

Title

Temporal insights: The significance of time distortion in a narrative text.

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Master of Arts

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November 2005

SUMMARY

The aim of the dissertation entitled *Temporal insights: The significance of time distortion in a narrative text*, is to study the effects of temporal relations within the novel and how these distortions are experienced by the reader as strategies influencing his/her understanding of and response to the text, thereby indirectly revealing the presence of the author in the design of the text. In fact, one could probably conclude that temporal structuring in narrative texts is a valuable tool deliberately or inadvertently used by the author to manipulate the reader.

Part one of the dissertation accordingly contains some observations on the role of the author and the way(s) in which the temporal deformation of a narrative text may reveal instances of authorial presence.

Part two and the main part of the dissertation is a study of how the three categories; Order, Duration and Frequency; as defined by Gérard Genette, operate within a novel. The chapter division of part two therefore correspondingly reflects three chapters, dealing with the above mentioned topics after having first introduced Genette's method of analysis. In the chapters titled *Order* and *Duration*, the novels used for purposes of illustration are *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and *Resurrection* by Leo Tolstoy, respectively. However, each of Genette's classifications is followed by an investigation of the effects of his categories on the reader's encounter with the novel *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras. In the final chapter of the discussion and illustration of these temporal

categories, that of Frequency, the novel *The Lover* is used not only to demonstrate Genette's conclusions but also to show how the reader's experience of the text is manipulated by the effects of this category.

Part two is then followed by a conclusion, which attempts to tie together observations on the manipulation of the reader and the way(s) in which temporal distortion can be taken to reveal indications of the author's presence as this is inferable from the text.

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Part One

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Gérard Genette, a French structuralist, who wrote extensively on the narrative and its idiosyncrasies and whose theories on temporal relations within the novel I shall closely follow in this study, believed that the meaning of the text does not lie only within the scope of the “disassembling” of the novel’s existent structures, but indeed within the comprehensive interrelatedness of these structures. In his study of the narrative Genette organized the points for discussion and illustration in such a way that various aspects of the novel were incorporated:

The principle behind Genette’s study is that the narrative is a product of the interaction of its different component levels.

[Jefferson & Robey 1991:102]

The analysis of narrative for Genette is in essence firstly, the study of the relationship between narrative text and story (surface and deep structure) of a novel, where he bases his conclusions of this comparative study on the distinction that he makes between the underlying deep structure, the story level (*histoire*) and the surface structure, the narrative level (*récit*) of the narrative text. Secondly, the study of relationships entails a comparison between the relations of narrative text (*récit*) and the narration or telling thereof (*narration*),

since there can be no narrative text (and sometimes no story (*histoire*)) without someone telling or writing it.

Since my focus in this study is on temporal distortion in the novel, and as this concerns the relation between the underlying story (*histoire*) and the concrete narrative text (*récit*), I shall not deal with the relations between narrative text (*récit*) and the act of telling (*narration*) in this study. Having delimited the scope of my study to the relation between *histoire* and *récit*, it needs to be stated that I may find recourse to Genette's notion of narrators and narrative levels and the distinction between narrator and author when discussing the manner in which the author may be perceived to use temporal distortion to manipulate the reader's understanding of and response to the narrative text.

Genette's abstraction of the way(s) in which the narrative is (are) adapted from the story for whatever reason, can be applied to various novels, without restriction. He applied these concepts of chronology and its role in the **now (the present)**, directly to his analysis of the narrative text. In other words he focused on relations between story, narrative text and narration as these appear in the "present" reality of the novel. He therefore did not confine his theory of the role of time to the form of the past, but studied it as a whole through its entire range, inclusive, of course, of the present and the future.

Examples of this procedure could be cited in the way(s) in which the temporal relations of the narrative contribute to the stagnancy or changes, in terms of the regression or progression of characters, events, situations, etc. of the

narrative text; in addition also to the way(s) in which these tenses interact within the narrative and can influence the reader's perceptions and understanding of the narrative text.

The reader's perception shifts as s/he continues reading because s/he is constantly evaluating and observing the events recounted in the text in light of both her/his future expectations and her/his recollection of the past. An unexpected event will force the reader to revise her/his expectations and reinterpret her/his knowledge of the past in terms of the event concerned.

A story is a straightforward recounting of events, of a fictional world, as they occur, in which certain characters, events, situations, etc, receive relatively more or less focus than others. Its main aim, I presume, is to entertain or send a comparatively meaningful message and to be reasonably credible, and that the words originate from the secret—albeit the sometimes under or over developed—source of the author's imagination.

What becomes apparent is that a story [*histoire*] does undeniably need the above-mentioned ingredients, that is story-telling skill and imagination, but what seems to set it apart from the ordinary, say a newspaper or documentary report for example, is the extent to which the author allows the events, actions, situations, characters of the story to be distorted, disrupted or foregrounded in the actual text (*récit*) in order to attain and maintain interest in the story.

An example of such disruption and foregrounding, can be seen, for instance regarding the chrono-logical sequencing of the underlying or primary level of the story—it is fair to say that when an author alters or interferes with this chrono-logical arrangement of the underlying level, it has a major influence on the final outcome of the story’s interpretation and understanding. Why does this latter ingredient have so much power? Perhaps it is best explained as that when an author chooses to write her/his story a certain way, or wishes to send a particular message s/he permit herself/himself the control to either intensify or emphasize certain aspects, characters, events or situations of the story. It is this wish to give a particular emphasis or intensification that urges the distortion that will make a certain aspect more noticeable.

But “what of the narrator?” Yes, the narrator is indeed the teller of the story in the fictional world, but it will serve us well to remember that the narrator is but a tool of the author, and that it is the author who chooses to divide the story (*histoire*) in a certain way. As Genette adroitly explains, when he addresses the question of the authorial role and whether or not the extra category of an “implied author” is necessary in a narratological model:

In narrative, or rather behind or before it, there is someone who tells, and who is the narrator. On the narrator’s far side there is someone who writes, who is responsible for everything on the near side. That someone—big news—is the author (and no one else), and it seems to me, as Plato said some time ago, that that is enough.

(Genette 1988:148)

Most importantly though, as is exemplified in the category of duration, when the narrator adeptly regulates the flow of information s/he is thus regulating the effect of the story, and crucially the author is able, by the utilization of this narratorial tool, to either subtly or overtly draw certain emotional responses from the reader, by allowing the narrator to reveal, imply or omit certain, seemingly influential passages.

The reader's progressive responsiveness to these subjective intensities necessarily complicates his or her experience of a work's narrative rhythms and does so in ways elusive of precise measurement. While the more objective tempo, with its varying but usually ascertainable speed at which fictional clock-time passes, ordinarily presides, there may be certain junctures when the objective tempo is superseded by accumulated subjective pressures, especially toward the end of the narrative.

(Walker 1997:5)

As readers we presuppose coherence in both the content and structure in the underlying story because we are allowed only to see it as a completed whole, and we base our reactions and response to actualization of that story in the novel on this supposition.

However, different from the view which supposes the story—where story in this sense refers to the fictional world—to be a cohesive and logical exemplar of events as they occur in real life, it is by becoming aware of the interference with the temporal elements/aspects of the novel that we see that this is indeed

rather a naïve concept of story, and that some deception on the part of the author is in fact part and parcel of what the word “story” and its concretisation in the narrative text (*récit*) implies. That is to say it is, in truth, artificial and fabricated, whilst allowing, with malicious forethought I dare say, the reader to believe that what s/he reads is natural and real.

In order to investigate this duplicity, Gérard Genette set out to examine the surface structure of the narrative text and its content and how this relates to the content as put together in the underlying story. Genette studied the narrative text under three basic headings, namely: Time, Mood, and Voice. Where the latter two, that also form part of the content and structure of the narrative text, deal, respectively, with (1) forms and degrees of mimetic representation, and (2) the verbal actions and the subject of reporting such actions, and the relations between all the participants in the speech act. For the purpose of this study however, it is in fact the first heading, that of Time in the narrative text, which interests me most, and which in my opinion incomparably facilitates and illustrates authorial manipulation of the reader.

To me, this is indeed an important point of departure, for I believe that we should move beyond the structuralist point of non-involvement and onto the point where theories and theorists ask questions about authorial manipulation of the literary work and try to find possible solutions. Granted that these solutions, if found, will not satisfy everyone simultaneously, but in this case, we move on from the abstract of structuralism and onto a level where the author is held responsible for the manipulation of her/his text.

Where narrative strategies are no longer a very interesting independent study, but a means by which readers are made aware of their potential for manipulation and that this awareness will allow the reader to justify her/his initial spontaneous response.

What this means in essence is that every time that a passage regarding the past or the future is inserted out of its chrono-logical frame, the reader will re-interpret what s\he has read and understood of the narrative text. Because like it or not the reader is affected by any information which lends itself to obviating what the reader has understood of the novel based upon said information already read, even if it is only background information, the latter will put a different slant on how previous information should be construed with the help of the inserted passage(s).

By way of explanation we may refer to the opening chapter of *Wuthering Heights* where Mr. Rutherford first meets one of the two main characters namely Heathcliff, and our initial response to Heathcliff is one of aversion, dislike for this austere, inhospitable and downright rude man. However, when we, with the help of Mr. Rutherford's servant Nellie Dean discover how Heathcliff was maltreated, alienated, and abused by Cathy and her brother, this in some way moderates the reader's initial response to Heathcliff (Brontë. *Wuthering Heights*. 1983).

If the author (Brontë), had started the novel in chrono-logical order then the reader would have been in a position to make a more balanced judgment of the

character Heathcliff, however the element of shock, of surprise would have been forfeited and the artistic quality of the novel compromised, in my opinion.

Again, the temporal relations of the story and the narrative reveal the guile of the author when s/he steers the reader to an understanding which has been modified or softened because of the insight the reader gets by virtue of the analeptic passages:

...the author is outside of narrative time and can manipulate events so that the end influences the beginning.

(Alexander 2002:162)

As explained before, my attempt here will be to show the significance of time, that is, how by the use of Gérard Genette's three temporal categories and their respective sub-sections, the meaning(s) of a narrative can become manifest and how because of these categories a new light can be thrown on an earlier interpretation of a novel. This is my main aim; I have a secondary aim as well. That is to argue that an author can, does, and very often will use these categories of time in such a way that they influence the readers. In other words: narrative strategies, or the temporal deviances in particular, function as a means of reader manipulation, thereby illustrating the communicative power of the author as the creator of the narrative text.

I will start with my second aim—and all that this entails, authorial involvement in the novel. Once this has been dealt with sufficiently for the purpose of this

study, I will attempt to devote the rest of the dissertation to temporal relations as exemplified by Genette and how these function in the novel.

CHAPTER II

REVIVING THE AUTHOR

As an introduction I must admit that the study of the author, here, is of limited scope, authorial presence is discussed relevant to its purpose in this dissertation. That is, what involvement the author has as a generator of meaning in his text. This in itself is a tricky problem because the attitudes toward the roles of the author differ significantly, and thus the question regarding authorial presence will always be a thorny issue. This fact is ensured by the very existence of present and future theoreticians and philosophers.

Noting that the New Critics and the Russian Formalists ascribed only an incidental role to the author, Jefferson and Robey maintain that the structuralist position differs to some extent from a purely formalistic notion of the author. Even though structuralism agrees that the author be excluded as a signifying element to the interpretation of the text, Jefferson and Robey argue that, structuralism differs, nonetheless, from the New Critics and Russian formalists in that structuralism believes that theory is a means that facilitates the exploration of conventions that make interpretation possible (cf. Jefferson & Robey 1991:14-15).

Correspondingly, using theory as a method by which he can ascertain how the interpretation of a text is reliant upon its inherent features and not the intentions of its creator, Barthes (1968) in his essay entitled *Death of the author*, claims that authorial intention in narrative is unsustainable. He further states, “the author is not the true source of meanings because it is the

observer's interaction with the text that is actually determining the part (that seems intelligible and is, at the same time, randomizing the part that seems unintelligible)" (Barthes 1968:146). Whilst discussing the Bathesian position regarding author, in her *Narrative Telos*, Victoria Alexander (2002), expands on Barthes' view, by saying that:

The author's original intentions are not only untenable, but never existed as such because a clear distinction between thinker as a subject and an idea as an object cannot be made: Therefore, there can be no originary intention in the author's mind that directly causes meaning.

(Alexander 2002:3)

I quote Alexander rather extensively as my beliefs on the author as a contributor to the consequence of her/his text, coincide with her ideas on how the author functions. Contrary to Barthes, Alexander claims that the author has an existence, which runs, outside of any information about the fictional world, which allows her/him the power to create and/or confer whatever meaning, or changes occur at the narrative level. The author's intentions consequently become the main point of influence of the narrative. In regard to literature, I deem an author's meaning and intention to be one and the same. Therefore, one cannot come before the other, or cause the other. I think that there are reasons other than final causes, for example, the effects of the interacting elements, which help create the ground of possibility for intentional meaning. However, that meaning cannot be reduced to the individual properties of those elements.

...we as literary theorists, have available a new meaning of selfhood and, consequently authorial intentionality. This new author and the author's meaning are dynamically stable, not static; and deterministic, but not predictable.

(Alexander 2002:26)

Conversely, it is Barthes's compelling belief that the reader constructs the novel's meaning. However, I believe that indicators are written into the novel by the author, which serve to guide the reader toward a certain interpretation of the novel. These indicators are prevalent throughout as the characteristics, which individualize and typify a certain work. A good example of the author's creative power is her/his allowance for more than one spokesperson in a narrative text—typically when one or more narrators usually main and secondary characters, distinct from the author, are allowed to “voice” their thoughts, opinions, etc. to the reader.

As Genette explains, the narrator's role in the narrative is fictive even when it is seemingly taken over by the real author; he emphasizes that the narrator is analyzed with a view to the production of the narrative text. The reader, he says, only has the concrete narrative text in which to search for traces of the narrator. The narrator is recognizable by the “traces it has left, or the traces it is considered to have left” (cf. Genette 1980:213-214). Whether it be a homodiegetic, heterodiegetic, or omniscient narrator the author invests in her/him a prior knowledge which allows her/him to divulge information about the diegetic world that is knowable only by the author, as we see when the characters of the diegesis are described to us. We see that Genette attributes

the characteristics *shown* to the reader—by the narrator—as attributable to the author:

Sympathy or antipathy for a character depends essentially on the psychological or moral (or physical!) characteristics the author gives him, and very little on the techniques of the narrative in which he appears.

(Genette 1988:153)

For instance, in the category of characters in the novel, the author will endow these with certain traits and/or characteristics that indicate to the reader how s/he should understand or (dis) approve of a character, situations or events, these are *portrayed* in such a way that it shows up as either advantageous or disadvantageous to the understanding of certain aspects of the story itself. A second example is that of the temporal relations at work in a novel. As far as time is concerned, it is the author who stands external to the narrative time, and who is thus able to link up aspects which coincide in such a way that the function is to create a particular effect, which the author had in mind.

As an example we can look at Alexander's comments on James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and the similar dreams, which the protagonists of this book share:

Stephen and Bloom are never aware of the fact that they had similar dreams. Therefore, the fact that the dreams seem to come true cannot be attributed to the characters' own beliefs in the supernatural significance of a stochastic resonance between their

two dreams. The separate, simultaneous dreams cannot be causally connected in a physical sense (i.e., there is no physical transmission of dream messages). They can only be meaningfully related to each other by some omniscient intelligence whose experience of cause and effect does not have to respect the narrative's linear time or physical constraints. Thus, the dreams seem prophetic of the intentions of an author external to the sphere of narrative action.

(Alexander 2002:32)

Take for instance how the character Heathcliff in Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* is portrayed; I agree that authorial creation and generation of meaning cannot assume to prescribe how a reader will interpret his character. Whether readers will sympathize or will be disgusted by his behaviour, his violence or cruelty, all this lies in the judgment of the individual, what is indubitable, however, is that the author has written into the character and into the incidents that relate to that character (Heathcliff) certain characteristics which become an indicator to the global understanding of *Wuthering Heights*. Where the reader interpretation is individual and unique to her/him, one can say that inscribed in the novel is a point of focus. For example, when Heathcliff's behaviour becomes one of the focal points of influence to the overall meaning of the text and is thus a point at which the author does generate the meaning of her/his text, by signifying, so to say, at which point interpretation should take place.

The notorious belief about authorial intention is the view that the author determines the meaning of a literary work and that the “correct interpretation” is one that coincides with the author’s intention—it is necessary to point out that I agree with the above definition up to the point of the coinciding of authorial intention and reader interpretation. When the author writes her/his novel or literary work s/he has a certain motivation in mind behind setting pen to paper. There is a message that s/he wishes to get across even if it is only to entertain; to deny this, in my view, is to deny the existence of the text.

As a counter argument the belief that the text exists only as an autonomous work that is open to the interpretations of the reader and that it only gains meaning when read, is fallacious, in my opinion. As a counter argument to the belief of the untenability of the author, I concur with G.S. Morson who in his writings profess that “intention is manifest in the design, and the creative process...” (Morson in Herman 1999: 305). He argues against those theorists who disregard the relevance of the creative process by asking them to obviate the authorial presence of a text, which is “by design and nature processual” (*ibid*). It is a given that any formulated action, such as writing, is motivated by intention, even if the work is processual and has no definite intention which motivates it, Morson states that: “[...] if we are to act at all, at some point we must arrive at an intention” (Morson in Herman 1999:306).

Simply put, the author is the one who writes in indicators, s/he is the one who handles the text in such a way that their specific message does get across, knowing that a variety of readers will respond in as many ways to the literary

work. Even though in most literary works we are ignorant and shall remain so forever in some cases, where the author has died into obscurity or does not explain her/his inspiration for writing the text, this does not mean that there was no authorial intention motivating the text into existence.

However, it should be borne in mind that because there are as many readers as there are responses, we can conclude that the meanings of the work are not restricted to what the author consciously or subconsciously intended.

That is why the author has no responsibility for the meanings, which unconsciously become part of the text. My argument, though, is not solely concerned with what the author does not write but how s/he writes. For if one follows ED Hirsch's argument that "the goal of interpretation is to group or understand the author's intentions" (Hirsch 1976:124-158), then in my view the determining of the message depends on how it was written.

And if one continues this argument even further one can quite fairly say that the author has the means right at the beginning of the text to manipulate her/his text for their own purposes. Yet even when the response does not agree with authorial intention this does not eliminate authorial intention.

Furthermore, this cannot refute that an author has the power on how to regulate and disperse information in her/his text. As Kenneth Patchen, in *The Journal of Albion Moonlight* (1941), says, "I think you will agree that I am alive in every part of this book, turn back twenty, thirty one hundred pages – I am back there..." (Patchen in McHale 1985:197).

I will attempt to further this not so modern argument about the relevance of authorial intention and quote an indubitably perceptive passage

Behind the “truth of the page” –the reality of the writer at his desk – lies the superior reality of the writing itself; but behind the reality of the writing must lie the superior reality of the *act* of writing that has produced it! [...] Whenever some element of ontological structure or some ontological boundary is foregrounded, the author’s role and activity is inevitably foregrounded along with it. Who else could be held responsible for the practice of foregrounding, who else could be credited with the *intention to foreground*, if not her or him?

