the sequence in time of the words. The printed page is what is left of the work if we deprive it of time.

> WORDS AND STYLE

When I start a new book, it often takes several pages before the words insinuate themselves unobtrusively into my mind and I am no longer aware of the words being separate from the reality they portray. In this way style can be transparent to the reality they portray and for which they are a window. The narrator says "can you imagine or picture this...", and if things work well, we respond "yes". At best, we do not know that the question is being asked. This does not mean that, as with painting, we cannot take delight in the words' decorative aspect, how they appear in themselves. We can be struck by the beauty of the writer's style, the words can hover an extra moment before their perfume yields to the reality they depict. Words in literature are like the brushstrokes in painting in that they are used to create an image, and which sometimes we choose to have them stand out for themselves.

In theatre, words were used but were not essential to the portrayal of the action. In literature words are necessary because words are the chosen form of narration, but they are unessential in that narration is possible without words, directly through images (in film). Words, which arose on the spectrum out of the abstract sounds of music, will subside again in the spatial arts, where they will be appreciated primarily for their spatial form.

> LIMITS TO DESCRIPTION

Words approach asymptotically to the truth they are trying to express. We search for just the right words. It is an ongoing process, no one word is sufficient to the task by itself. We start dealing with how one word relates to another. After a while it becomes less a matter of capturing the original truth and more that our way of saying things contains a beauty that has the aesthetic force equal to the original truth. There is a similar disparity if we compare a visual image to words that are offered to describe the image. We are immediately faced with the difference between the loose

fit of verbal description and the precisely etched outlines of the image. There is no way to measure the difference between image and the description of image, to use in correcting one to the other. In the attempt words may be added that evoke additional unwanted connotations of their own. A new set of discrepancies will result. Words are like a sculptor, suddenly blind, attempting to mold an image according to an inner version but without recourse for outward comparison. It is easier for the author to start with just words and leave it to the reader to form a specific image⁵. Ultimately it is unimportant whether a description is faithful to a visual *perception*, for that perception will never be known to us.

> MORE ABOUT TIME, IN LITERATURE

>THE NARRATOR'S PERSONAL PRESENT

The person narrating is sometimes the person whose activities are being described. In such a case it is logically impossible that the narration is taking place at the same time as the action, otherwise the description would have to include reference to the character actively making the description. An ambiguity results as to where to place the present tense. While the act of narration can try to be like a simultaneous translation at the United Nations, there is no real way of telling whether the events are happening now or are being recollected. There has been a translation. The narrator stands at a vantage point that has no exact date relative to the present of the action, unless the narrator makes a point of defining it⁶.

The present is now *present* only in the narrator's past. No matter how precisely one date stands to another within the narration, their time relation is compromised by both dates probably now being within the present tense of the narrator's memory, standing (sic) as s/he does at an unknown distance (sic) in the future. Proof of the distance of the narrator's present from the a unique present in the action is that the narrator can return, over and over, to the same point in the course of the action, describing things each time from a different point of view. The narrator may already know the outcome though we are only midway in the book. The outcome may color h'er description of the events leading up to the outcome. If so, the narrator takes on the air of the writer of history, telling things after they have all happened, and appearing omniscient with regard to time. It means less to us to consider that the musician already knows how the current movement will end. The performer is not a presence in the time of the symphony (see chapter two), the narrator *is* a presence within the time of the literary work. There is an air of history in all literature, even if fictional history.

> MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS PRESENTS

It is a tacit assumption on our part that when characters are together in the same place they are together at the same time relative to each other. This is usually clear from their interactions. The histories of all the characters have linked together in a common temporal nexus. There is, however, nothing to prevent the narrator from describing three characters in the same room as if each were talking at a different date in their own personal-historical time, and that no intentional interaction is taking place between them. Though this might be very confusing, it is certainly possible.

> THE WORK IS PERFORMED IN SEPARATE SESSIONS

The slackening of time in literature allows a work to be read in more than one session. We do not experience discontinuity in the flow of the story in part because time is already fragmented in literature, and reading it in plural sessions does not further aggravate that fragmentation. The performance of most temporal works of art usually occurs in one continuous session (as measured by the clock in the everyday reality). A work of literature is often longer than works of the other temporal arts in good part because of the time taken to narrate. It is quite normal for our experience of a work to be spread out over various sessions. Although it is perfectly possible to listen to a symphony in several sessions, when we sit down to listen to the next section, the previous section is not *present* to us in the same way as the previous section was in the work literature. Literature stores its content in a "plot", an intricate matrix of human, verbal and conceptual meanings, that immediately releases its content back into time when we return to the book. At the point we re-enter the work, the point immediately past to that moment does not contain our walking into the room to sit down and read, but the moment containing the events in the book that immediately preceded the events which we are about to read. Any discontinuity is noticeable only on the everyday clock. In literature, in addition to the artistic clock setting itself to zero when we begin, it can also be paused and resumed during the work, much as the timing clock of a player in a chess match. There is no more interruption in the flow of the artistic time than we perceive in our own time when we wake up in the morning. The gap is consciousness sealed over and disappears. Our memory re-weaves the connection from past into present.