(McHale 1985:199)

It is exactly what the passage speaks of when it refers to the actual writing process and the choices and selections made by the author, when I make the point that the text or literary work is from start to finish open to the exploitation of the author if s/he so chooses.

By allowing any transgression, for the sake of this study, let us say that of temporal transgression, the author betrays her/his influence by means of the utilization of the elements, which pre-exist the reading of the novel. For instance, even today’s technological period agrees with and allows for the existence of authorial intention. By way of exemplification, one may cite a

discussion in a text on the Internet named the *Hypertext and the Role of the Reader/Writer*; where the author, Ilana Snyder, when speaking of the hypertext and how technology has changed the reader/writer relationship, says: “[...] hypertext is changing our notion of authorship”. She notes that the absence of textual autonomy and centeredness “dispenses the author”. (Snyder 1996:2)

However when she denies the “autonomy of the author” in the hypertext, is she then affirming that the author has had total control in the written text? Is it then reasonable to conclude that the reader too, “who now participates in writing” the hypertext, was formerly—when faced with a written text—confined to the intention and control of the author? By admitting, by implication, I must add, authorial autonomy, Snyder is admitting the author’s involvement and manipulation of the novel, thereby further admitting that the reader was not only aware of said involvement and manipulation but was influenced by it and perhaps participated in it.

Genette (1980:72), says when discussing the temporal relation of order, that the rearrangement of interpolations [...] is obviously motivated by the *narrator’s* desire to have done with the properly worldly aspect of the “Guermantes way” before approaching what he calls the “moral landscape” of “Sodom and Gomorrah”.

What really catches my eye here is that he attributes the power of temporal manipulation or disturbance to the narrator. Yet further on, still on the discussion of order Genette speaks of reader competence with regard to

discerning advance mentions and prolepses, he here states: “Moreover, this very competence is what the **author** relies on to fool the reader by sometimes offering him false advance mentions or snares...”

Just as Genette here attributes the manipulation of the information to the author, another instance of authorial interference can be found in Manfred Jahn’s discussion of narratorial roles. He makes an interesting observation, which concurs with the above view held by Genette; where Jahn accedes to the view that the narrator has information, which s/he has no reason to possess, and consequently can only have been relayed by means of the author: “Apparently the narrator knows all the facts, yet nobody is going to ask her how she came by her knowledge” (Jahn 2005:9).

What I am getting at here is Genette’s apparent disregard of the distinction between *narratorial* power and *authorial* power. If he assigns the “rearrangement of temporal interpolation” to the narrator should the “advance mentions or snares” not be attributed to the narrator too? Because both are intended for the reader to interpret according to her/his competence one may well ask, which of the two, either narrator or author can be held responsible for the temporal disturbance?

It seems that Ricoeur (1980) picks up on this seeming confusing, or confused relationship. He approaches it in another way by investigating the relation between utterance and statement, thereby, in my opinion clearly establishing the authority of the author in designating particular functions to the narrator:

If the time of utterance is examined so briefly and so late in *Narrative Discourse*, this has in part to do with the difficulties involved in establishing the proper order of the relations between utterance, statement and story, but more importantly, it has to do with the difficulty that, in *Remembrance*, is connected to the relation between the real author and the fictive narrator, who here happens to be the same as the hero (...). The narrator- hero's fictive experience of time, because it cannot be connected to the meaning of the narrative, is referred back to the extrinsic justification of the work that the author, Proust gives for, with its interpolations, its distortions and above all its iterative condensations.

(Ricoeur 1980: 86-87)

Genette himself, in his discussion of the duration of the narrative, explicitly attributes the temporal manipulation of *A la recherche du temps perdu* to Proust:

It certainly seems that Proust wanted, and wanted from the beginning, this even more abrupt rhythm, with a Beethovenian massiveness and brutality, which contrasts so sharply with the almost imperceptible fluidity of the early parts, as if to compare the temporal texture of the older events with that of the more recent ones - as if the narrator's memory, while the facts draw nearer, were becoming both more selective and more enormously enlarging...

(Genette 1980:93)

Here there is no longer any confusion between author and narrator, the author, as far as Genette is concerned, is the one who decides and exploits the temporal relations of the text.

Another aspect of the relation between author and narrator is touched upon by Rimmon-Kenan when she contends that even though the authorial role should be recognized, the contents of the novel do not necessarily reflect the ideals or contradictions that the author upholds in real life:

An author may embody in a work ideas, beliefs, emotions other than or even quite opposed to those s/he has in real life, s/he may also embody different ideas, beliefs and emotions in different works.

(Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 87)

Just so, when discussing the position of the author, Ginsburg and Rimmon-Kenan(1999) engage in a highly insightful discussion of what the author means to the text. They expand the role of the author by considering the inherent authorial transgression of “ ‘ inside’/’outside’ borders” of the novel. Therefore accordingly the author operates both within and outside of the text. Without limiting herself/himself to the limits which exist between the real and the fictive world.

What Ginsburg and Rimmon-Kenan propose is that the author should not be designated to a place that is distinct and separate from the text, but rather that the author be seen as having “a relation to a specific which it creates and is

created by” (Ginsburg & Rimmon-Kenan in Herman 1999:72). Precisely in this way does the text, for them, relate to the reader. Because of this interaction between reader-text and author-text, they therefore deduce a triadic relation, by means of which the “reader’s interaction with the unfolding text [results in] intensifying the reciprocal dynamics of the relationship [...] whereby reader expectation can be and very often is modified and adapted” (Ginsburg & Rimmon-Kenan 1999:73).

Thus far, the discussion of the author has not really acknowledged the role of the narrator, and it is not my intention to dismiss the narrator and or his role in the text. There should be no confusion of the role of the author and that of the narrator. The latter acts as agent to the former, and it becomes imperative to clearly distinguish this relationship, as Genette (1980), in his chapter on “Voice” certainly attempts to do. It becomes a question of how the author transgresses the delineation of the so-called “inside”/“outside” borders of the text and how the narrator is limited to operate only within the borders of the fictive world. Ginsburg and Rimmon-Kenan when discussing the author in *Reading Jazz*, unambiguously state that: “ ‘Narrator’, we remember, is part of a model designed to account for textual operations, whereas ‘author’ in our sense, concerns the production of meaning. Consequently whereas the ‘narrator’ is an instance in the text, the ‘author’ looks both ways, inside and outside” (Ginsburg & Rimmon-Kenan 1999:75).

What can be deduced from the above quotation is that the narrator’s knowledge is limited to the fictive world and as such is interrelated with and intrinsic only to the text.

Still confining our discussion mainly to narrative strategies of temporal distortion, we may cite here yet another acknowledgement of authorial presence when dealing with the category of frequency. In a clear allusion to Genette's sub-categories of frequency, he confers to the novelist/writer the power of the occurrence of any of these; Jahn (2005) reminds the reader that:

[...] a novelist can (a) narrate once what happened once or (b) narrate n times what happened once or (c) narrate n times what happened n times or (d) narrate once what happened n times.

(Jahn 2005:57)

The author, consequently, then is the originator and implicitly and explicitly the generator of meaning throughout the text, with the absolute autonomy of control of what is to be included or excluded in the text.

As generator of meaning, Brian McHale, in his *Postmodernist fiction* corroborates the existence of the author as opposed to the author's death; by using Foucault's explanation of the author as a function, that makes it possible for readers to "grasp the subject's points of insertion, modes of functioning, and systems of dependencies..." (McHale 1985: 201).

This preceding discussion serves as a prelude to how the authorial autonomy reveals itself, when the author decides to exploit the temporal relations, or more often than not to distort these relations, in order to compel the readers to modify or change their responses to and interpretation of the novel.

The belief I hold of the author being manifest in the temporal manipulation of a text, is corroborated by Margolin when he says:

Notice that the availability of such knowledge to the narrating instance is itself only an option, and literary retrospective narratives do exist where the narrator dwells instead on his or her lack of knowledge, his or her uncertainty as regards the very occurrence or nature of some crucial past events. On the other hand, retrospective narration is the only form of narration where the unqualified factive claims can dominate and unequivocally define the story world. This is actually one of retro narration, so it is only natural that most authors employing this stance would also employ this mode.

(Margolin in Herman 1999:147)

Part Two

CHAPTER III

THE FUNCTION OF TIME IN THE NOVEL

Time has the unique ability to structure a novel, by situating a text/novel in its specific sphere of influence. Time allows us to know from which vantage point a story is being told. The significance of which resides in the interpretation of the text, which can be relayed to the points in time to which it refers. Which is when the chrono-logical sequence is fragmented and distributed, in such a way that it invites the reader to try to 'locate' a central time from which a narrative is told. Even if the novel does not offer any dates, the reader can then rely on the dispersion of temporal information by analyzing the way(s) in which events and actions are temporally positioned and distributed in the fictive situation. Genette sets out the significance, and one can say, the duality of the role of time and how it functions in the novel, along these lines,

Narrative is a ... doubly temporal sequence... there is the time of the thing told and the time of the narrative (the time of the signified and the time of the signifier). This duality not only renders possible all the temporal distortions that are commonplace in narratives [...]. More basically, it invites us to consider that one of the functions of narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme.

(Genette 1980:33)

In this the third chapter I shall attempt to introduce how the influence of Genette's attitude to the temporal qualities of a novel, be it **order, duration** or **frequency**, can illuminate that which has not been foregrounded by any other means other than **by** the use of time disruption. Genette, I believe offers a systematic means by which a credible temporal analysis of the novel can be made.

Genette's structuralist approach offers a far more systematic methodology, one that is consistent and rigorous enough to afford a precise account of the manifest features of a narrative text and also a secure basis for analysis of the dynamics of reader response enacted by that text as it is experienced during the time-act of reading. Genette's narratology, involving such key terms as diegesis, extradiegesis, mimesis, focalization, iterative and pseudo-iterative narration, has been usefully applied not only to Proust's multivolume novel but also to other complex narratives.

(Walker 1997:2)

The structure of time is such that it draws up the boundaries of the contents of the story in such a way that one is able to perceive and analyze any changes that have taken place.

When the text in its present [the **now** of the text] refers to an event outside of its temporal domain, say for example, past events are introduced into this present, we, the readers know that what is being told, is told with the benefit of hindsight, where the past event, we know, is assured of having a significance on whatever event it relates to in the present.

This temporal interplay not only allows for, but also ensures the emphasis of an event that might have gone unnoticed.

In order to highlight, explain, and facilitate such temporal interplay Gérard Genette created a concept, which starts out by analyzing two levels of a story.

I wish to illustrate that by using Genette's model of these levels of a story, the reading, interpretation, and understanding of a novel reaches a more profound level, which more importantly, is verifiable by the use of his distinctions. Genette contends that these two levels consist of namely: the underlying story level (the so-called *histoire*) and the surface/narrative level (the so-called *récit*).

Here the underlying story level/*histoire* connotes the chronological sequence of events. And the surface or narrative level/*récit* signifies the novel as a finished product that has effected any amount of chronological changes to the original sequence of events. This means that any investigation of the role of time in narratives must account for the essential duality of that factor: on the one hand there is the time of what is narrated (story time) while on the other hand there is the time of the narrative, (narrative time).

Accordingly, Genette's division facilitates the investigation of how the changes that restructure the sequential order of the events in the underlying level of the story affect the reappearance of these events at the surface level, and further how it affects the meaning of the narrative text as a whole.

On these divisions he further distinguishes three major sections, as mentioned before, which categorize the temporal distortions, which take place from *histoire* to the *récit*. His first distinction or temporal categorization refers to how discordance in the novel is caused when the present of the novel is interrupted by the insertion of a past or a future occurrence, this interruption Genette classified as anachrony.

Anachrony is a means, a very fertile means, from which the analyst or reader can draw, it explains how and why temporal interruption or chronological disruption is employed and affects the overall comprehension effect. The anachrony presents itself as a very guileless and innocent means by which the story achieves and maintains the readers' interest.

However, this is in fact very far from the truth. Explicit it may be, but anachrony almost always operates on a 'hidden agenda'. It disguises itself from the unsuspecting, as a supplier of information, and more importantly it often acts as a manipulation tool by which reader opinion can be modified or changed. Sternberg argues that spaces of non-information occur, i.e. gaps, which are to be filled in later, because "all these devices [...] stimulate the reader's curiosity by [...] calling attention to specific gaps" (Sternberg 1978:58).

Furthermore, when an anachrony occurs it can be either in the form of a past/passed event or as an advanced notice. Genette labels these "forms" of interruption/disruption of the <tense> of the novel, the analepse, and the prolepse respectively.

However, Genette's study of temporal relations does not stop here, it continues onto how the *récit* has, apparently, disrupted the even rhythms of the *histoire*. At the level of the *histoire* a certain amount of time is devoted to a certain event, in other words, every event has an attributed duration. Moreover when an event holds significance, as part of a system of the contributing factors which give meaning to the scheme of the novel's autonomy, the *récit*, notwithstanding, alters the duration by allotting a shorter or longer space to an event in the *récit* than it has been allotted it in the *histoire*. Genette terms these alterations in speeds between the *histoire* and the *récit*, anisochronies. Could it be that when the *récit* has reworked the speeds of certain events, that there is now a new significance which weighs upon these events?

It is very important to note that the anisochronies are relevant only to the text in which they appear. Unlike anachrony, which is identifiable in any text, with the anisochrony one has to analyze the typical pattern/behaviour of speed/duration attribution in the *histoire* and redistribution in the *récit*, of a specific novel.

The foregoing explanation sounds more involved and complex than it actually is. Taking Tolstoy's *Resurrection* as an example, here, one is exposed to an embarrassing youthful 'affair' between the servant girl Maslova and the wealthy young prince, Nekhlyudov, of which the sordid end lasted up to the passage of the train on which Nekhlyudov was and for which Maslova was waiting. One could say that the passing of the train was over in a couple of seconds, yet the explanation of its passage takes up more than half a page. Duration here comes

in the form of a scene, to emphasize metaphorically the significance of Nekhlyudov's harsh and dismissive treatment of Maslova.

For the interpretation of this novel, one is fortunate in that the author, Tolstoy, explained his intentions after having written the text and therefore one can gauge the significance of the instances of discordance. As I said before this fortune of authorial explanation does not befall us (the readers) often, therefore it is left up to us to try and sort out the significance of the inserted passages or the differences of rhythms or the amount of mentions that an event goes through from the *histoire* to the *récit*.

The last category defined by Genette is that of frequency, and the concern in this instance is with the number of times an event is (not) mentioned in the *récit*. That is to say the difference between the number of times an event occurs at *histoire* level and the number of times it is repeated at the level of the *récit*. The interesting thing about frequency is that it can be instrumental in the game of time, which resembles a children's game of hide and go seek. Oftentimes the reader is able to tell when there is repetition of an event and then the reader obviously need not take recourse to an involved analysis. However in the case of the non-mention of an event or action in the *récit*, the reader, firstly, has to realize that an event has been ignored or disregarded, and secondly the reader has to seek out the significance of this event being ignored in the *récit*.

In the novel, *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras, for instance, we see that in the *histoire* the episode of the young girl of sixteen when she had boarded the ferry

headed along the Mekong river, and seen her future Chinese lover for the first time, remains a single event. However, in the *récit* this event is repeated more than ten times, thus foregrounding this as a momentous event in the life of the narrator as a young girl. On the other hand, the mother's madness that holds all three young children captive, and which is prevalent throughout the *histoire*, is mentioned very infrequently in the *récit*. It is up to the reader to investigate, to search out that which the author wishes to foreground most in the reader's mind and to what extent. The analysis of this novel with regard to frequency will be discussed in detail in chapter VI.

All things being said, the novel's autonomy should not be taken over by its temporal relations, because the other aspects such as character, focalization, etc. contribute to the novel's meaning as well. Having conceded this however, it remains a fact that the temporal relations of a novel are not only traceable throughout every aspect of the novel, but are imperative to every aspect of a novel. The aspect of its temporal relations between the *histoire* and the *récit* touches the essence of what I am trying to say here, which is that all events and characters rely on a certain time frame, where their causality has an impact on the interpretation of the novel. In this regard I concur with Kafelnos' notion, "...that in narratives manifest as text, whether fictional or not, representation, shapes, interpretation [occur] according to [a] causally linked sequence" (Kafelnos in Herman 1999:41). Margolin goes further in contending that the constitutive element of a novel is present within the configuration of the "teller-viewer instance" and that the "temporal told" implies, too, that the narrative

inexorably shows the absolute complexity of the linear temporal plane (cf. Margolin in Herman 1999:165).

Hence it follows then that Bal (1985), Genette (1980), Fleischmann (1990), and the like, claim that temporal distortions can be extraordinary tools of focus and emphasis regarding the foregrounding of the significance of certain events.

If readers approach a text expecting a certain order in which the events might unfold in a novel; i.e. that narration starts at the beginning and sequentially order events up to the end – then consequently the (mis)-ordering of events

a-chronologically will have the effect of disorientation and subsequently of focusing the attention on that event which is picked out of its chronological sequence. One could say that the ‘ostranenie’¹ effect has been achieved, because it is at this point at which this event receives special attention as reasons are sought to explain the significance of the a-chronological presentation of these events.

As Susan Fleischmann (1990:133) explains:

Playing with sequential ordering is obviously an important convention of literary fiction, it is a means of drawing attention to certain things, bringing about aesthetic and psychological effects, showing different interpretations of an event, and indicating subtle differences between expectation and realization.

¹ A term coined by the Russian Formalists, meaning the effect of making a familiar object strange.

In attempting to show how the application of Genette's three categories of time enriches the reading experience and the interpretation and understanding of the novel, and how these categories of time contribute to a sustained analysis of the literary work; the following chapters of this dissertation will concentrate uniquely on the categories of order, duration and frequency, for which I will draw on the following novels respectively: *Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë, *The Resurrection*, by Leo Tolstoy, and mainly, *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras.

CHAPTER IV

ORDER

A manifest means of temporal disruption

4.1 Introduction

Within the fictive world of the story the readers rely on information, which will inform them of the yet unfamiliar world of the novel that they are reading. However, because the novelist has to introduce so much information “within the limits of a certain fictive period” (Sternberg 1978:1); this information which creates the uniform picture the writer wishes to present, compels the writer to follow an order which matches her/his intent on how and what should be introduced at certain points. As Sternberg adroitly explains:

It is thus unavoidable that he [the author] should intersect the lives of his dramatis personae at any given hour. His problem is only to decide which hour it shall be and in what situation they shall be discovered. In either case, the reader as a rule has no idea what is going to happen next, nor does he know anything about the characters figuring in the story.

(Sternberg 1978:1)

By “given hour” Sternberg refers here to the temporal point at which the novel introduces information, referring also to the sequential link of events, situations and characters. Order in the novel can be seen as the chronological sequencing of events. It is largely perceived as the means by which the reader can situate events in the time of the novel. Simply put one can say that order is the ‘what

happened when' explanation of a situation, event, and character occurrence, within the novel. Sternberg's argument is that because of the focus on the deviations of temporal order, which occur within the novel, the significance of its chrono-logical use is often obscured. It is for this reason that Sternberg emphasized the *exposition* of events in a narrative text, regardless of whether or not the exposition in the *récit* deviated from the expected chronological sequence in the underlying *histoire*.