The loosening of the fabric of time also helps explain the absence in literature of literal repetition. In music, repetition, even exact repetition, is a common device. It adds to the structural relief of a work. In poetry sounds repeat, and rhymes keep certain sounds alive, phrases repeat in refrains. In animation exact sequences of images can repeat and, as with music, contribute to the definition of the structure of the work. A dancer can repeat motions exactly. However, what would if a certain description in literature was followed by an identical repeat? Something would seem odd. We are too used to entering and leaving its flow. We would say to the author "if I had felt that I didn't get what you said the first time, I would have re-read the passage myself before going on".

> APPROACHING THE POINT ON THE SPECTRUM WHEN TIME STOPS FLOW- >> ING WITHIN THE WORK

In the temporal arts there is a balance between aspects that change with time and which remain the same with time. In music a chord can remain constant while a melody plays over it. Rhymes hold certain sounds constant as individual words dance through them. A shape in animation can remain unchanged while others change, just as one dancer or parts of h'er can remain still while others move. In theatre, scenery and sets remain unchanging throughout a scene. The furniture that the author describes as being in the hero's room remain fixed, even permanent, throughout the novel. By the spatial arts however everything that changes from within the work has gone away. The dancer did not step out of the time of the dance in order to remain unmoving during an interval of the dance's time. In literature, though, the time of the action can be stopped even though the time of the narration must move forward. In theory, this narration could continue indefinitely without ever getting to describe the next event in the action. Or, if the narration ceased altogether, we could replace it with a still image. The painting comments endlessly on the same event in the action.

> MORE ABOUT SPACE, IN LITERATURE

> GROWTH OF HOMOGENOUS SPACE

There is a subtle shift in space as it appears in theatre and literature. The theatre stage is a mechanism for importing different segments of space at different times, somewhat like the fairy tale's "mirror, mirror, on the wall". If the work of literature brings from one place to another in our imagination, we are more likely to form a notion of an extended space that embraces both locales of the story and extends in between them. Literature's space is also more like the everyday space in how it holds onto the objects placed in it. If these objects are to be moved away, it would require that someone, perhaps one of the characters, to come and do it. No invisible stage hands are available.

> PERSPECTIVE

In dance and theatre, if we get up and move around in space, the visual appearance of the action will gradually change with the laws of perspective. The literary narrator however can affect any change in perspective instantly. If movement was required for the narrator to change position, it has taken place in a part of the past that now inaccessible to us.

As with theatre. when a shift to a new locale happens, we have no idea of the *when* of this new locale versus the previous locale, unless the narrator chooses to tell us⁷. Space is freed from its connection to the flow of time, as earlier on the spectrum time was freed from its connection to space. When we see through the narrator's eyes, we see through someone not limited by time with regard to space.

> SOME COMPARISONS BETWEEN LITERATURE AND OTHER ARTS

> WITH ARCHITECTURE

The order through time in which a building is constructed cannot be arbitrary with regard to time. A foundation must be laid before proceeding upwards. In describing an image in literature, the author can follow any order, begin, if s/he chooses, figuratively with the top floor and then work 'backwards' till s/he adds the foundations.

> WITH PAINTING

Though painting is separated from literature across the gap of the everyday reality, it inherits from literature an ability to narrate. The literary author cannot present the appearance of something all at once but must string out the description in time, adding one "brush stroke" at a time, but the painter can present it to us all at once because s/he has already gone through the phase, now invisible to us, within which the depiction was created one step at a time. Space has swallowed up the results of time and the order is unknown. In literature the sequence is known. We get to see the process of creation in the temporal work because the work is re-created in the performance.

A story may be told so as to include anyone as a character. This can include the reader of the story, or anyone else who is listening to the story. In the last case, that person is in two spaces. H'er material body is in the everyday space and on the everyday clock. The part of h'erself that is within the work of art is in a different space, and more importantly can only be there if it is at a different time than the everyday clock time. A similar situation exists with painting if we are in a room looking at a portrait of our self. We cannot be in both places at the same time within only the everyday reality. The time of our image in the portrait must be different than everyday now.

If the narrator takes us suddenly from place A in space to place B, we do not get to perceive what lies in the intermediary space. In painting, generally, what lies between point A and B on the canvas is visible, although we may choose not to look at it. If the painting is representational, however, the artist may have left out things that had intervened between two places in the subject represented.

> WITH THEATRE

Actors enact while narrators relate. What happens to the actor ultimately happens *to* h'erself, though it may be witnessed. What the narrator relates is for the benefit of someone else to whom s/he is talking. Action in theatre is complete as a community experience without an audience. Literature implies at least an audience of one, even if it is the reader is speaking to h'erself reflectively. In theatre, though characters may be describing what is going on, it is in their own time, i.e. the time of the action, that this describing is occurring. In literature, the describing occurs in a time not occurring to the characters. The narrator is free to wander back and forth in time. It is harder to achieve such effects in theatre because the unidirectional press of the action in time is never far away. The action happens in front of us; the actors cannot stop acting.

Through a narrator's eyes we can see someone standing between two stacks of books in a library, even though there is no room for a second person to stand⁸. We can see someone locked in a vault, or hiding beneath a pile of hay. In theatre, the book stacks would have to be seen edge on or be devoid of books, the vault must be minus a wall, and we could only hear the character under the hay. In general, for the audience to be able to see actors and the action in theatre, the stage must not be too cluttered with content. One sign of the increasing functionality of space in literature and film is that it can become as cluttered as one wants, including putting back the fourth wall that is absent in theatre. It does not impede the view of the narrator, who is essentially immaterial.

In theatre, if we are very close, we would have no choice but to become a participant, and will change the evolution of the work. In literature, to be as close as we want, we do not have to become a participant. We can be positioned directly in between two characters in conversation, and be able to see each actor's face frontally. Doing the same in theatre would be a distraction to everyone including other observers⁹. We can witness things from the exact spot in space occupied by one of the characters. Our presence, ignored through convention by the actors in theatre, has become invisible in literature and will remain so in painting, but then because there is no longer anything living to respond to us. In theatre no two viewers can have the same perspective on the action at the same performance. In literature any number of people can have the same perspective on the scene. In film all are looking through a common, borrowed eye.

If we start with a work of literature, we can work our way back to a work of theatre if we undertake a series of progressive modifications. First, instead of reading to ourselves, there would be a group of people reading out loud to each other. One speaks for the narrator, the others speak the words of the different characters. The readers begin to express how they are reacting to what is going on. They begin to physically react to one another. Ultimately the narrator becomes superfluous.

There is a tension connecting one moment to the next in theatre that we experience vibrating in the air as we sit in the theatre space. It is hard to sustain such an energy indefinitely. Eventually there must be a pause, a stepping back. Stepping back is already built in to the notion of the narrator.

In literature we hear words being spoken, but to whom is this voice addressed and to whom does the voice belong? Is the reader an actor, acting the part of the narrator? If the reader changes the quality of h'er voice when the narrator is quoting an individual character, is the reader an actor playing the role of the character or of the narrator portraying a character?

> WITH DANCE

In literature the character is the repository for the effects of the events that have occurred to that personage. It means less to say that the dancer absorbs the consequences of the events that occur in the dance.

> WITH POETRY

Space is still inchoate in poetry, but established in literature. Time is still at its most vital in poetry, and in literature has been tamed and channeled. Without using time and space as guidelines, the boundaries between literature and poetry are harder to identify. What follow are simply tendencies that lean more in one direction in poetry and in the other in literature.

Poetry is a possible technique for writing literature. It is like using painting to decorate the surface of a sculpture: we don't lose the awareness that we are experiencing a sculpture, or that the painting is used to decorate or adorn the sculpture.