Yet the very reason why, according to Genette, focus should fall on the deviations is that these more often than not, highlight, emphasize and foreground the significant elements of the text, which more likely would have remained undiscovered or at best ignored. Indeed, it is as a contrary measure that the groundbreaking analyses of Gérard Genette's theories on temporal relations have aided numerous theorists who wish to study and focus on the divergent temporal nature of many novels, and as such has enabled these theorists on how to systematically break down the function of time in the novel. Genette has been able to identify and categorize the three major temporal movements, at work in any novel at any given time; these are: order, duration, and frequency.

As Paul Ricoeur, reiterates that what is important in Genette's study of the "three essential determinations—order, duration, frequency—are the discordances between the temporal features of the events in the diegesis and the corresponding features in the narrative" (Ricoeur 1980:83). Accordingly we will start with the temporal movement of **order** present in the novel, where a

comparison is made of the chrono-logical sequence of events at the story level (*histoire*) and the interruption or disruption of this sequence at the discourse level (*récit*); this disturbance of chronology Genette terms anachrony.

Below will follow a discussion of anachrony and its sub-categories, which fall under temporal order, where I shall further exemplify the theoretical study with the novels *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras.

4.2 Analysis of Order/Anachrony

For the first part of this chapter both *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras will be used, to demonstrate specific aspects of Genette's theories regarding anachrony. Moreover, for the second part, only the novel *The Lover* will be used to illustrate and illuminate how the theories identified by Genette, function throughout a novel, how these are achieved, what the effects are of temporal disruption, and why such manipulation was necessary.

It would be a fair question if one were to ask how the chrono-logical placement of events really affects the interpretation and/or understanding of any particular novel. An examination of the temporal disruptions present within a novel is hugely dependent upon the chrono-logical deviance between the (*histoire*) story and the (*récit*) narrative, ultimately it is solely dependent on this deviance. It would thus be imperative to the understanding of this study to clarify the difference between the (*histoire*) story and the (*récit*) narrative.

Genette (1988:13), succinctly explains the difference between the two levels, thusly: **Story (*histoire*)** consists of the chronological order of the events of the story where event (a) is followed by event (b) which in turn is followed by event (c), and so on, whereas the **narrative text (*récit*)** consists of the rearranged events, in this case event (c) can be followed by event (a) which then could be followed by event (d), and so on, and the narrative text with these changes in chronology, forms the novel as it stands when it is finished (Genette 1988:13). As Ronald Walker explains in terms of the structural levels of the story, he reaffirms Genette's postulate about ***histoire*** and ***récit*** by stressing the importance of the arrangement of events in the act of reading:

In order to understand the ways in which the shaping of "virtual" experience in a given novel animates and directs the reader's cognition, we must look beyond the macro-structural level to the more immediate level of smaller, local units of discourse. In doing so we move closer to the subjective, moment-by-moment, expectation-bound yet finally unpredictable process of reading itself.

(Walker 1997:5)

On this point of the relevance of the temporal re-distribution of *histoire* events in the *récit*, Meir Sternberg (1978) in *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering* claims that starting *in medias res* can create more unity in a narrative² because it provides a starting point from which events can be told. Rather than beginning at the beginning of the *histoire*, which can become confusing, as

² 'Narrative' refers to the novel or the completed literary work.

focus tends to spread and numerous extraneous matters may be added as the focus has yet to be delineated, it is preferred by some authors and more exciting to readers if the story has an *in medias res* beginning.

Taking *Wuthering Heights* as an example, one can say that if Emily Brontë had allowed her focus to wander by going back to before Heathcliff's arrival, to when Catherine³ and Hindley Earnshaw were still babies, our focus as readers would spread according to the context of their growing period from that point and thus to the various influences filtering through. When we meet them for the first time they are introduced to us without too much history. Brontë shows us them as privileged children who enjoyed and often expected privilege as their due. This view already shadows the introduction of Heathcliff, where the reader may see them as spoilt and negligent in their attitude toward the waif. If Brontë had not delimited her focus to them as older children, and introduced Heathcliff at a point where the Earnshaw children were still young enough to be more accepting; then Heathcliff may have blended in quite well, for the already entrenched behaviour would perhaps not have started.

This practice or 'selective procedure' makes it possible for both reader and writer to have a text where they are working within the scope of the parameters set at the point at which the *in medias res* starts. A further advantage lies in the fact that the reader can follow the story, allowing her/him to comparatively read how events occur at the two levels of the text.

³ Henceforth I will refer to Catherine (née) Earnshaw as Catherine and her daughter Catherine (née) Linton as Cathy.

Mendilow, in his *Time and The Novel*, insists that where the causal sequence is highlighted or interrupted, reader interest and attention are increased and renewed; “[i]n proportion therefore as the causal element is emphasized, the tempo is accelerated [...] promoting his eager anticipation of the course of events” (Mendilow 1952:125).

A propos order, Genette studies too the “connections between the temporal order of succession of the events of the story and pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative” (Genette 1980:32). He adds significantly of these events, that these must be studied as “.... the extent that story order is explicitly indicated by the narrative itself or inferable from one or another indirect clues...” (*ibid*). It follows from the above that it is part of the reading act to reconstruct the underlying story from information available to the reader via perusal of the narrative text only.

The dissonance between the events at story level and those at narrative level, Genette specifies as anachronies. He claims that anachrony is not a new invention and that it existed as far back as the *Iliad*: “We will thus not be foolish enough as to claim that anachrony is either a rarity or a modern invention” (Genette 1980:36). Thus he shows that temporal manipulation of the narrative is a very old custom.

Under the heading of anachronies, Genette (1983:40) devises another two categories, namely the analepsis “... any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the past of the present of the story....”; and the prolepsis

“... an evocation in advance of an event that is to come later in the story”. What Genette makes evident in his study of the prolepsis and analepsis present in the story he analyzed is that these are interdependent in creating the continuity and meaning of the novel and that the events of the *récit* are dependent on their chronology at the story level for their meaning and continuity at the narrative level. Sternberg believes that the distribution of events in their a-chronological order in the *récit* can be seen as:

...(i)ntriguing, allusive, disconnected expositional motifs [which] rather whet than allay our appetite for [...] past adventure, for it only makes the specific informational gaps (as well as the large temporal blank that subsumes them) more glaring than before.

(Sternberg 1978:58)

At the narrative level the events of the story's present rely on temporal interruption for the clarification of how they (the events) inter-relate at the present time in the narrative text. Forster further states that:

Every action or word [...] ought to count, it ought to be economical and spare, even when complicated it should be organic and free from dead matter. It may be difficult or easy, it may and should contain mysteries, but it ought not to mislead. And over it (that dull glow of the mind of which intelligence is the bright advancing edge) will constantly rearrange and reconsider, seeming new clues, new chains of cause and effect, and the final sense (if the plot has been a fine one) will not be of clues or chains, but of something

aesthetically compact something which might have been shown by the novelist straight away, only if had he shown it straight away it would never have become beautiful.

(Forster 1949:84-85)

In the last part of this quotation Forster admits to the authorial manipulation by means of order; by saying that the author withholds information in order to interest the readers and make them aware of the aesthetic qualities of the novel.

What Genette's theory does is to temporally 'locate' and then designate the flux of the disturbance of the narrative, when he moreover takes the anachronies of analepsis and prolepsis and looks at how far back or far forward from the present of the narrative these go. The amount of time in which they refer back or forward is called **reach**, and the length of this reach, that is, how long it lasts, its duration if you will, is called the **extent**.

The best way to explain, I think, is to apply Genette's category of anachrony and its sub-categories to a novel, so that we can see this temporal function in action, so to speak.

First though, we shall take a look at how the analepsis works and then how the later divisions of **reach** and **extent** affect the analepsis.

4.2.1 Analepses

We know now that an analepsis is defined as when the present of the narrative is interrupted and a past event is inserted. Genette maintains that if a past occurrence is inserted it should be investigated in terms of its reach and extent. If for example the story's present is in, say, 1990, and the inserted analepsis occurred in 1986 then it has a reach of four years, if this analepsis lasted up to 1988 then it has an extent of 2 years. For the study of the analepsis it would perhaps be an advantage to study it in conjunction with a novel, which exemplifies the role of this function. I find the narrative text *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras, is one which does rely quite a lot on its past for an explanation of the present, thus providing a temporal interplay which will hopefully illustrate how and why its temporal disruption creates the tensions existent in the present situations.

In his *Narrative Time*, (1980: 121), Paul Ricoeur argues convincingly that “the **temporality** of two opposing actions [] have the ability to create and give time movement and tension”. This is illustrated in Duras's *The Lover*, which starts *in medias res*, and which is essentially an analeptic novel, where any proleptic formulations rest upon and form a link with and into various overlapping chrono-logical adaptations. Such effects cause the reader to focus attention on the interpretation of the present situation, thereby obviating the temptation of glancing over or totally ignoring a certain passage. Throughout, reader curiosity regarding the family and social situation in which the focal character, the young white girl of fifteen and a half finds herself, is steered towards the social

situation in which she finds herself. Furthermore, the reader is confronted, time and again, by the way(s) in which the young girl starts and continues her relationship with the thirty year old Chinese and how this further affects her status, her position and her life.

What has gone before is in fact retrospective sequencing which has to coincide with the *in medias res* beginning of the story, as said period of focus is predetermined by it. If the retrospective telling focuses on another aspect or totally separate or different events, the effect could be one of confusion, of scattiness, of absolute irrelevance. Thus the focus of the *in medias res* beginning of the narrative determines its focus throughout, allowing the author to justify or condemn by means of a “backward glance”.

Genette goes into a further division of these subsections when he states that, if an analepsis which occurred outside of the present of the narrative, as for example if the analepsis goes to 1986 and it does not join into the present of the narrative which is say 1996, then this analepsis is external, its function is purely “to fill the reader in on [...] one or another ‘antecedent’” (Genette 1980:50). For example, in the novel, *Wuthering Heights*, reference is once or twice made to the mother of Catherine and Hindley Earnshaw. The mother’s role is one of an ineffectual and ineffective woman, whose role is to support, and to remain submissive to the will of her husband, thus she assumes a subordinate role in the whole of the narrative, and has no effect on the characters, events, situations, etc, of the first narrative. Here is a prime example of Genette’s belief vis-à-vis external analepsis.

We see that if an analepsis occurs within the period of the present of the narrative, e.g. 1990, say in January of 1990 and lasts to April 1990, then said analepsis is internal to the present of the narrative. The internal analepsis does influence the first narrative because "... their temporal field is contained within the temporal field of the first narrative" (Genette 1980:50).

However if an analepsis occurs outside of the present of the narrative and extends onto a later stage of the present then this analepsis is mixed. In this case the analepsis will start say in 1980 and join up with the present, which is 1986, and will extend into 1988 at which time it serves as an epilogue to the novel whose temporal span stopped in 1987.

Moving on, we notice that once again Genette divides into further sub-categories, now he specifies that the internal analepsis can be further categorized as heterodiegetic, which deals mainly with a character recently introduced whose past needs filling in, yet this does not necessarily have any bearing on the first narrative. The other category of the internal analepsis, is distinguished by Genette, as the homodiegetic internal analepsis, this type of analepsis not only interferes with, but is unavoidable in the first narrative. Once more Genette sub-divides these homodiegetic internal analepses as; (a) completing homodiegetic internal analepses, these are "... temporary omissions which are later completed..." (Genette 1980:51), and, (b) repeating homodiegetic internal analepses, here the narrative (sometimes) retraces its own path.

Duras fluctuates between the two types of internal homodiegetic analepsis. As an example of the first type we see in, *The Lover*, that the relationship between the young girl and the Chinese is referred to without detail at first, an enormous amount of time is spent on the initial meeting between the two, then later on the young narrator provides a little information about the Chinese and his background, so that at first when the Chinese man is presented as an unknown and his presence is not explained, the reader is left a gap. The best way to gain insight into the importance of an analepsis is when Genette expounds on the significance of the analepsis by saying that “... the most persistent function of recalls [...] is to modify the meanings of past occurrences after the event” (Genette 1980:56). The example of Hareton, the son of Hindley Earnshaw (in *Wuthering Heights*) is perhaps best. We initially see, through the eyes of Lockwood, that Hareton is a beastly slob, rude and unsophisticated. Yet we by virtue of the analepsis, modify our opinion of him, when we learn that Heathcliff had set out to turn him into just such a man in order to avenge Hindley’s abuse of him (Heathcliff). Ironically, Heathcliff claims that Hareton had he not been Hindley’s son, would have been exactly the right son and heir for him.

This “modifying recall” has two functions here; firstly it shows us a very nasty trait, which makes up a large part of Heathcliff’s character, and secondly it forces the reader into sympathy for Hareton, which hitherto had been absent. And it is this second function, which underlines the impact of this analepsis. Genette says that there can be a “...subtle dialectic between the ‘innocent’ narrative and its retrospective ‘verification’ ” (Genette 1980:61).

As far as this statement is concerned I believe that it is relevant to every narrative text. For whenever any temporal interference occurs that means then that the text gives an “innocent” version of events as they are seen in the present of the text. In *Wuthering Heights* this refers to Lockwood’s observations during his visits at Wuthering Heights, the “retrospective verification” occurs when through Nelly Dean, we see that these observations are modified and/or even changed by virtue of past occurrences. In addition, our opinions and judgments succumb to the temporal manipulations of the author.

What this boils down to is that the so-called ‘innocent narrative’ referred to by Genette, is one in which observations are made without the benefit of any temporal support or reference, for it is purely of the present; whereas ‘retrospective verification’ refers to the way in which analeptic passages inserted into the narrative lend justification for whatever observations/judgments were made, based on the information of the first narrative Sternberg states:

As we soon discover, one reason for this manipulation of the reader’s attitude through the tendentious distribution and ordering of expositional material is that unless his sympathies and expectations are directed in the desired way, he may not react properly to the complicated alterations of hope and fear that lie ahead.

(Sternberg 1978:59)

Sternberg expresses here, what I have maintained throughout, and that is that temporal disruption between *histoire* and *récit* is one of the foremost forms of authorial manipulation, assuring a reader response, which has been created by the signs and indicators, which the author has placed at different intervals in the novel. Moreover, the tampering with the sequential or chronological order of events can be one of the most powerful tools, as this can and does delineate a focus, thus limiting the reader to that which the author considers to have the most import. For instance, by delineating a path, in *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë made it easy for both herself and the reader to retain focus.

The *in medias res* beginning of the novel, touches on aspects that will be the core focus where analepsis is the essential supplier of information, and thus gives the author more control of the relevance of what to include and what to ignore. In keeping with the above limitation of focus of the *in medias res* beginning, the novel introduces to us all the important players almost at once: Heathcliff, Joseph, Cathy, Hareton, Catherine (as a ghost) and Edgar by his connection to Thrushcross Grange. From this point on, anything and everything that is told, is told from the point of relevance to these characters, introduced *in medias res*.

4.2.2 Prolepses

The advance evocation of an event in the narrative is much less frequent than the evocation of the past. Genette categorizes the prolepses in much the same way as he does the analepses, up to the categorization of the internal homodiegetic prolepses, where we find the (a) completing internal homodiegetic

prolepses, these fill in ahead of time a later blank; and (b) repeating internal homodiegetic prolepses, which double a narrative section still to come—these occur infrequently and only as brief allusions. Genette reminds us that we must not confuse these anticipations in the narrative with mere “...*advance mentions*, simple markers without anticipation, even an allusive anticipation, which will acquire their significance only later on and which belong to the completely classic art of “preparation” (Genette 1980:75). Genette claims that “all prolepses are of the partial kind”, often interrupted in as abrupt a way as they were begun...(cf. Genette 1980:77).

4.3 The function of temporal disorder

Just as Genette’s study concentrated on how chronology in the novel is disrupted and what effect it wishes to achieve herewith, so too did Sternberg (1978) in his *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* study the ways in which temporal tampering affect the novel and how it was achieved. The importance and function of time lie in its ability to give structure to the narrative, to the way in which it connects various elements of a narrative into a whole, centered around its temporality. Sternberg states that:

The tendentious delay, distribution, and ordering of information can thus be exploited not only for creating and sustaining narrative interest but also for the equal dynamic control of distance, response and judgment...

(Sternberg 1978: 97)

Mendilow, shares the exact same focus as Sternberg, that of the successive intake or processing of information:

It requires time for the eye to pass from point to point, and the impression of seeing the whole is really produced by the rapid succession of views, perhaps even seen from different angles. Even where the whole can be viewed at once, just one part is covered by the focal vision the rest comes only within the scope of the marginal vision.

(Mendilow 1952:24)

In this context *Wuthering Heights* does not fail, for the angles presented allow the reader to concretize that which s/he is being confronted with. In the first example of Hareton's behaviour we have Lockwood's affirmation of his moroseness, then we have Nelly Dean's explanation of this rudeness, next we see through Nelly Dean's eyes how Cathy viewed Hareton, and lastly his cousin Linton Heathcliff shows how he experiences Hareton's attitude. This means that we are not presented by Mendilow's explanation of the word after word order, but we are confronted with the sequential tellings of a character trait which lends confirmation to both Sternberg and Mendilow's belief that the impression the reader has, of seeing the narrative text in its entirety, is in fact created by the rapid sequence of views, perhaps even viewed from varied perspectives.

However, Genette further states that the disorder of a narrative does not only occur when its chronology has been interrupted, but also when an event is

atemporal, that is to say, has no temporal reference at all; it still gives structure because if an event is *unplaceable* “ ...[it]⁴ need only be attached to some other event, this event which is ‘ageless and dateless’ ” (Genette 1980:84), can still be defined as an achrony. Genette states that, even when an event “...[has] no connection to the temporal order of events composing it [...] and its sequential order depends essentially on the [geographical] location of sites, even then it rests on a very different kind of temporality, that is, “ on the opposition between the time taken to reach these sites.” (*ibid*)

What becomes interesting in such temporal analysis as set out above, is that the manipulation could have exactly the opposite effect in that the hoped for sympathetic, empathetic, or understanding support which the analeptic revelations should generate ends in a rather harsher criticism. In this context nothing prohibits the readers from re-enforcing their original opinions and/or judgments of Heathcliff, that it is his cruelty that ensures (a) the failure of his romantic aspirations toward Catherine, and (b) that his cruelty ensures his loneliness and bitterness. For example in Chapter 27 where Cathy wishes to escape Heathcliff's obsessive imprisonment of her and Nelly Dean:

... Heathcliff glanced at me a glance that kept me from interfering a moment. Catherine (Cathy) was too intent on his fingers to notice his face. He opened them suddenly and resigned the object of dispute; but ere she had well secured it, he seized her with the liberated hand, and pulling her on his knee, administered with the

⁴these brackets [] indicate my insertions.

other a shower of terrific slaps on both sides of the head, each sufficient to have fulfilled his threat, had she been able to fall.

(Brontë 1983:249)

Looking at this analeptic passage in this context, the reader may consider herself or himself justified in disliking or even hating Heathcliff.

A case here in which the reader may regard the events told *in medias res* as indicative of a character trait that the narrator wishes to soften in order to gain sympathy but the latter ploy may lack conviction, because it presents itself as the only means to gain the sympathy of the reader. One can say that these temporal disruptions can become a double-edged sword by which the trustworthiness of the writing becomes rather doubtful.

Inevitably the author is faced with the credibility of these retrospective justifications for the missteps of the character, whose actions contribute to the way in which s/he is perceived *in medias res*, ultimately the author has to be able to safely gauge the readers' acceptance of the retrospective justification, bearing in mind that these could have major effects and consequences on and for the other characters.

What does this mean in terms of reader appreciation of authorial—or should it be narratorial—intention? Does it mean then that the retrospective “explanation” of a character's behaviour is now to be disregarded, or to be regarded as some irrelevant add-on? Which somehow or other fleshes out the

story providing hidden or missed information to the reader. Fortunately, Genette does value the latter and all other types of retrospection, and therefore he makes it imperative that a thorough study of the function(s) of all types of retrospection within the novel be studied as relevant to the interpretation and understanding of the novel. Paul Ricoeur explains that in the Proustian novel, *À la Recherche du temps perdu*, the use of the analepsis is not 'gratuitous', because it is governed by the meaning of the work as a whole. For me the recourse to the analepsis plays an important integrating role whereby the past influences the present, thus the present is perceived in a different light. In view of the fact of this interdependence, which affects the understanding and interpretation of the text's global significance, one can say that the analepsis is governed by, in addition to governing the effects of the novel (cf. Ricoeur 1980:83).

4.4 Analysis and summation of *The Lover*

The novel, *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras shows after a deeper reading that there are various themes at work here, albeit mostly about familial and personal relationships, there are also sub-themes dealing with morality, materialism, violence, abuse and hypocrisy both social and personal. Such a novel does not merely hold our attention for a brief space of time. It forces us to think. Where readers are steered onwards not only by curiosity, but also by intelligence. Because of its varied themes, and its central ideas, which may be stated directly or indirectly.

Never has a novel presented itself so innocently, and been so wrung with complicated and intricate depths. There are so many levels of reading and interpreting in *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras that, a superficial reading will not be adequate to the understanding of the complexity of the novel. And in accordance with this demand of a more profound reading as was necessitated for this analysis.

The more profound the reading of *The Lover* becomes, the more it brings into play the chrono-logical aspect of the novel, which highlights the intricacies of the relationships at play, the social taboos, the personal examination and the soul searching. As we see how the mother encourages the young girl to take money off men:

Her mother won't stop her when she tries to make money. The child will say: I asked him for five hundred piastres so that we can go back to France. Her mother will say: good, that's what we'll need to set ourselves up in Paris, we'll be able to manage...The child knows what she's doing what the mother would have chosen for her to do, if she dared, if she'd had the strength, if the pain of her thoughts hadn't been there every day, wearing her out.

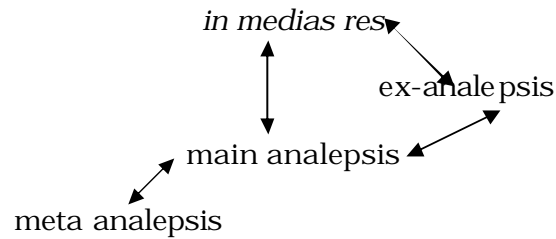
(Duras 1985:28)

Yet contrarily, the mother is disappointed when she discovers the daughter's excellence in French, further on we see also the mother's reaction to the girl's ambition of becoming a writer (cf. Duras 1985:27-28). The exploration of these contradicting behaviours, which become apparent on analysis, tears apart

whatever zones of accepted behaviour, we believe, exist not only in family but also in social relationships.

Another instance of the ways in which Duras portrays the almost macabre and weird family relations is shown where the older brother tries to rape the old servant Dô, because this happens long before the narrator's present, but future to the young girl's present; it serves to further embed the unnatural circumstances of the young girl's childhood. This "advance mention" or internal homodiegetic prolepsis is again evidence of Duras' non-conformity in terms of temporal categorization. One sees also how contradictory her words are on p.29 when she speaks of the feelings of love and hate which dominated this highly involved and emotional family. Confusion of how to temporally identify certain moments of the novel is such that I feel obligated to veer from Genette's identification of chrono-logical disruptions, especially the use of the analepsis, which forms the basic viewpoint from which the story is told.

At this point I wish to introduce a formulae, which will hopefully facilitate the explanation of the relevant to and fro movement of the analepsis. My reason for proposing that the analepsis be further divided into **meta-analepsis** and **ex-analepsis** respectively is that Genette's theory does not, in my opinion adequately allow for the regression from the point at which the main analepsis occurs nor for the point of regression future to the main analepsis. The extension of the analepsis, which I am proposing, can at first, best be described by the following diagram:



Firstly I need to explain that the novel I am analyzing necessitates this proposal and diagram, but these are not necessarily restricted only to this novel. An explanation of these terms is perhaps the best place from which to start. The meta-analepsis is the point of analepsis that regresses beyond the main analepsis. In the novel—*The Lover*—the *in medias res* narrator goes to a point in her past at which she made a very significant choice; this period when she was fifteen and a half years old when she—this white French child—decided to become involved with a thirty year old Chinese lover—this is the main analepsis. For it is this that influenced and often forced her to make choices and decisions which have led her to her present situation. However, she goes from this analepsis into a more regressive analepsis in order to explain her choice as a fifteen-year-old girl, and this regressive analepsis is then the **meta-analepsis**. Where **meta** here refers to an analepsis within an analepsis. It further allows the analyst to extend the word **meta** so as to incorporate as many regressive analepses as possible. Here I believe one can perhaps argue for Genette’s internal homodiegetic analepsis—which is concerned with events affecting the primary narrative—however it should be borne in mind that the internal analepsis is homodiegetic only when it deals with the “same line of action as the first narrative” (Genette 1980:51). Or as a further argument one could perhaps propose the hypo-diegesis, which concerns the story levels, this

too touches at but inadequately does not refer specifically to regressive but connected and causal past happenings. It rather refers to stories within stories: “[...] a hypo-diegetic world, one level ‘down’ from their own” (McHale 1985:113). My proposed term is specific to the consequential regressive analepsis, which is why I believe it to be a more appropriate way of facilitating the continuous reference to the events, which occurred before the main analepsis.

The second proposed term, is easier to explain, perhaps, because it refers to an area that has no specific or particular point of allusion. Which has up to now been referred to only in terms of reach and extent in order to particularize the date of occurrence of (a) certain event(s).

The term **ex-analepsis** refers expressly to the point at which the main analepsis interrupts itself to move to a point future to itself and closer to the present. It moves out of the main analepsis to explain how the latter affects and often causes the choices, decisions, and actions of the **ex-analepsis**. The latter in turn directly or indirectly causes the situation of the present. The effect is metaphorically comparable to someone mentally and/or emotionally ascending and descending a ladder. We again take recourse to *The Lover* to illustrate how this ex-analepsis functions and see that the narrator uses it quite often.

For instance when she moves from the main analepsis of her love affaire with the Chinese onto a period after her main analepsis but before her present, where she explains and describes the superficial lifestyle of the French society

in which she lived, and within which existed the most criminal and abhorrent Nazi conspirators.

What really stands out about these ex-analepses is that these have seemingly no connection to the main or meta-analepsis, nor a more obvious connection to the present of the novel. These ex-analepses are apparently irrelevant, yet they indicate so many things which have influenced her past, they could be indicative of a comparison between the gloriously luxuriant lives of these Nazi conspirators and the life that her brother, her hated and despised older brother may also have lived as a conspirator. The relation between the events supposedly refers to the hypocrisy of these conspirators wanting kindness, closeness and acceptance from their fellow human beings, whilst they (as did her brother) live off the dehumanization of so many.

Duras, achieves a chrono-logical jaggedness, a jarring that attracts highlights and foregrounds significance. She places her indicators for interpretation re the importance of an event in such a way that the reader feels dislocated temporally speaking, and in trying to place her/him self the reader tends to focus more rigidly on the contents of the novel. Analytically one focuses also on how the events relate and on why she has chosen to present her novel in this way. Duras excellently uses time to jump attention, yet or maybe because of it, succeeds in signifying that this point of the narrator's life had been a life altering experience, and also succeeds in getting across that it is the past which has left her, as she was after she arrived in Paris—cynical, hard, terrified, yearning yet unable to form any long-term relationships, consequently she is

now “ravaged” as an old woman, her past has consumed her and is presumably still consuming her. To such an extent that it confuses even her for a moment for on p.31, in an analepsis she says that she received the following news: “your brother died in three days, of bronchial pneumonia. His heart gave out. It was then that I left my mother. [...]. Everything came to an end that day, ...” Yet on p.60 she speaks of having left her mother 11 years before her younger brother’s death; “My younger brother died in December 1942, during the Japanese occupation. I’d left Saigon after graduating from high school in 1931.” From the point at which she left off about the death of the younger brother, she skips to a point far forward, to where her “son was two years old”, p.33 — she the narrator was living in Paris and her mother, older brother and maid-Dô were moving to Paris. From this point the jaggedness of chrono-logical jumping becomes flea-like, for she goes from a point nearer to the present to the time of the younger narrating I and moves in between these time zones at will, giving the reader no hope of finding a chrono-logically linear comfort zone, but rather inserts passages which illuminate cause for the effect already written about.

As a start to and example of this jaggedness, we see firstly “the mere advance mention” of which Genette speaks in his *Narrative Discourse*, and immediately thereafter we see an analeptic prolepsis:

...it is in this house she hears of his death...She’ll know about before the telegram comes, the night before, because of a sign only she saw and could understand, because of the bird that called in the middle of the night, frightened and lost in the office in the north front of the palace my father’s office.

(Duras 1985:35)

Because this is the only significant mention of the father, one cannot immediately understand the significance of this passage. Yet later on, one gauges its importance, had he been alive the dominating parental role of the mad mother may have been neutralized—the young girl would perhaps not have had to sell herself to get money, the older brother would perhaps not have wielded his sadistic power so freely and the younger brother might have felt more protected and secure. Again Duras, *par excellence* has chronologically disrupted the narrative in order to communicate the importance of this event and its consequences.

From this “analeptic prolepsis” we are now into the most significant analepsis of the novel, what is in fact its main story, that is the analepsis dealing with the young girl of fifteen and a half, and the older Chinese man. She speaks of how they met, the fact that the man is twice her age, how he sees her clothes, this daring outfit and was trembling with fear for her; then asks her to get into the limousine with him, and this is then the fateful point at which their affair starts. The intrusion of the older narrator into the analeptic tale of the young girl has the function of providing information, which may bring insight at a very personal level. As we see in connection with this paragraph of the initial meeting between the two lovers: where the older narrator explains to the reader what the young girl of fifteen has realized as soon as she accompanied the Chinese, which is that she has sacrificed her life as she knew it and created a distance from everything familiar and loved:

I'll have a limousine to take me to the high school and back to the boarding school. I shall dine in the most elegant places in town. (And I'll always have regrets for everything I do, everything I've gained, everything I've lost, good and bad, the bus, the bus-driver I used to laugh with [...] the family in Sadec, the awfulness of the family in Sadec, its inspired silence.

(Duras 1985:38)

Notice how once again Duras turns convention on its head, where the analepsis should bring clarification for the present, she interrupts the analepsis by using the present to bring clarification for the past "As soon as she got into the black car she knew: she's excluded from the family for the first time and forever" (Duras:39).

Genette contends that "the retrospective telling of an event is many times a means by which to manipulate the readers' response"—persuading them to feelings of understanding and/or sympathy and at the least to feelings of justified actions yet on p.41 of the novel we gain insight into a different aspect of the young girl and we start to see why the aged narrator felt the need for "retrospective justification". It gives insight into the callous and calculating way in which she uses the Chinese, knowing that he suffers because she doesn't love him: "She could say she doesn't love him. She says nothing." - She asks, demands rather, that he treat her at fifteen and a half; "as he usually does with the women he brings to his flat. She begs him to do that" (Duras 1985:40-41). May this then be one of many reasons why this retrospective narrative was

necessary? Is she perhaps hiding her perverse characteristics behind the family she portrays as evil and hateful—letting them take the blame for her decisions and choices? Is this why she feels the presence of her mother in this bedroom, why her image is ever-present? Conscience? Guilt? Nothing explains why at this moment, in this first love scene between herself and the Chinese, she thinks not of him but of her mother. Duras has integrated, again a time plane with an unrelated thought/image creating questions that hold, intrigue and disturb.

After a very thorough description of this bedroom scene, the present of the narrating “I” of the young girl goes into a meta-analepsis again, and she speaks of what her life was like before she met the Chinese. After hearing of her past the character of the Chinese is exposed to us; when he explains why at first he was terrified of her family, the real reason was hidden behind the so-called superficial ones—that is—behind the fear of their racial superiority and his inferiority, his relationship with their daughter/sister who was under age, no his real reason reverts to his cowardly self, it was because he was afraid they might expect him to marry the girl. Yet later on their treatment of him frightened him because they treated him inhumanely—the girl included. However he used her also; for him it was a choice between his father’s money, status and power that this implied and the so-claimed love he felt for the young girl. He chooses to retain the money and the power with the encouragement of the young girl. Another trait of the young girl is revealed, we see that in this corrupted and corruptible young child there is an unrepentant and profound honesty not only toward the Chinese but also in her life. As when she tells him that she would probably not have been interested in him had it not been for the

money and power. This interplay of emotion, lust, greed, and violence prevalent in the young girl's life forms the basis of the more dominant and more unsettling themes of this novel, and it is rendered even more so by Duras' handling and manipulation of anachrony. By so doing Duras binds, in both senses of the word, the novel into a complex *mélange*, which causes the reader to think and ask questions. The reader fears to utter an instant judgment because the retrospective insertion may alter or even nullify the first interpretation.

Thus we see that Genette's postulation that claims that these retrospective novels have the ability to change or modify interpretations is in fact true. Duras, along with many other novelists, has proved it so.

I feel however that even if retrospection can and often does neutralize a prior interpretation or understanding the reader should remain wary of accepting what is in the last instance—as in this novel—the narrator's understanding of a very significant yet extremely subjective moment of her life. Once again we see the contradictory attitude which the girl displays and her defiance when she takes up with the Chinese against everyone's wishes, yet as a result of her conformity to her family and society's attitude she treats him as a non-entity when she is with her family.

We all treat my lover as he⁵ does. I myself never speak to him in their presence. When my family's there I'm never supposed to

⁵ 'he- refers to the older brother

... speak to address a single word to him. Except, yes, except to give him a message.

[...] My lover's denied in just that weak body. In my brother's presence he becomes an unmentionable outrage a cause of shame who ought to be kept out of sight I can't fight my brother's silent commands. I can when it concerns my younger brother. But when it concerns my lover I'm powerless against myself. Thinking about it now brings back the hypocrisy to my face...

(Duras 1985:55-57)

Again this insight of the girl's treatment of the Chinese reflects badly on her. Should we as readers suppose and in retrospect indulge her and forgive her because she acknowledges her wrongness for it was her conformity to family, which made her hypocritical and cruel? Even when she mentions the elder brother's behaviour, his rudeness this exacerbates rather than excuses her callousness. Is her selective defiance, a means by which she can satisfy her baseness, whilst pretending loyalty? Just as she tries to justify her behaviour, her cruelty by saying that they always behave this way. That their first instinct is to destroy therefore they behave this way.

I'll explain when we are together again in the apartment. I tell him my elder brother's cold insulting violence is there whatever happens to us, whatever comes our way. His first impulse is always to kill, to wipe out, to hold sway over life, to scorn, to hunt, to make suffer.

(Duras 1985:58)

From the explanation or justification of her callous cruelty toward the Chinese, the girl goes on to describe the physical abuse she suffered at the hands of her mother, with the encouragement of her elder brother. The hatred and violence existent in this family is expressed here with terrifying intensity:

I know my elder brother's glued to the door, listening, he knows what my mother's doing, he knows the girl is naked, being beaten, and he'd like it to go on and on to the brink of harm. My mother is not unaware of my brother's obscure and terrifying intent.

(Duras 1985:63)

This sadistic pleasure of both elder brother and mother shows once again the abnormality in which the girl and her brothers were raised, it goes a long way in explaining the brittle defiance of the young girl, perhaps too explains the choice of her first lover who is unacceptable to the family in many ways and for many reasons.

After speaking of the violence, which is mostly implicit and only rarely out rightly shown there is only one description, of wholesome and unadulterated happiness which the girl remembers clearly—this falls within the context of the meta-analepsis—when as a young child she, her brother and their mother were sluicing the house by the river. Their elder brother was not there and their mother was “very happy”. But their happiness at that moment too was marred when they remembered their mother's madness, her mood swing from hysterical happiness to absolute despondency and depression: “The two smaller

children, the girl and the younger brother, are first to remember. They suddenly stop laughing and go into the darkening garden” (Duras 1985:65).

This pattern of snatched happiness, which was momentary at best and which immediately descended into the morbid expectation of an unbearable despondency that would always come is a significant pointer for the reader. This attitude, or self-belief that happiness was short and its repayments long and anguished, this was perhaps why the girl chose the Chinese, it was almost a self fulfilling prophesy, where she knew that regardless of the shared passion and pleasure, ultimately they would separate and live unhappily ever after. As she says, “I feel a sadness I expected” (Duras 1985:48), this expectation accompanied her life as the leitmotif accompanies music.

In the meta-analepsis, when explaining their moments of childhood happiness, she emphasizes this foreshadowing, and ever present sadness; “... we were children who laughed, my younger brother and I, laughed fit to burst, fit to die” (Duras 1985:65).

These transitory phases of her life linked almost exclusively to the meta-analepsis dealing with her childhood where her first impressions and experiences of life were formed. We see once again that the narrator has convincingly created a justification or is it an excuse upon which she falls back—conveniently perhaps—at moments when she withdraws or withholds her love and kindness and lashes out cruelly.

This stance regarding the narrator and her past may be perceived as harsh and critical, perhaps yes, but one feels sympathy too with the absolutely devastating experiences she has had living with an insane mother and extremely cruel elder brother, having no-one to fend for her rather she was the one fending for her younger brother who was, in fact, older than her. Continuing with the dominant theme of immanent sadness, one distinguishes that two opposing forces are at work in *The Lover* in that love and hate dominate here.

Firstly it is the love between the girl and the Chinese, where this love is in fact a betrayal, for it is doomed and therefore in itself and in these particular circumstances dooms the two lovers. And paradoxically their love leads to a hatred one for the other, because their love is illicit, disgusting to society and their respective cultures and families, and because of this, they in turn feel an underlying hatred toward one another and their helpless love.

Secondly, the hatred in the girl's family is expressed through cruelty and violence and blunts their longing for normality and love. It is by means of anachrony that the interplay of these two strong emotions and their consequences are not only highlighted, but also stunningly emphasized. Duras was able to foreground how the dominance of an unacceptable love and ill-disguised hatred careened inevitably to destruction. For example, the love the children felt for their mother, whose madness resulted in their hatred and fear for her. The love felt for the lover, whose social and cultural status necessitated rejection. The love for the younger brother whose weakness and cowardice resulted in pity and a need for release.