In poetry feelings and thoughts tend less to adhere to a well developed character. There is more a direct presence of states of being, something closer to music. An event can be abstracted until just its pith remains, a reaction without the name of the event. As dance prefigured theatre when it told a story, so poetry may be said to anticipate literature when it tells a story. Time is alive in poetry in the furnace of its words. Meaning is time-tempered, conscious of the time it takes to express itself. We were meant to be aware of the words, and watch how they merge in identity with what they mean. In literature time passes to provide the time in which the next event can occur: it is the medium in which a plot can unfold and work itself out. It uses whatever amount in time it wishes in order to say what it has to say. In poetry, how every moment supersedes the previous screams to us, stamps its imprint on every word. Words are more at being created in poetry and are more at being used in literature, language is more settled down. We are more likely to use words as familiar objects in familiar ways, though overall descriptions can be unique. Poetry's images can evolve in non-probable ways in an inchoate space. In literature, we can fade out and fade back in at a later

time, but when we do fade back in, the reality we are presented with is more likely to have evolved from the one before according to the principles of human motivation and everyday cause and effect. In literature the author builds up a picture, the aim being rather more to complete the picture, rather than our savoring how that picture changes during its construction process.

> WITH MUSIC

In literature events happen to a character. In music there is no intermediary that intercedes between what is happening and ourselves, although one could in some sense say that a theme is an entity, that in new settings reacts in new ways. In music we are more likely to take the first statement of a theme as being the theme itself. It is this first incarnation that is said to later undergo "development". In literature it is clearer that no one incarnation in time of a character or h'er personality, including the one met with first, is the *basis* on which future development occurs¹⁰.

Notes

¹ The narrator can claim that s/he did not experience the action directly, and that it was related to h'er by someone else, and that s/he is a second narrator, or narrator once removed. This is often the case with history books.

² In theatre, if an actor sits down on a chair, we do not have to be told this, we see it. In literature we may not only need to be told that the character has sat down, but where the chair is, what it looks like, and in what manner s/he sat down. The physical demeanor of a character often gives us insight into h'er personality. We are blind to this in literature unless it is described to us. Much of what is a given in theatre, in literature depends on words to exist at all.

³ Space can cause the weakened flow of time to double back on itself or jump ahead, or retrace its steps in an eddy, either in the same locale or in different locales (as in the "Wandering Rocks" episode in James Joyce's "Ulysses"). Changes in space can be imposed upon time without regard to the normal pacing of events. By painting, space takes over entirely, and there is no longer a need for any specific ordering or sequence in what we are looking at: space has lost all implication regarding time.

⁴ We often speak of a narrator painting a picture in words. Painting, though, must be content with "narrating" just one event and fixing it in a single unchanging image.

⁵ An author can always rely on our imagination to *complete* any picture, just as we recognize a known object when a painter has given us but a few casual brushstrokes. It is the same when in any field of knowledge when we generalize from just a few sparse facts. It is like the archaeologist who theorizes into existence an entire culture, and predicts many of its habits and mores, based on a single shard of pottery. Sometimes it is better for less to be more. The value in haiku, for example, is that a description is offered of a real event that re-approaches that event not through elongation, but through curtailment, returning towards nothing, towards the moment in which the urge to describe first occurred, catching the description before it takes on its own momentum.

⁶ As an example, consider two events from a story. The second, near the end of the book is described as taking place a year after the first event which we read about near the beginning of the book. If we now turn to the middle of the book and start reading the question arises, at what point in time is the narrator recollecting the portion we are now reading? Is it before or after s/he witnessed the event described at the end of the book? We have no way of knowing. The narration's present and the narrator's present can never be brought into meaningful alignment. Even when a work is set in the future, as in science fiction, it is still narrated as if already witnessed: the future is past relative to the narrator's present, which means too that we can never align our everyday time with the narrator's personal time relative to the story.

⁷ We can be easily misled since we first assume that what occurs next in the story, happened next with regard to itself.

⁸ In film, which is still closer to the middle of the spectrum, the same thing is accomplished by using two different times to film what will purport to be the same time in the work: first with one wall missing and then another, the wall current missing always being behind from where the camera is seeing.

⁹ To achieve this in film, a fissure must be made in time. The conversation is recorded twice. The scene is filmed from the position of one of the characters and then from that of the other. It is then presented as if occurring together. If time retained its full integrity, the camera would have blocked the characters from seeing the other just as any spectator would who came on stage. Film, being closer to the everyday reality than literature, pays more dues to everyday reality.

¹⁰ Perhaps we should also think of the musical theme as a fluid entity in time, whose latest developments are as much a part of what we would term *the* theme as its first form. On the other hand, when we hear the theme for the first time in music it does occur with a clean slate: it has no history. A character in a novel does not appear from nowhere, s/he has had a history up to the point in time when we first encounter h'er. The musical theme comes only with the rhythmic and harmonic clothing on its back. In theatre and literature we can be filled in later about the history that occurred before the first scene.

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