We see that even though the girl fears her mother's madness above all else, she cannot not love her. "And suddenly I think I hear her running behind me, and suddenly I'm sure someone's after me. Still running, I look round, and I see. It's a very tall woman, very thin, thin death, laughing and running. [...] My memory is of central fear" (Duras 1985:89). Yet she speaks of her love for her mother so simply and so poignantly when she says: "My mother, my love..." (Duras 1985:26).

This book is a journey throughout where the present narrating "I" is looking over her life and goes back to the turning point, from which she tells of how and why she had made certain choices and decisions. Because it is a first person retrospective novel it is highly subjective and alternates mainly between explanation and justification, and delves into the innermost feelings that motivated her, and regardless of her inner turmoil, presents herself in a bad light. For example, when she describes her own actions and reactions toward the lover, at the meals that they shared with her family or even when they are alone, sometimes her cruelty and callousness are uppermost yet she does not steer away from it nor does she deny her actions. A second example is her description of her desire of H el ene Lagonelle she does not try or succeed to hide her baseness. There are points at which she is excruciatingly honest yet her journey to my mind follows Genette's prophesy that most retrospective novels aim to justify past actions to modify interpretations in order to motivate a positive understanding attitude in the reader.

In this tale, Duras has expressed the haunting nature of regret for things lost, for love lost and has ensured that the novel not only challenges the reader intellectually, but that emotionally one is poignantly moved by the passion and misery of the plight and life of the young fifteen year old girl coming to terms with her “crossing over” from childhood into a world of love, lust, desire and heartbreak as the older narrating “I” looks back to a past which formed her present.

The Lover is therefore one of the more enriching types of retrospective novels, one could say that it has taken on—quite successfully—the *ostranenie* effect of the Russian Formalists. Whose belief was that making a usual occurrence strange by giving it a new angle, would result in its being foregrounded in the audience’s mind; Duras by her unstructured and seemingly unrelated insertions has made the reading not only entertaining but more profound because of the thought and emotional provoking element which is caused not only by the unrelated events but also by the unrelated chronological placements. To the utmost effect has she been able to sway reader opinion and interpretation, where even if she cannot change it she attempts to challenge and moderate the initial understanding of an event, situation or character, her entire story is one of retrospection searching for illumination and peace in her old age.

We have seen through the study of order that a novel is and can be highlighted in ways, which demand attention and continuously assign different meanings to whatever the author considers important or significant. This emphasis is given

weight by the author's ability to manipulate the temporal order, in such a way that a different or even entirely new light falls upon an event or situation or character that might have remained unseen.

Instead of communicating a certain piece of referential information – an incident, a motive, a situational or psychological datum, a general canon probably – at its “natural,” logically and chronologically determined place – the author chooses to withhold it for some time (thus creating a gap), to draw at will the reader's attention to its absence by holding the gap open (thus stressing the original violation of the fabula order), and finally to divulge it at an opportune moment (thus closing the gap in a way that again deforms the chrono-logical sequence.

(Sternberg 1978:51)

As we have seen in both *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Lover*, the chrono-logical disruption present in both, leads to a reading in which interpretation and understanding are continually challenged and/or shifted, neutralized or changed. Meaning is highlighted and emphasized in such a way that readers constantly have to refer to chronology to realize and concretize their interpretation with regard to the universal understanding of both narrative texts. As, Gwynn and Blotner summarily explain the significance of anachrony and the interaction of the past, the present, and the future, which are all participating in the creation of a story that is at once exciting and intriguing.

"To me, " he famously said, "no man is [only] himself, he is the sum of his past. There is no such thing really as was because the past is. It is a part of every man, every woman, and every moment . . . And so . . . a character in a story at any moment is not just himself as he is then, he is all that made him. . ."

(Gwynn and Blotner in Walker 1997:3)

CHAPTER V

DURATION

Rhythm as a means of focus and emphasis

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter as in the previous one I shall be using two novels with which to (a) demonstrate Genette's theory of duration, where the novel *Resurrection* by Leo Tolstoy will be used to exemplify each segment of Genette's analyses; and (b) where the novel *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras will be studied to see how duration affects the interpretation of the novel.

But, first we have to take a look at what duration is, what in essence it consists of. Is it simply a question of how long a story lasts? Perhaps honestly and succinctly the answer would be 'Yes'; and the matter can be put to rest. But can it; are the variations of duration present within a novel not so integral that further investigation is necessitated? I feel that it is, for is it not necessary to find out why the story has slowed down over a certain segment yet it hurried over another, what is the intent, what narrative purpose does such altering speed serve. When we study the duration of a novel, we look at it comparatively, according to Genette's theory, where we see how the temporal duration of events at the level of the *histoire* are presented in the spatial duration at the level of the *récit*

This can become problematic as there is no consistent means by which we can predict that because, for example, segment A took one hour in the *histoire*

therefore it will spatially be presented in 60 lines in the *récit* and it will take the reader 3 minutes to read. This impossibility to predict the representation of *histoire* duration in spatial terms in the *récit*, has led to many scholars trying to find a useful means by which duration can be studied at both levels. As we see how Shlomith Rimmon explains in her review of the French version of Genette's *Narrative Discourse*, which appeared in 1972, that it is difficult to transpose the concept of duration from the "the temporal plan of the *histoire* to the spatial plan of the *récit* [...]" for the simple reason that there is no way of measuring the duration of the *récit*" (Rimmon 1976:45).

There is absolutely no means by which a rate of reading can be determined beforehand, by means of which one is able to predetermine the required spatial length equal to the time of the event occurrence. Genette too denies the predictability of duration, even though it is possible to establish a relationship between *histoire* and *récit* on the basis of story time = length/duration of an event in the *histoire* comparable to its presentation in the text or narrative time, i.e. the length of textual space that is allotted an event. Genette argues that even if this formula is plausible and applicable, it is not always a reliable means of measure (cf. Rimmon 1976:45).

Regardless of all these detractions, Genette held if we presume an equal point of reference, then we can deduce that there are two major forms into which the duration is altered. Firstly the pace can be accelerated and secondly decelerated. The first or accelerated form is divided into two further forms of duration and Genette named them thusly:

5.2 Categories

5.2.1 Ellipsis

This represents a maximum form of acceleration – “null *récit* duration corresponds to some diegetic duration”. Genette further states that the ellipsis can be divided into 3 further categories:

- [a] Explicit ellipsis—when the text either before or after the event had been omitted, refers to it.
- (b) Implicit ellipsis—when the text infers the omission of an event.
- (c) Hypothetical ellipsis—when “the presence of an ellipsis is only revealed in retrospect by an analepsis” (Rimmon 1976:46).

In what turns out to be the most tumultuous moment in the spiritual and physical lives of the two main characters of the Tolstoy story; Prince Nekhlyudov and Katusha (a.k.a. Maslova, a.k.a. Lubov), the author chooses to employ the ellipsis. In the moment when the protesting innocence of Katusha is taken away by the lustful craving of the young Nekhlyudov, we are confronted by an open moment. We see how differently they viewed the approaching consummation of their feelings:

Nekhlyudov stood a long time without moving, and waited to see what she, not knowing that she was observed, would do. For a minute or two she did not move; then she lifted her eyes, smiled and shook her head as if chiding herself, then changed her pose and dropped both her arms on the table and again began gazing down before her.

He stood and looked at her, involuntarily listening to the beating of his own heart and the strange sounds from the river. There on the river, beneath the white mist, the unceasing labour went on, and sounds as of something sobbing, cracking, dropping, being shattered to pieces, mingled with the tinkling of the thin bits of ice as they broke against each other like glass. There he stood, looking at Katusha's serious, suffering face, which betrayed the inner struggle of her soul, and he felt pity for her; but, strange though it may seem, this pity only increased his desire. Desire had taken entire possession of him.

(Tolstoy 1972: 82)

The suspense of what happened at that moment is relieved in the next paragraph, it qualifies as an explicit ellipsis. Yet this act of love or lust on the part of Nekhlyudov led, in a very direct way to Katusha's downfall, because after she fell pregnant, she was shunned by Nekhlyudov's aunts, where she worked as a companion and maid to the old ladies, she became ostracized as a "fallen woman" and chose what she as a young poor girl saw as the only way open to her, she became a prostitute. The entire analepsis, which directly changes her whole life, which leaves her standing now, in the present of the novel, accused of murder, is elided from the story. How cunning, that this significant event was chosen to be omitted, where the anticipation and consequences of the act are told in detail. The author here subtly shows his power, by allowing the reader to see what only he is prepared to show, and manipulates the reader to seek evidence of the two characters' experience of that event in that moment.

Justifiably, I would say, these passages serve to foreground the omitted event; the reader is directed toward a certain expectation and at a different level, is let down. The ellipsis holds significance, in the way that it is used here; the ellipsis is a concealment of the most important event in the story, because all the other significant moments of the story follow directly from it.

Isn't it strange, that the catalyst, which catapults an innocent, loving girl, almost directly into an extraordinarily base life, is totally omitted, and only referred to? Yet it serves the purpose here of heightening the interest, necessitating the question "Why?", subconsciously or maybe consciously the reader is intrigued to find the reason for the omission.

5.2.2 Summary

Here segments of the *récit* are shortened in terms of their duration in the *histoire*. It can serve as either a relief from detailed scènes and pauses or as a build up to either or both of these. It is a rather mistaken belief that the only purpose of the summary is to act as a platform between great and moving scènes, where it never realizes any significance other than its backdrop effect to the scènes and pauses. This is in fact a highly fallacious belief, because the significance of an event may be hidden in the shortened events, where various details are omitted, these might reveal or conceal an important act or speech, which might reduce or increase the anticipation/interest of the detailed scènes and pauses. This is not the only important function of the summary; its second function is its large contribution toward the rhythm of the novel, because of its ability to accelerate the narrative text, whether it be normal acceleration or the

concentrated acceleration—defined by Tamar Yacobi (1988) as telescoping. In the latter case, an extraordinarily long event is expressed in as short a space as possible. In fact it becomes a question of what not to include, one asks here how the monopoly of duration within the novel relates contextually to its universal message. It can be argued that within a novel summary and its more intense form—telescoping—may aim to disrupt, distract, contradict, emphasize, or simply neutralize the main state of being of the narrative text. These postulations are applicable to every aspect of duration, within any novel, yet because of its dependence on contextuality, varies in the way that it is applied in different novels.

As we know by now, rhythm is exclusively contextual therefore the summary really comes into its own when it is used as a relief or anticipation to the longer passages of pause and scène.

In Tolstoy's novel referred to above, there are not many summaries, yet when these occur they are not, as one might expect, exclusively analeptic in character and imply more toward atmosphere and emotional content. In the novel the summary very definitely indicates the feelings prevalent in the courtroom and more importantly the profound complexity of Nekhlyudov's emotions. Four pages are covered with the twenty-seven paragraphs describing all the details of the external examination of the:

...(e)normous, fat sullen, and decomposing body of the merchant- who is the murder victim- and who had been making merry in the town'. The infinite

loathing that Nekhlyudov felt was increased by the description of the corpse. Katusha's life, the serous liquid oozing from the nostrils of the corpse, the eyes protruding from their sockets, and his own treatment of Katusha, all seemed to belong to the same order of things, and he felt surrounded and wholly engulfed by things of a like nature...

(cf. Tolstoy 1972: 75-76)

Compared to the foregoing detailed attention to the report, where 1 paragraph of the report is covered in about three pages, the fact that the 27 paragraphs are concentrated into 11 lines brings more into focus the emotional reaction of Nekhlyudov. Aiming in fact to foreground these emotions rather than the report of the external examination of the merchant's corpse, which is contextually relevant at this point.

Indeed Tolstoy has chosen a novel way of deflecting focus by way of summary. Pulling summary from its traditional role of interrupting the scènes and pauses without being or having any significant effect, Tolstoy at times creates a new role for it, as in the above case, where summary is portent with emotion, highlighting atmosphere rather than focusing on the physical fleeting description which was the reason for this summary.

5.2.3 Pause

Here one finds a maximum form of deceleration – “some segment of the *récit* corresponds to null diegetic duration” (cf. Rimmon 1976:46). Referring to Proust's use of iterative descriptions, as well as descriptions which “never evades the temporality of the story” (Genette 1980:100), because the latter

correspond to sites where the main character, Marcel, may stop to contemplate, Genette does not regard such instances as pauses in the normal understanding of story time being brought to a standstill while discourse time is allowed to digress. However, instances of contemplative thinking are exactly the points at which there are no forward movements in the *histoire*; instead it stops and spreads sideways as we, the readers, consider the thoughts and opinions of the narrator or character. And if this is not essentially a pause, according to Genette, where NT (narrative time) $\circ\circ > ST$ (story time), then a more adequate term should be found to explain such an interruption of the rhythm of the story and which of course adds to and alters the universal rhythm of the narrative text. In this case where NT (narrative time) $\circ\circ > ST$ (story time), what happens is that the RT (reading time) is side-tracked. Although there is no progress in either the *histoire* or the *récit*, at that point, the reader is absorbed in the reading of the mental activity of the character or narrator, and is re-interpreting and re-evaluating according to what can be called, the “narrative aside”.

In Tolstoy's *Resurrection* a very telling quote challenges Genette's notion that character/narrator thought or mental reflection in the story does not slow down the action. In this description the focal character Nekhlyudov is invited to a soirée, and he attends it straight after he had finished his jury duty, where because of a small but significant omission they (the jury), committed Katusha to four years hard labour in Siberia. Here follows an excerpt of how he felt about the entire situation:

Nekhlyudov had come here in order to distract his thoughts, for he used to like being in this house, both because its refined luxury had a pleasant effect on him and because of the atmosphere of tender flattery that unobtrusively surrounded him. But, strange to say, today everything in the house was repulsive to him – everything: beginning with the door-keeper, the broad staircase, the flowers, the footman, the table decorations up to Missy herself, who seemed unattractive today and affected. Kolosov’s self-assured, trivial tone of liberalism was unpleasant; as was the sensual, self-satisfied, bull-like appearance of old Korchagin, and the French phrases of Katerina Alexeyevna....

“Shameful and horrid, horrid and shameful!” he repeated to himself, not only about his relations with Missy, but about everything. “Everything is horrid and shameful,” he muttered, as he stepped into the porch of his house.

(Tolstoy 1972:122-131)

His frame of mind is not receptive to the superficiality and ostentation, which he finds there. This very long segment of 9 pages seems to be a pause, because it definitely stops the action of the story, whilst acting as a further motivator to the mental and emotional changes that Nekhlyudov is undergoing. This is but one of many similar mental reflections and emotional reactions present in this story, in which the descriptions constitute a pause, by halting the story and making NT °° > ST.

Tolstoy uses the pause as a subtle guide to reader response. Usually the pause acts, for the reader that is, as a mental and/or emotional resting spot between

the action(s) of the novel, yet Tolstoy subliminally—one could say—infuses into the pause so many of the character's thoughts and feelings that the reader is in one way or another affected and influenced by it. Equally he uses the pause as the character's taking-off point, where her/his reflections often propagate a different or progressive course of action.

For example, at the beginning of *Resurrection*, where Prince Nekhlyudov is contemplating his surroundings, the readers are shown in detail his entire boudoir and are told about his bathroom habits, etc. In addition, it is while he is confronted by his untold wealth, shown off by his surroundings, that he decides to adopt a new way of life, one that is less materialistic and more spiritual and altruistic. All of this, takes place within the pause itself, yet his thinking forms an additional part of the pause, it becomes, what I would call, a “narrative aside” one where detail is not omitted but added to, it is just that another level has been added. Where we see not only what the focal character shows, but also what he thinks at the time of our perception, we, the readers, are at once confronted by two levels of seeing.

In his discussion of Genette's four categories of duration, Seymour Chatman (1974:359) suggests that this mental reflection above be termed “Stretch”, the “reverse parallel to summary”. He added that, “Stretch” as he terms such mental activity, accounts for “ the discourse-time, which is longer than the story-time”. However, Genette disallows this “reverse parallel” because he argues, it is the use of descriptions, which make discourse-time exceed story-

time, and thus this “stretch” is in essence a pause. It is only that the pause is prolonged by a scene.

This is a quite reasonable argument if one refers to the illustrations, which follow in the discussion of the scène. Tolstoy’s use and exploitation of the pause-scene-pause mix, which coincidentally—I assure you—exemplifies the validity of Genette’s refutation and rejection of the “stretch”.

What Chatman terms the “stretch” has to do with the long periods, within the pause, that is spent on a character’s thoughts, fantasies, etc. The term “stretch”, as it is used here, implies that this mental activity pushes against the theoretical boundaries, which define the limits of the pause. However, seeing that it is the imagery of mental reflection that is depicted in this so-called “stretch”; what is of significance in my view is that it is the inclusion of this mental detail that makes discourse-time exceed story-time, which means that, in this case we are dealing with a scene within a pause. We see that Genette concedes that it is anything but a continuous pause, with a varied description, indeed Chatman’s quote of Genette’s original French statement regarding this term, explains quite succinctly how he (Genette) viewed it: “*scène ralenti*” (Chatman 1974:358); quite literally this term means *slow-moving scene*. One can argue then that the scene, which is included in the pause, creates part of the pause, and as such there is no “stretch”, the two become an autonomous whole.

5.2.4 Scène

Here the duration of a segment at the level of the *histoire* is comparatively represented in the *récit* to approximate such duration spatially. In this novel the scènes and pauses are interwoven where the one flows from the other and you are not aware that a change has taken place, it is presented in such a way that one can mistakenly call it one description, as we see on pages 40-42 of Tolstoy's text. This quote occurs in the context of the President of the court swearing in the jury members, and calling up the priest:

The old priest, with his puffy yellow pale face, his brown gown, his gold cross, and little medal laboriously moving his stiff legs beneath his cassock, came up to the lectern beneath the icon. The juryman got up and crowded toward the lectern. "Come up, please," said the priest, pulling at the cross on his breast with his plump hand, and waiting until all the jury had drawn near.

This scène is immediately followed by the pause:

This priest had been in office for forty-six years, and was preparing to keep his jubilee in three years' time, in the same manner as the archdeacon had kept his a short time before. He had served in the Criminal Court ever since it was opened, and was very proud of having sworn in some scores of thousands of men, and, in spite of his venerable age, of still continuing to labour for the welfare of the Church, of the Fatherland, and of his family, to whom he expected

to leave, besides his house, thirty thousand rubles in interest-bearing papers. It never occurred to him that it was unseemly for one in his position to make men take oath on the Gospels, which forbid the taking of oaths. It did not at all trouble him; on the contrary, he liked this familiar occupation of his, through which he often got to know nice people. It was not without some pleasure that he had now made the acquaintance of the celebrated advocate, who inspired him with great respect by having received ten thousand rubles for that one case against the old lady with the enormous flowers on her bonnet.

This pause is again immediately followed by a scène:

When they had all ascended the steps of the platform, the priest passed his bald head sideways through the greasy opening of the stole, and having rearranged his thin hair he again turned to the jury. "Now raise your right arms in this way and put your fingers together thus," he said in his tremulous old voice, lifting his fat dimpled hand, and putting the thumb and two fingers together as if taking a pinch of something. "Now repeat after me, ' I promise and swear by Almighty God, by His Holy Gospels, and by the life-giving cross of our Lord, that in this work which," ' he said pausing after each phrase—"Don't let your arm down; hold it like this," he remarked to a young man who lowered his arm—"that in this work which..."

There is nothing startling about the scène, except in the way that Tolstoy uses and exploits it. The function of the scène, here as in other places in this novel is

not that of deceleration, but in fact, accelerates the novel merely by the description of action, even that of the slow deliberate actions and speech of the characters in this novel. In this way the scène occupies a unique role, it is now moved from its traditional role of “dramatic concentration”, where a typical scène consists of the portrayal of long drawn out details, sometimes, laboriously recounted, in order for the author to give a “true” account of certain events.

Now, Tolstoy has moved it into the sphere of movement, not only because of how it reflects the actions which take place, but more importantly because of the position it occupies, when it is placed immediately after a pause or closely between a number of pauses.

What the above discussion of the four categories and their examples of duration show is that of all three temporal categories as defined by Genette, —it is order, frequency and duration—we see that only duration is and must be studied unique to its application in any novel. That is, one cannot decide beforehand how duration will function, or be exact in how it will be applied. Assuredly one can say—for order—that if event (b) takes place before event (a) then there is chronological disruption, so that event (a) will now be seen as an analepsis, and this statement is then applicable to any novel. Of frequency one can say that if event x which occurred once at the level of the *histoire*, is repeated many times over in the *récit*, then we have a repeating narrative, and again this statement can be applied where relevant to any novel. Yet duration is relevant only to a particular novel. The events occurring at the level of the *histoire* are not limited in the time taken to present them at the level of the *récit*.

In order to see how the duration of any novel affects that novel and how its functions will alter the effects of a particular novel, I will now move from the discussion of the different categories of duration and study the novel *The Lover* to see how duration is applied concretely, to bring about different aspects, meanings, and interpretations.

5.3 Analysis of Duration in *The Lover*

When we consider Genette's three categories of "time", then duration it would seem is most able to provide insight into a novel, because any analysis is based upon and its effects are relative, only to that novel. In *The Lover* by Duras, duration plays an indexical role, she manifestly uses duration, more especially the two categories of scene and summary which she chooses to oscillate between; to point to or indicate whatever she considers significant in or to the context and interpretation of her narrative text; as for example in the passage below:

I've often been told it was because of spending all one's childhood in too strong a sun. However, I've never believed it. I've also been told it was being poor made us brood. But no, that wasn't it. Children like little old men because of chronic hunger, yes. But us, no, we weren't hungry. We were white children, we were ashamed, we sold our furniture but we weren't hungry, we had a house boy and we ate. Sometimes, admittedly, we ate garbage, storks, baby crocodiles, but the garbage was cooked and served by a houseboy,

and sometimes we refused it, too, we indulged in the luxury of declining to eat.

(Duras 1985:10)

The indexical role of the summary of their lives shows up not only their poverty, but more importantly the snobbery that went along with it. Here the rhythm of the narrative is short and sharp, explaining in 11 lines all of 15-18 years of life as the girl experienced it. It focuses sharply on the superficiality that existed, where they would rather be seen employing a houseboy than having money for food; it shows too, the hardships the children had to contend with so that their mother could keep up the front of being superior. Duras' choice not to turn these experiences into either a pause or a scene strengthens its effect, for the summary "telescopes" onto those feelings, which make the experience of the girl tangible to the reader.

Her use of duration, which is sometimes obvious, but many times, as in the above illustration, is used discreetly exploiting it in subtle manipulation, guiding the reader to partake in a certain view; a view, which most certainly should coincide with her intention.

One can see how skillfully Duras is able to vary the duration within the story, how she equates the length of one section where it turns into a scene, with another section where it turns into a summary. In the following we find two examples thereof:

My ageing was very sudden. I saw it spread over my features one by one, changing the relationship between them, making the eyes larger, the expression sadder, the mouth more final, leaving great creases in the forehead. But, instead of being dismayed I watched this process with the same sort of interest I might have taken in the reading of a book. [...] And I've kept it ever since, the new face I had then. It has been my face. It's got older still of course, but less, comparatively than it would otherwise have done. It's scored with deep, dry wrinkles, the skin is cracked. But my face hasn't collapsed, as some with fine features have done. It's kept the same contours, but its substance has been laid to waste. I have a face laid to waste.

(Duras 1985:7-8)

Here approximately 12 lines are spent on the appearance of her face, and the message is implied by the length of time taken to describe it. The significance—of how the face reflects the inner changes—comes to the fore when this passage is read comparatively with the summary below:

I remember my younger brother's courses in book-keeping. From the Universal Correspondence School – every year every level. You have to catch up, my mother used to say. It would last for three days, never four. Never. We'd drop the Universal Correspondence School whenever my mother was posted to another place. And begin again in the next. My mother kept it up for ten years. It wasn't any good.

(Duras 1985: 9)

The lack of application and discipline implied by the inconsistency of study by the children, by the mother's constant change of workplace, and the insecurity engendered by such instability is reflected in this summary. The brevity of the summary demands that only significant aspects be included, those that are dependent upon what the narrator wishes to convey about the mother's attitude toward her children, and their life, and these influences on their lives. The summary here is a direct means by which the reader can gauge information relevant to the message of the situation as the narrator sees it. Just as the face in the first quotation is 'laid to waste' so too does the mother's impassiveness toward her children lay their lives to waste. Here once again Duras, is by no means heavy-handed in guiding the reader to come to a certain conclusion—in fact one can say that the relevance of the second example to the first, is rather obscure. She compels the reader to seek a link between the two, not only because they follow one another, but because of the way she has employed (and exploited) the two categories—[summary and scene]—of duration.

We see that, she (Duras) is able to attach significance to both these passages by ascribing duration in a way that is contrary to the natural rhythm and time attribution. In the above case a vice-versa or "proper" time ascription would have obviated deeper analysis and/or investigation discouraging the reader to discover the profounder meanings hidden by the seemingly unrelated events, which she recounts. For, as we see in the reading of the novel, the summary of the young girl's past and the mother's influence thereon forms part, a large part, of why she (the girl) makes the choices that she does make. Wrongly or rightly, these are a reaction to her mother's apathy, she seems to be trying to

wake her mother up, get her to react, and not just sit there in this state of utter despondency, which causes this inability to see things through.

What is really challenging about Duras' use of rhythm, is the way in which she is able to combine the temporal category of duration with that of the category of frequency, in such a way that a repeated⁶ event gains a greater emphasis and significance as she uses duration to gradually intensify an action, situation, speech, or character. We will now take a look at an example in which she uses this technique:

So I'm fifteen and a half. It's on a ferry crossing the Mekong river.
The image lasts all the way across.

(Duras 1985:8)

So it's during the crossing of a branch of the Mekong, on the ferry that plies between the Vinh long and Sadec in the great plain of mud and rice in southern Cochin-China. The Plain of the Birds.

(Duras 1985:14)

On the ferry, beside the bus there's a big black limousine with a chauffeur in white cotton livery.

Yes, it's the big funereal car that's in my books. It's a Morris Léon-Bollée. [...] Between the drivers and employers there are still sliding panels. There are still tip-up seats. A car's still as big as a bedroom.

(Duras 1985: 20-21)

⁶ Repetition is a sub-category of frequency

The elegant man has got out of the limousine and is smoking an English cigarette. He looks at the girl in the man's fedora and the gold shoes. He slowly comes over to her. He's obviously nervous. He doesn't smile to begin with. To begin with he offers her a cigarette. His hand's trembling. There's the difference of race, he's not white, he has to get the better of it, that's why he's trembling. She says she doesn't smoke, no thanks. She doesn't say anything else, doesn't say Leave me alone. So he's less afraid. He tells her he must be dreaming. She doesn't answer. There's no point in answering, what would she say? She waits. So he asks, But where did you spring from? She says she's the daughter of the headmistress of the girl's school in Sadec [...] He says again how strange it is to see her on this ferry. So early in the morning, a pretty girl like that, you don't realize, it's very surprising, a white girl on a native bus.

(Duras 1985:36-37)

We see how innocuous the first statement, of the first quote is, this is only a girl crossing a river, and there is nothing significant about it. When you get to the second reference of the ferry crossing interest is stirred and not much else, the real revelations start and the importance of the significant way in which the ferry crossing and the meeting with the man in the black limousine become apparent as Duras loads each reference with a longer duration turning it from summary to ever longer scenes.

Given that a number of past occurrences have led to the narrator's present situation, a similar method is sometimes used to emphasize the same event in

an attempt to foreground its significance in the reader's mind. Duras, seemingly, manipulates the effects of duration so that these mirror the effects these occurrences had on the narrator's life.

Duration is used here in an especially rhythmical way, building the tempo, carrying it forth into a climax that acts upon or counteracts the major themes of the novel. This happens when she introduces, as she does in the above extract, an event that impacts significantly on the life of the narrator. Such an event is usually surrounded by minor occurrences, which embrace the same theme, or seemingly contradict the theme. She repeats the event of which the duration lengthens every time it is mentioned, thus the events surrounding it intensify, because she summarizes these and only includes what is relevant to the main event. We shall look at another example in which Duras uses two seemingly opposite themes to build on one central theme, one, which forms an integral part of the meeting between the young girl of fifteen and the thirty year old man:

This particular day I must be wearing the famous pair of gold lamé high heels. I can't see any others I could have been wearing. So I'm wearing them. Bargains, final reductions bought for me by my mother. I'm wearing these gold lame shoes to school. Going to school in evening shoes decorated with little *diamanté* flowers. I insist on wearing them. I don't like myself in any others, and to this day I still liked myself in them. These high heels are the first in my life, they're beautiful, they've eclipsed all the shoes that went before....

It's not the shoes, though, that make the girl look so strangely, so weirdly dressed. No, it's the fact that she's wearing a man's flat-brimmed hat, a brownish-pink fedora with a broad black ribbon.

The crucial ambiguity of the image lies in the hat. [...]

What must have happened is, I try it on just for fun, look at myself in the shopkeeper's glass, and see that there, beneath the man's hat, the thin awkward shape, the inadequacy of childhood, has turned into something else[...] Has become, on the contrary, a provoking choice of nature, a choice of the mind. [...] Suddenly I see myself as another, as another would be seen, outside of myself available to all eyes, in circulation for cities, journeys, desire.'[...]

The one who bought the flat-brimmed pink hat with the broad black ribbon was her, the woman in another photograph, my mother. [...] My mother's in the middle of the picture. I recognize the awkward way she holds herself, the way she doesn't smile, the way she waits for the photo to be over and done with. By her drawn face, by a certain untidiness of her dress, by her drowsy expression...But it's the way we're dressed, us children, all anyhow, that I recognize a mood my mother sometimes used to fall into and of which already at an early age we were in the photo, we knew the warning signs - the way she'd suddenly be unable to wash us, to dress us, or sometimes even feed us. Everyday my mother experienced this deep despondency about living. Sometimes it lasted, sometimes it would vanish in the dark. I had the luck to have a mother desperate with a despair so unalloyed that sometimes even in life's happiness, at its most poignant, couldn't quite make her forget it. [...]

(Duras 1985:16-18)

With the focus falling firstly on the girl's clothes emphasis seems to be on the purely superficial, the description of the girl's clothes seem rather daring and incongruous for a young girl of fifteen. Her flaunting manner of dress is at once both innocent and inviting, and is one of the things, which drew the Chinese to her. A good question to ask here would be why did her mother not object, especially as she was "a young white girl traveling on a native bus". We then realize that the mother had unwittingly contributed to this outfit when she donated both the hat and the shoes, but what is highlighted here is a more important component of how this family functions. This young girl who could be criticized not only because of her dress but also because of the affair she has with the Chinese, has been neglected, thrown upon her own mercy without anyone who could or would guide her. Again the theme of the mother's apathy, as in the second extract, is focused upon in such a way that it induces the reader to infer that this was a major contributor to the young girl's frame of mind. Quite cannily Duras was able, by presenting this description as a scene, to emphasize the unworldly air that surrounded the young girl at that time as she relishes the "maturity" of the clothes, one's perspective changes, when we see how she in a childlike way, draws out her description of the clothes and how grown up these make her look.

This rather extended quotation shows how Duras has used the summary and the scene to considerably vary the tempo, by contrasting the way(s) in which she attributes scene and summary here, she forces the reader to realize the significance of the young narrator's clothes in conjunction with the apathy of the mother.

The despondency experienced by the mother, is described after the scene in which she describes her clothes. This state of the mother is seemingly “unrelated” to the girl’s clothing. She summarizes in 15 lines the mother’s mental condition that lasted throughout her lifetime, as an explanation as to why she was able to acquire and wear these clothes, yet the deeper implication is of the mother’s total inability to care for her young children. Their independence and self-reliance is enforced. In addition, the young girl’s clothes reflect this and by these means rebel against the disinterested role of the mother.

The indexical function of duration in *The Lover* allows Duras to subtly signify how seemingly opposite themes draw together into an explanation of the central whole. The daring and flaunting behaviour of the daughter implied by the clothes is pointed out in a scene and unlike the usual function of the scene, which is rather deep and dramatic, this is told in a lighthearted manner copying the superficiality of the description of appearance. Duras turns the conventional function of the scene on its head and as a result forces the reader to look for and find the reason why this usual description of clothes, which need not be told in a scene, is such a drawn out portrayal. It is then when she tells of the way in which she and her brothers suffered because of the mother’s mental state, which most times left her incapable to care for them. Then when we establish that the state of clothes and also of behaviour is consequenced directly by the mother’s apathy, despondency and neglect, we realize that the summary whose function is usually to act as respite from the intensity of the

scene, has also been reversed and it has now become the catalyst in which the intensity of the narrator's situation is shown.

Our perspective of the young girl changes and our interpretation and understanding of her and her choices are more sympathetic. At certain points, Duras, as she has done in the above example, tries to change the normal perception and interpretation that readers will have, applying duration in a wholly contradictory way, here she reverses the duration of events in such a way that it not only ensures being noticed but that the reader is aware of a significant occurrence.

As Emma Kafelnos explains:

Readers of narratives, characters in narratives, and individuals in the world establish configurations from available information and interpret the functions of events in relation to those configurations [...] interpretations motivate actions, and actions change the configurations in relation to which further interpretations will be made.

(Kafelnos in Herman 1999:55)

By attributing so much time to one event, situation, or character the author can ensure that the attention and focus are heightened, whereas the summarized events are dependent upon their relevance to the major theme(s) of

this novel. Keeping this in mind, Duras, forces the reader to remain aware of how events interrelate by her attribution of contradictory durations to events.

The reader constructs and reconstructs events according to the way in which she prefers to portray them. She manipulates duration in such a way that perception varies and widens to incorporate the significance of her manner of portrayal of events, situations, etc. She further ensures that, in a case such as the above and there are more examples thereof, the ideas she wishes to convey are communicated, highlighted, and foregrounded by her contradictory use of duration.

We see in this novel that the two categories of duration, that of *scène* and summary have prevailed, and observe that because of a certain dramatic atmosphere that these create, the impact of the message is heightened and emphasized. The duration of the text is in fact the very essence of changing perspectives, in such a way that the reader's interpretation and/or understanding of an event or situation has to include the implications of the varying tempo of the novel. Knowing that in this novel duration speeds up or slows down so that the relevance of one event can be allowed to show the import of another, creating in the reader an impulse to cease her/his immediate judgments and postpone these until their context is widened by the relevance that duration has on them. It is indeed true that duration with its varying pace, becomes the driving force in determining how momentum swings within the novel, how the slow monotonous description of one event can and does influence the quick, short and sharp depiction of another, or vice-versa,

ensuring a comparative reading which even subconsciously questions the motivation behind the varied speed of one segment against another. As a result, Duras has been able, to a certain degree, to ensure that the effect created, is one in which the narrator is not judged on the basis of her behaviour and decisions only, the manner in which she was able to blend the background of the girl with her current and future behaviour has ensured that the reader's judgments is less harsh, becoming more sympathetic and understanding, of the young girl's choices, as they continue to read within the scope of the following scene or summary; deferring judgment and criticism until the entire context of an event is understood. Duras takes care to ensure that information is interrelated, by means of the interplay between scene and summary, into an integral whole, and as readers, consciously or subconsciously acknowledging this strategy "we interpret events after the fact in a given configuration" (Kafelnos in Herman 1999:39).

CHAPTER VI

FREQUENCY

A circumspect way of foregrounding information

6.1 Introduction

Starting with the translated novel *The Lover* by French writer Marguerite Duras, I hope to be able to show how a novel which is not uniquely subject to its temporal manipulation relies quite heavily on *time* for its (re) interpretation and deeper understanding of the characters, more especially the prime character, who is the first person narrator and sole focalizer.

In the following short summation of the novel by Duras, time does not seem to have a prominent place in the understanding of the novel. Yet, as I see it, the temporal interruption and disruption do have a quite influential impact on the more profound reading of the text, and the understanding at both the emotive and intellectual levels of the outcome of the lives of the characters.

6.2 Summation of *The Lover* by M Duras

Duras' novel is the telling of the story of the life of a young girl who is also the first person narrator and principal character. She, the narrator/focal character, tells of her life in Saigon before, during, and after the Indo-China war. She tells of her family and how she lived with her insane mother, sadistic older brother and sensitive yet slow younger brother. Her family life and social status form the background against which the fifteen-year-old girl's love affair with a grown

Chinese man blossoms, continues and spirals toward an inevitable and irretrievable end.

6.3 Frequency

The study of frequency or repetitions was initially and systematically defined by Genette as the analysis of the number of times an event occurs at the level of *histoire* and the number of times that same event is repeated (or not) in the *récit*. Jonathan Culler, in his foreword to Genette's influential *Narrative Discourse* (1980) observes that frequency, where "the narrative may repeatedly recount an event that happened only once or may recount once what happened frequently" (Genette 1980:11) has seldom been discussed before, though it is an important topic in narrative time.

What Genette (1980:113) very importantly and concisely states in relation to such repetition is that the repeated events are not identical but "a series of several similar events considered only in terms of their resemblance." For purposes of clarity it would be best, I believe if we have a short exposition of each of Genette's four distinctions:

6.3.1 Singulative Narrative—(1N/1S)

In this case events that happen at the level of the *histoire* are narrated in the *récit* according to the number of times they occur in the story. Therefore Genette explains: "the singulative is therefore defined not by the number of occurrences but by the equality of the number" (Genette 1980:115).

6.3.2 Anaphoric Narrative—(nN/sS)

In this kind of narrative there is equality between the occurrence of an event at the *histoire* and the number of times it is repeated in the *récit*. In other words, a repeating event would be recounted exactly as many times as it took place in the story (*histoire*). Referring to an example provided by Rimmon-Kenan (1983) Genette (1988:40) refers in this regard to the event, taken from *Don Quixote*, where Sanchez attempts “a goat-by-goat” account of the crossing of 300 head of goat.

6.3.3 Repeating Narrative—(nN/1S)

Here, palpably an event, which occurred once at the level of the *histoire*, is repeated many times over in the *récit*. It is important to keep in mind that one event may either be recounted with variations or it may be presented from different angles.

6.3.4 Iterative Narrative—(1N/nS)

The *récit* tells once what happens many times over at the level of the *histoire*: “Where a single narrative utterance takes upon itself several utterances together of the same event (in other words, once again, several events considered only in terms of their analogy” (Genette 1980:116). Genette distinguishes the Proustian use of the iterative from its traditional function, where it tended to be subordinate to the singulative narrative, for which the iterative sections provided “a sort of informative frame or background” (Genette 1980:117), fairly close to the function of description. By contrast, Genette points out that in Proust’s *Recherche du temps perdu* the iterative is

thematically important and that in some sections in the novel the text narrates, “not what *happened* but what *used to happen* at Combray, regularly, ritually, every day, or every Sunday, or every Saturday, etc.” (Genette 1980:117-118). It is therefore far different from its traditional use, where, according to Philip Lejeune (Genette 1988:39) it was reserved largely for evoking childhood memories. The iterative was used prior to the traditional novel, as Genette has it, but was reserved for its function of summation. The iterative held no meaning related information, but was used rather as a framework builder, through which readers would familiarize themselves with a certain routine within the story.

6.3.4.1 Generalising or external iteration and Internal or synthesising iteration

Genette states that when the scope of the iterative extends beyond the temporal field of the scene into which it is inserted then we are dealing with general/external iteration; whereas the opposite of this external iterative is defined as the internal/synthesizing iterative, where the iterative insertion does not transcend the period of the scène (cf. Genette 1980:117-118).

6.3.5 Pseudo-iterative

Furthermore, Proust’s narrative is also distinguished by the use of what Genette (1980:121) termed the *pseudo-iterative*, “when the story narrates as something that happened repeatedly an event whose very particularity makes it seem undeniably singular”. Thus such scenes are supposedly presented in the

iterative, but their richness and precision of detail would make it unlikely that they could have occurred, over and over again, in precisely that form.

It should be clear from the above that the occurrence of frequency, with its distinction between non-recurring and singulative and ongoing or iterative repetition could be both functional and complex in a novel. Because of the unpredictability⁷ of repetition/frequency in the narrative, it demands a closer reading and requires an understanding of the text, which will allow the reader or analyst to come to her/his relevant conclusion regarding the function of frequency (repetition and/or iteration) in a particular novel.

6.3.6 Determination, specification and extension

There are multiple possibilities when dealing with frequency since the spotlight it shines, throws its beams not only on the foregrounded event, but further afield. Genette states that the iterative narrative is characterized by (1) Determination, (2) Specification, [3] and Extension. All three of which provide the temporal framework from and around which an iterative series occurs: “Every iterative narrative is a synthetic narrating of the events that occur and reoccur in the course of an iterative *series* that is composed of a certain number of singular *units*” (Genette 1980:127). Any series, such as “Fridays in the South-African winter of 2006” is defined [1] by its diachronic limits (between the end of May and the end of August in the year 2006), and then [2] by the regularity of the recurrence of its constituent units (Genette speaks of its “rhythm”), one day out of seven, and finally [3] by its extent (“Friday” could be

⁷ Unpredictability here resides in the reader’s (in) ability to determine who or what will be affected by frequency and the effect thereof.

taken to indicate 10 hours, 12 hours or 24 hours, depending on the time-span referred to).

According to the explanation above, determination deals with the diachronic limits, it occurs either explicitly (every day for a year x event occurs) or implicitly (the reader must determine, if possible, from the text the period of the event), the onus here is on the reader to gauge the length of the period to which the event(s) refer(s).

In the novel *The Lover*, determination of diachronic limits is never explicit in the sense that the author never refers to a specific day. The reader is in limbo until s/he, by means of reconstructive reading, is able to temporally situate an event. This implies that the units would also be unspecified.

6.3.7 Internal and external diachrony

Genette observes that the iterative need not necessarily be confined to the unit or event or the series in which it appears;

...[a]n iterative unit such as *sleepless nights* constituted from a series extending over several years, can very well be narrated only in its own successiveness, from evening to morning, without letting the passage of “external time”—that is, the days and years separating the first sleepless night from the last—intervene in any way; the typical night will remain similar to itself from the beginning to the end of the series, *varying*, without *evolving*.

(Genette 1980:140)

However, Genette maintains that it is possible for the iterative narration to include genuine diachrony or development over time. Thus, for example, a typical Sunday at a specific place may be recalled without ignoring the changes brought about by the intervening years—devices to this end could include a reference to the demise of friends and relatives during the period concerned. By this means the difference will be stressed between earlier or later experiences of events that usually or *normally* took place on the Sundays in question, and so points of contact may be established between internal diachrony (of the synthetic unit of a typical Sunday) and external diachrony (of an actual series of Sundays).

The significance of taking into account the actual series comprising an iterative narration is the fact that the novel does not necessarily stagnate with the iterative series. I believe that the iterative is a function which is exploited to foreground selected information, whilst the story continues, the iterative harps on a specific event which reminds the reader of the significance of this event or that the routine which is implied by the iterative gives an aspect to it which will gain later significance; as the study of the chosen novel will hopefully show. Thus it may not interfere with the story, it does give a different or new perspective which impacts on the reader and affects the way in which the story now evolves in the mind of the reader. Genette argues that the internal diachrony of the iterative series should run parallel to its external diachrony. He states, lastly that the law of the iterative is to have the repeated event run parallel with the successive events that give forward movement to the novel.

6.4 Analysis of Frequency in *The Lover*

6.4.1 Introduction

In content *The Lover* is comparable to many other novels. There is nothing new about an ill-fated love affair. Yet in style it achieves an individuality that sets it apart as a unique piece of literature.

What catches the eye immediately is the fact that there are no chapter divisions, throughout from the beginning to the end of the story different sections are divided into paragraphs of half a page to two or four pages. The assumption is, (and there is the temptation to make deductions or to conjecture), that the novel would thus be one long 123 pages of continuous telling. Not so, because Duras expertly brings in and plays with the temporal relations of the story, and because of her temporal manipulation there is no monotony.

As will be argued below, even the numerous repetitions of the same event, the ferry crossing signaling the beginning of the love affair between the young girl and the Chinese man, escape tedium, because the utterances recounting the same event are contrasted with iterative sections and placed in different contexts. This procedure serves to gradually reveal information about the circumstances, which shaped the girl's character, thereby increasing the significance of the event for the reader's understanding of the text.

The author places her events in such a way that she is constantly able to recreate expectation by the blending of events and of their temporal positions. As far as the above categories devised by Genette go, Duras transgresses the limits of many; one sees that she transgresses the boundaries of the singulative without exactly interfering with it. She does so by inferring an ongoing attitude or atmosphere that is prevalent in a situation, event, or character, whilst she describes a singular event.

For example, if we look at pp.89-93, where the young girl's confrontation with the mad woman is a singular event, but the fear she feels is the constant fear of becoming like her mother. Duras' metaphoric allusion to the madness of the young girl's mother by using the beggar woman is exceptional. The fear for the mad woman in that single scene is almost tangible. Furthermore, by this allusion Duras explains this terrifying fear, that underlies and underlines the girl's childhood into her adulthood, thereby turning a singulative event into a constant, repetitive condition typically signalled by iterative passages.

In Duras the sense of inappropriateness, of wrongness is reflected in her temporal attribution to events. Interestingly she tends, throughout the novel, to apportion significance to a section, a character, an event or characteristic by employing temporal disruptions. By disruptions I mean the way in which Duras plays with the differences that occur between the *histoire* and the *récit*. Uniquely, the creative way(s) in which she combines emphasis by using the tools of time enhances the way in which the characters interact.

Her novel is to a large degree dependent upon its temporal distribution, which tends to lend emphasis to foreground and to highlight the ebb and flow of the story.

Although the use of all three categories of Genette's division of time is present in *The Lover*, anachrony and anisochronies have, for me at least, less emphasis than the category of frequency. This despite the fact, as has been shown in previous chapters that the former categories are functional in *The Lover*; yet frequency reveals so much more of the emotional level of the story.

I shall attempt, at this point, to give an evaluation of the role of frequency and how it signifies in the novel.

6.4.2 Repetition

Duras in the first pages of her novel relies rather heavily on iteration and repetition. Already after the reading of the first few pages one sees that Duras uses the categories of frequency—uniquely as a characterizing function of characters, events, situations and places. We should be wary of making any assumptions about the relevance of frequency and, also the redundancy of a repeated event, and take into consideration that such procedures can be used to foreground a quite different aspect within the novel. If we look at the narrator of *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras, we see that the young girl when making that all-important ferry crossing, which is repeated so many times in the récit, is at a superficial level concerned with the girl's instant attraction to the car of the Chinese man (cf. Duras 1985:20).

The placements of these passages that relate to frequency are irregular and jagged and it seems that it is in the absence of structure that Duras prefers to exhibit emphasis. Strangely this irregularity at once reflects, enhances, and propagates the ragged and unbalanced presentation of the characters and their actions.

With regard to the category of frequency this novel offers a plethora of options. There is nothing subtle to the way in which Duras repeatedly refers to the young girl's ferry crossing of the Mekong River; the reader is left in no doubt as to where and which event(s) she wishes to give importance to, however, as Genette says of repetition in the narrative:

The "repetition" is in fact a mental construction, which eliminates from such occurrence everything belonging to it that is peculiar to itself, in order to presume only what it shares with all the others of the same class [...] similar events are considered only in terms of their resemblance.

(Genette 1980:113)

The subtle differences and contextual changes ensure that even in her more than ten repetitions of the same event, Duras is able to avoid tedium. Perhaps the author achieves this by shifting emphasis when she juxtaposes the repetitions within the context of various other temporal alterations. For instance on p.8 when the 1st ferry crossing occurs, the next paragraph, which is still in the young girl's present (and the narrator's past), informs the reader cursorily about her background—her schooling, her home life, stressing, in

Genette's terms, what "used to happen", when she refers to her mother's ideals for her family: "Every day I saw her planning her own and her children's future" (Duras 1985:8). The first occurrence has no significance yet, and because the subsequent paragraph is so ordinary the ferry crossing itself appears ordinary. Yet on p.13 the same event of the ferry crossing is followed by a paragraph which would have kept it neutral had it not been for the prolepsis, which prompts the idea that this ferry crossing is of great importance:

I think it was during this journey that the image became detached, removed from all the rest. It might have existed, a photograph might have been taken, just like any other, somewhere else, in other circumstances. But it wasn't. The subject was too slight. Who could have thought such a thing? The photograph could only have been taken [...]if someone could have known in advance how important it was to be in my life, that event, that crossing of the river.

(Duras 1985:13)

The third repetition of the ferry crossing includes a repetition of the young girl's age at fifteen and a half, thereby closely linking the repeated event with the protagonist's status as an under age girl, clearly indicating the increasing significance of the ferry crossing as repeated event. Same page same repetition, once again in reference to an emotional change the young girl has undergone and this time she proleptically states as quoted above its importance: "The photograph could only have been taken if someone could only have known in

advance how important it was to be in my life, that event, that crossing of the river” (Duras 1985:13).

Interspersed as they are with iterative references to the habitual behaviour of the mother, “As usual my mother came to see me off, and put me in the care of the driver. She always puts me in the care of the Saigon bus drivers...” (Duras 1985:13), the first repetitions of the ferry crossing contain as yet hardly any indication of how momentous that particular crossing at the age of fifteen and a half would prove to be both for the course the young protagonist’s life would take and for the telling thereof by the mature first-person narrator in the text of *The Lover*.

The repeated telling of that particular ferry crossing, as opposed to the habitual daily ferry crossings when going from home to school and back, is also varied in the text by detailed descriptive passages outlining, for the reader, the importance of the girl’s outrageous attire, ranging from a dress of pure silk, albeit a threadbare cast-off of her mother’s, to gold lamé high heeled shoes, to an incongruous fedora hat. It is this hat that suddenly, on first trying it on we are told, causes the girl to notice a change in herself:

Suddenly I see myself as another, as another would be seen, outside myself, available to all, available to all eyes, in circulation for cities, journeys, desire. I take the hat and am never parted from it. Having got it, this hat that all by itself makes me whole, I wear it all the time.

(Duras 1985:16)

The iterative and descriptive passages, detailing either the relationship with her family, in particular her mother, or her mode of dressing, ensure that the repeated telling of the ferry crossing is framed by variable detail which not only precludes tedium, but also serves to prepare the reader, in advance of the “actual” telling of the events at that particular ferry crossing, for the inevitable outcome of the meeting between the under aged white colonial girl and the mature Chinese man. Weird as the girl’s attire may seem, it is the focus on the black limousine on the opposite bank not far from the ferry docking, as well as, eventually on the “very elegant man” (Duras 1985:20) inside the car, looking at the girl, that catches the reader’s attention. (The importance of the car is conferred when the narrator at a later stage refers to that particular ferry crossing as “...[t]he day of the black limousine” (Duras 1985:23)). Significantly the car is compared first to a “big funereal car” (*ibid*), and directly after that it is said that it was “as big as a bedroom” [*ibid*], thereby foreshadowing both the attraction of the Chinese man to the young girl and the inevitable consequences of an unsuitable relationship. Before the next recounting of the ferry crossing, a reflective passage by the mature narrator leaves no doubt as to the sinister intent underlying the girl’s contrived appearance referred to above. The motives ascribed to the mother are enumerated: her habitual bouts of utter despair, as well as her poverty, and the disillusion with her sons, resulted in deliberate exploitation of the girl for material gain:

The only thing left is this girl, she’s growing up, perhaps one day she’ll find out how to bring in some money. That’s why, though she doesn’t know it, that’s why the mother lets the girl go out dressed

like a child prostitute. And that's why the child already knows how to divert the interest people take in her to the interest she takes in money. That makes her mother smile.

(Duras 1985: 27)

In similar vein following references to the repeated event of the ferry crossing are either embedded in reminiscences about the dire poverty or emotional instability, which characterized the girl's childhood, or else they are coupled to the presence of the black limousine on that fateful day. Particular attention is paid, in this regard, to the mother's actions during different stages in the immediate or more removed past and the constant strain on family relationships caused by the deterioration of the mother's depression bordering on "madness". These iterative and/or contemplative passages interrupt and postpone the "actual" telling of the girl's meeting with the Chinese, thereby preparing the reader for the inevitable course of the events triggered by the fateful ferry crossing.

Finally the eleventh repetition reveals what all ten repetitions have been building up to, the momentous event, which was hitherto only hinted at or implied. The young girl meets the man who has been in the previously focalized black limousine. This man is the Chinese whom she meets and subsequently takes a lift from, and who is to form an integral part in the disintegration of her young life.

6.4.3 The Iterative

The iterative has one of the more interesting functions in this novel, Genette says of the iterative:

...when such repeating phenomena occur in the story, the narrative is not by any means condemned to reproduce them in its discourse as if it were incapable of the slightest effort to abstract and synthesize: in fact, and except for deliberate stylistic effect, a narrative - and even the most unpolished one - will in this case find sylleptic⁸ formation.

(Genette 1980:116)

In *The Lover*, the iterative is introduced after the very first repetition. In this iterative passage the girl describes her mother's constant preoccupation with her children, the passage is neutral the undertow of emotion one expects is revealed later, and it is then that this passage is put into context.

On p.11 the iterative reoccurs with the intention of focusing the readers' attention on the habitual cruelty of the older brother and the constant and crippling fear the younger brother felt for him.

With the third iterative (p.19) which again is reserved for a member of the family, we see that each time the iterative shows a different aspect of the girl's life, her family and her situation. Giving the impression, contrary to its

⁸ Syllepsis – anachronic groupings governed by one or the other kinship (spatial, temporal, etc.)
[Genette 1980: 85]

indication of inertia by the use of terms such as every day, again, every time, etc; a feeling that there is constant change and movement. In this instance the iterative is used to describe certain characteristics of the mother's madness. Eight pages further hidden between descriptions of the girl's clothes an iterative insert again refers to this madness.

The succeeding iterative is a narratorial reference to the mother's mental illness.

One sees that the iterative sections reserved for the young narrator's family are customarily explicit, dealing rather critically with their shortcomings. It is quite significant then, that the iterative section on p. 53, dealing with the relationship of the young narrator and her lover, gives no details other than the iterative: "throughout our affair, for a year and half we'd talk like this....". Does the implied iterative here, of "every time we met", in itself imply that her reticence is due to the fact that these were treasured stolen moments too precious to talk of, especially in light of the next iterative, which follows.

On p.54 when the iterative appears again, there is no implication, no hinting. Rather the girl explicitly states: "These evenings are all the same" consistent with previous iterative passages which are used as characterizing functions in this novel, we see here the girl has no reticence when she describes her family when they go out to dinner with the Chinese. The negative portrayal shows her brothers as being uncivilized to the point of being barbaric in their behaviour. The two consequent paragraphs on p.55 refer once again to the brothers' behaviour, and again the iterative is reserved for negative characterization as

far as the girl's family is concerned, she portrays their behaviour as disgusting and their rudeness as bordering on uncouthness.

The iterative skips 3 pages and reoccurs on p.58, where the young girl once again explains the ghastly behaviour of her brothers toward her lover. Still in the iterative the young girl moves on to the way(s) in which her family interact, making explicit her constant fear, the underlying hatred that underscored every action in their house. Further, the violence and that very thin veneer of civility, which hides that capacity for brutality. It was their awareness, acknowledged or not, of their baseness, which united them as a family. This iterative function is carried onto pp.61-62 where the young girl once again describes her mother. Only now the ever-present signs of her mother's mental instability—the desperation, the despondency and the depression, which typified her home life, are more evident. In the subsequent paragraph on p.63, the iterative is used to relate, on two entire pages, the verbal and physical abuse, violence, cruelty, and humiliation the girl suffers at the hand of her insane mother and sadistic older brother. The consensual savagery of mother and son becomes even more frightening when put in its iterative context, the regularity, which this implies makes it all the more deplorable. One sees that Duras' use of the iterative as a characterizing tool is highly innovative and effective.

We know by now that the iterative is reserved almost totally for the negative portrayal of characters, yet on p.67 when describing her relationship with her Chinese lover, she describes at length his tenderness and his gentleness. This juxtaposition reflects how the socio-cultural typecasting assumes a greater significance. The girl's family regard the Chinese as beneath them, simply

because he is Chinese, yet his behaviour contradicts all their colonial beliefs, and it becomes clear to the reader that it is by virtue only of their nationality that they regard themselves as superior. Contrarily though, their so-called, “white” status, does not reflect their ostensible sophistication and erudition.

One sees now that by her iterative characterization Duras has highlighted one of the many contradictions prevalent in this racially biased society. The stereotypical generalizations of the native (the Chinese) and the colonialists (the girl’s family) are no longer applicable.

The negative characterization by means of the iterative continues when the mother’s influence on her children negates the seemingly natural preoccupation described in one of the first iterative passages. Now we see that it is an unhealthy preoccupation based more on her obsessive nature, which encourages her constant states of desperation and depression becoming more frequent as her mental illness intensifies.

We move further from the narrator’s past and closer to her present in this iterative passage on pp.68-70. It is here that we see that as a young woman who now lives in France, the iterative is used to express the nightmarish experiences of Marie-Claude Carpentier’s soirées. Again the negative connotation, which lends itself to the iterative description of Marie-Claude and her parties, can be said to be synonymous with the utilization of the iterative thus far.

After ten pages the iterative returns on p.80 and continues onto p.84; the girl now explains her oldest brother's behaviour. Even though the actions are described as singulative these represent the unchanged and ongoing malice and cowardly violence that have distinguished her oldest brother since childhood.

The iterative passage that occurs on p.91 is centered on the preceding singulative section regarding the confrontation between the mad woman and the young girl. Regardless of its singular occurrence, the madness of the old "Lady" is so pervasive that the girl begins and continues to associate it with her town and all its people and more especially her mother: "And always my mother has been there beside her [the mad woman]..." (Duras 1985:91).

The madness is an invasion, which intrudes into all aspects of the girl's life. Because of its association with her town and her mother, the pervasiveness of that madness glimpsed in that singulative incident, creates its own iteration; by becoming an incessant and ever-present burden which the girl carries with her "everyday".

When taken up again on p.94, the iterative, this time occurs with terms such as "every evening" and "every morning" coupled with adjectives and nouns such as "dirty", "slut", "filthy chinese", "disreputable", are used to emphasize with great effect the growing view that the relationship between the 15 year old girl and the 30 year old man is debased and exploitative. The iteration of this sentiment inevitably leads to the downfall and final ostracism of the young girl.

The next iterative passage immediately follows the one above. It is one, which draws on the associative characterization of the young girl and the Lady from Savannah, Khet. Where the lady's isolation and exclusion lead the young girl to closely relate it to her loneliness as an outcast. They share too the same attitude of acceptance of the inevitability of their isolation.

In the iterative on pp. 99-103, the narrator speaks of the mother's insistence to have photographs taken; this is iteratively used to indicate the atmosphere, attitude and feelings which are not only present in the photographs, but prevalent throughout their lives. The hostility and isolation members of the family feel for one another.

The implicit "every time" goes further and iteratively characterizes other aspects of the mother, this time more positive. One sees her determination, her pride, and her strength at getting her children to pose for these photographs notwithstanding the underlying aggression and hatred, which typified this family.

In this, the following iterative passage, we see that the attitudes are so ingrained, so instinctive that the failure of the relationship between the girl and the Chinese lover is ultimately guaranteed. The iteration of the lover's impotence against his powerful and wealthy father, who along with her family irrevocably reject their liaison, furthers its termination. The next iterative is significant but its significance is emphasized by the preceding and following paragraphs of iteration. This iterative passage speaks of the way in which the

relationship between the lover and the girl has moved into an almost exclusively physical sphere. The lover knowing that he will lose the young girl uses her body while he becomes more and more emotionally detached.

In this, the iterative immediately following and which aids in highlighting the above passage, concerns the young girl's experience in and of the relationship. She enjoys their relationship because of the intense pleasure they share, however, she sees the abusive side of it too. She tells of how this 30-year-old man exploits her as a child. Relishing in her pubescent youth, he puts himself in the role of parent, as the one who leads her to another level and introduces her to the life of passion. It is possible to say that there is almost an element of incestuousness to the relationship, emphasized in this context by the lover calling her "his child": "He takes her as he would his own child. He'd take his own child the same way" (Duras 1985:106-107).

Although the iterative is the main and most efficient tool Duras uses to communicate the habitual, it has the further benefit of drawing out the framework and the essences of the relationships between the main characters in the novel. The iterative is also uniquely employed by Duras as having a dominantly characterizing function in this novel, and extends its use further than that described by Genette. Albeit that the iterative retains this function in Duras' novel, as said above, it serves also to underline and emphasize one or the other element or characteristic. It is possible, I believe, to say that she uses the iterative as a positive characterization tool for her lover. Even when she iteratively refers to his weakness in the face of his father's autocracy, she pities

rather than criticizes. For instance, if we look at her iterative portrayal of her family and their behaviour, of the friends she later made in France; she tends to use the iterative to draw on the negative aspects of their personalities.

Even though frequency or repetition is described as being redundant, Sternberg (1976:33); expostulates that:

No normative value can be automatically ascribed either to location of the exposition in the sujet or to its form and texture (just as there are no grounds for the categorically dismissive attitude to exposition, as if it were necessarily limited in quantity and functionality alike)

In two instances Duras provides us with the seemingly unrelated histories of two women, (1) “the lady from Savanna Khet”, (2) “Marie-Claude Carpentier from France”, Duras uses the iterative, in this instance, in an interesting and distinctive way, as her intention here is to convey the message that the shared characteristics of the two women are those which are revealed by the narrator herself.

In the hands of Duras, it seems that the iterative is almost recreated in such a way that it exposes information, which indicates to the reader how to interpret this information. For example the suffering of the young girl, the arrogance of her family, the abuse and sadism of the older brother, the madness of the mother and lastly the weakness of the lover. This category of Genette’s theory on temporal relations is extremely revealing. In Duras’ *The Lover* – the iterative

is instrumental in typifying not only the characters and their particular traits but also the situations in which they find themselves. It is because of the use of the iterative that one is able to foresee the inevitability of the disastrous end of not only the lovers but also that of the members of the girl's family.

6.4.4 The Singulative

Moving onto the use of the singulative in *The Lover* we see that it has a <closing the door> function. Characteristically of course the singulative describes once in the *récit* an event that occurred once in the *histoire*, giving any event, finality. One sees in this novel that Duras seems to lengthen that finality, where the singulative event absolutely ends a previous state. For example in the singulative occurrence on p.133 where the oldest brother gambles away his home, everything, his comfort, safety, security all end on that day.

Duras has a second way of using the singulative, that is, by describing the singulative event, which is exemplified by an iterative attitude or atmosphere. For example when the mother is summoned to school to be informed about the girl's unacceptable behaviour, who does not attend school regularly and who often spends her nights away from the hostel. Firstly the mother defends her daughter's behaviour by saying that she is an independent spirit, next moment she laments the fact that her daughter is beyond control, asking the principal to let her daughter finish her schooling, whilst letting her get on with her own thing.

The contradictory attitude shown here is prevalent throughout and is almost iterative in its consistency and the regular inferences and mentions thereof. Yet this constitutes a singulative, because it is the first and only time that we see the mother's response to her daughter in front of any other witnesses other than the family members. On pp 77-79 a second singulative scene that betrays an iterative attitude is found. When the young girl admires and fantasizes about one of her classmates, Hélène Lagonelle's, body; we see that for the first and only time some of the immorality of her family is displayed. Her affair with the Chinese does not qualify as depravity because there is mutual awareness and consent. Hélène Lagonelle is a mentally slow girl whose obvious innocence makes the young girl's fantasy a more than objectionable perversion. This scene is highly informative and more than indicative of the girl's desirous mindset and the moral decadence that typifies her family.

When the third singulative occurs it is centered on the occurrence of the illness of the father of the Chinese. Where the recovery of the father <closes the door> on the lover's dream of marrying the girl. However, not only does this singulative scene show the hopelessness of the situation it indicates too the cowardice of the Chinese lover who depends on the death of his father to fulfill his dreams and desires.

One of the most indicative and for me the most impressive singulative scenes is when the young girl is confronted with and runs away from the mad woman. Her almost palpable fear at not wanting this mad woman to touch her lends itself metaphorically to her fear that she be "touched" by her mother's madness.

Suddenly there is a singulative in which we are given a seemingly irrelevant piece of information, we are told of a married lady from Savannah, Khet. After having ended her affair with a young administrator, he shoots and kills himself. This incident brings on the lady's isolation and she and her family have to move. This singulative scene, dare one say, predictably is used to show the resolute finality, which is the consequence of the lady's choice.

Yet this consequence, which is described as a singulative has an iterative effect where every choice hereafter is made based on this experience. The last purely singulative scene is when the girl, now an older woman receives news of her younger brother's death, her intense pain is expressed as outrage and hatred toward God. The singulative once again <closes a door>, this time via the death of her younger brother, which irrevocably and inevitably means that she too now has to face her own mortality. Throughout she has accepted the idea that she must die, but the shock for her is that she was wrong in thinking that immortality was the right of every innocent as she saw embodied by her younger brother.

For Duras the singulative varies in a kind of sway between one event betraying the perpetuating attitude and atmosphere, whilst portraying that event as the ultimate and absolute end of an occurrence.

There is another way in which Duras handles frequency in this novel, where she is able to combine aspects of it. Where the scenes of the iterative do include the singulative, or repetition, or vice versa. These, because of their narrative

positioning, counter each other thus highlighting qualities that contradict or complement, but which may have gone unnoticed had it not been for this crafty technique.

We find an example of such a contradictory scene combination on p96, where the iterative describes the Chinese man's visits to the young girl as "every night". Then included here is repetition of the gentle way in which he loved the girl. We as readers come to understand that this was the way in which he always treated the girl.

On pp.115-116, the iterative again switches over to the singulative and back to the iterative, with the lover's gentle ways of "every night". Which, on hearing of the girl's impending departure, become "one day" when he treated her roughly, thereby expressing his frustration at his inability to keep her with him. But this impotence, which started-off in a singulative scene, becomes habitual, and switches to the "every time" of the iterative.

The novel concludes on the singulative in which the iterative reveals the despair of emotion, when many years later, into the narrator's present, the lover telephones her, and even though this telephone call constitutes a singular act, yet when he tells her he has always and still does love her, we are moving again into the realm of the iterative.

6.5 Conclusion

Frequency lends itself easily to exploitation by the author, perhaps because it so explicitly concurs or contradicts the assumptions of the narrative (*récit*). In this category we see that the author does manipulate here: some things vanish and other things keep coming back. At one extreme there's an empty node baffling readers and implicating a loss, and at the other end there's a node that keeps expanding while being read by the unsuspected reader. This allows very elaborate games of memory—one might imagine a text where all dialogue vanishes after being read once or twice while everything else stays the same, or not quite.

One can say that the concentrated means of frequency can be seen as an expositional means, as well. Since by means of the three choices of frequency and their individual combinations, Duras succeeds in going beyond the surface assumptions, she breaks the (very thin) film of superficiality and goes out the reality of the situation of this so-called superior colonial family. It is through the theoretical exposition of time that the above conclusion and analysis become possible. Genette has gifted a mode of analysis, which time and time again proves itself indelibly and irrevocably inexhaustible, enabling both author and reader to evoke concepts and interpretations limited only to their own perspicacity.

Frequency has proved itself a quite useful tool; it is used to overtly (repetitions) or subtly (iteration/singulative) manipulate the way in which the reader perceives. By these very same means the author is able to manipulate the

interpretation of her/his text. In my opinion, frequency reaches an optimum level of implementation when all of its subcategories interact in such a way that individually and even better together these are able to accentuate the significance of an event or the interrelatedness of numerous events. To the extent that this interrelatedness becomes a mosaic whereupon the aesthetic capability of one piece or event draws from another.

For all that it seems so straightforward, frequency often does become quite complex. But how, anyone can ask, is it now possible to speak of the complexity of frequency when up to now I've been expounding its simplicity? Well perhaps this question can best be answered if I explain that I have through this study discovered that its simplicity is only a superficial one. For example if we take the subcategory of repetition; everyone when confronted with repetition will surely see it for what it is or for what it is meant to imply, which is that there is significance to or in the repeated event. However, this is where the assumption of its simplicity should end, because the significance in the case of the subcategories of frequency is highly contextualized and as such highly individual and unique to its use in a particular narrative. It is when put into its contextual relevance that an analyst or reader would perhaps discover the more profound function of repetition. For instance in the Duras novel *The Lover* the more than a dozen or so repetitions of the young girl's clothing suggest, superficially, that she was tawdry and cheap. However if one puts it (her clothing) in context with her behaviour, her circumstance, a less accusatory picture emerges. As readers our interpretation is now tempered with pity; just think how she so defiantly wears this "outfit", the clothes, unwittingly, become

indicative of the girl's attitude, which suggests defiance, innocence, and sensuality. Now a further deterrent to the first hasty interpretation should also be considered such as the girl's background and the circumstance in which she finds herself, living with an insane mother, a sadistic and abusive older brother and a gentle, but ineffectual younger brother, all this engenders even more pity for this fifteen year old girl who taunts the world with her daring clothes. In fact the mother who sends her daughter out to get more money off men, unscrupulously and cruelly exploits this unwitting sensuality suggested by the clothes. Does the complexity of frequency not rear its multifaceted head here? Where an initial assumption is negated by the context, which in turn often relies on another sub-category of frequency, such as iteration. Which then suggests the permanence of the girl's desolation. This interaction definitely discourages presumption and assumption, which have their basis in a superficial reading of the narrative text. One can say that when frequency operates within the complexity of its numerous juxtapositions it creates a tension which is relieved sometimes only by the introduction of one or the other of its subcategories.

The following quotation by Tamar Yacobi concludes this study of the interplay of the categories of frequency when she says that: "... the juxtaposing poems often preserve the norms of realism [...] they seem to 'compensate' for the perspectival structure by emphasizing the unique, the bizarre sometimes even the marvelous time features of the situation rendered from the conventional viewpoint" (Yacobi 1988 :105).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Does temporal difference between *histoire* and *récit* reveal instances of authorial manipulation and does it affect the reader's decoding of the novel?

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation was exactly the conclusion of the preface, which was to establish how the application of Gerard Genette's theory on time and the temporal disruptions and/or manipulations within a novel can and very often does create a new interpretation or point of view of characters, events situations, etc.; and also to investigate the role of the author in creating these new meanings, interpretations and/or understandings.

My point of departure was that the application of Genette's theory seeks to generate new meanings in place of preconceived ideas, and generalized attitudes.

Genette's theory is based on the differentiation between the story (*histoire*) and the narrative text (*récit*). Where the former comprises the chronological sequence of the basic events as they took place, and the latter comprises the disruption or reconstruction of this chronological sequence.

The story (*histoire*) is not immediately accessible to the reader, in so far as the analysis of the novel is concerned, it has to be abstracted from the narrative

text (*récit*), since the experiences of fictional characters do not have to start with their childhood and relate chronologically all that had happened to them, [...] most narratives deviate from the “real”⁹ chronological sequence of events.

Any device concerning the ordering of events -[...] is a means of foregrounding some things, accenting others, creating aesthetic or psychological affects, or depicting various interpretations of an event, etc.

(Bal 1985:57)

In my view, though, the above statement begs the question of relevance. One would be justified to ask what the significance of such an analysis is, in view of the fact that the actual sequence of events does not appear in the completed story of the narrative text. The fact of the matter is that, the usefulness is explained by saying that the relevance of such an exercise or the answer regarding its use, lies in the importance of an “alienation technique”, which the author employs when s/he wishes to emphasize a certain aspect. Where this “technique” manifests what the author considers important for the reader’s understanding of a character, event, situation, etc. within the novel.

Genette’s theory further acknowledges the role of the author, in his comparison of the *histoire* and the *récit*, since in the telling of the story the author decides where to start and what to leave out till a later date and what should be (totally) omitted and only implied. This decision by the author to withhold information is one of the prime tools of manipulation.

⁹ The word “real” refers to the underlying structure of the narrative text.

It is by means of the comparison between the uninterrupted chronological sequence of the story (*histoire*) and the reconstructed chronological sequence in the narrative text (*récit*), that the reader is able to identify foregrounded data; which in turn smoothes the progress of the (re) interpretation of the narrative text (*récit*). The study of the reconstruction of the chronological sequence which occurs in the narrative text (*récit*) is essential to facilitate the reader in identifying time deviations in the presentation of events, because it allows the reader to assess the impact of such deviation on the narrative.

The time deviations, distinguished by Genette, occur in many different forms, and perform different functions, which frequently run parallel to their main function, that of disrupting the chronology of the narrative. These so-called different forms refer, of course, to the way in which characters, events, situations, etc. are affected by the “game of time”.

Genette says that:

...we can characterize the temporal stance of a narrative only by considering at the same time all the relationships it establishes between its own temporality and that of the story it tells.

(Genette 1980:155)

This is an interesting and seemingly obvious statement; however there is a temptation to apply Genette’s categories regardless of their relevance. So that the temporal aspects of the specific narrative work greatly overshadow all the other aspects of the work. One can say that a text becomes absorbed into the temporal relations.

This grave error runs the risk of eliding the significance of the text itself. It is incumbent on the analyst when investigating the temporal relations of a text to apply Genette's categories in a way that is complementary to the specificity of that text. Genette calls the analyst forward to not only be satisfied with exposing the technique at work, but to see how the motivation of narrative functions, combine with these temporal techniques. When entering into the analysis of the temporal aspect, the analyst would do well to remember that, at every subtle or obvious recourse to time, the author has taken a conscious decision, in order to create contradictions, distortions, subversions, and perversions in and to the meaning and understanding of the text. Bringing to the narrative a dimension, which envelops and complements its aesthetic aspect (cf. Genette 1980:159-160).

By specifically classifying the way in which temporal relations within a novel are disturbed, Genette has opened up how the author via the narrator is able to change the reader's (pre) conception of that which s/he has read. This also offers a means by which the author allows the narrator to filter through information at points where (re) interpretation is at its most influential to the total understanding of the novel.

Still more recently, the French structuralist Gerard Genette has developed a comprehensive theory of narrative and a systematic method for examining its constitutive elements in their dynamic interaction during the process of reading. To say the least, Genette's close study of *A la Recherche du temps perdu* is an impressive achievement, authoritatively demonstrating the

resourcefulness of narratology in coming to terms with even this most immense and complex modernist novel.

(Walker 1997:1)

Bronzwaer contends that the study of how the author relates to the text or her/his novel is facilitated by the analysis of the temporal relations of the novel (cf. Bronzwaer 1970:viii).

In the previous chapters the studies have also focused on the way(s) in which the author influences the text when they disrupt or distort the temporal framework within which the narratorial situation operates. It is a definite operation upon which a function is established, it becomes a means wherein illumination is systematically conveyed, by means of the effects of the deferred or suppressed or allocated information. In instances such as these, where the means by which information is released points to a distortion of the story (*histoire*) by the narrative (*récit*), then a gap occurs—the information is, as far as the reader is concerned—unavailable at that moment of the story or in some cases permanently unavailable. It can become a demanding task for the reader if these “gaps” occur frequently, because they not only have to constantly keep these in mind but they have to collect every relevant and relatable piece of information which would enable them to grasp the meaning and/or significance indicated by these “gaps”. These so-called “gaps” refer not only to the discordance of chronological sequence—but also to the gaps left when a change occurs within the rhythm of the story—where the reader has to consider the reason or significance of the fluctuating speeds. The term gap is also

applicable when there is a variance in the number of times an event occurs at the level of the *histoire* and the number of times it is told in the *récit*. Here “gap” again refers to the way in which the reader tries to relate the significance of why an event has been changed, repeated, or completely elided.

At this point it has been accepted the term “gap”, as used here, is applicable to any withholding or transference of information to conform to whatever purposes of the author. For the author these gaps are not only manifest indicators of significance, but these also become integral to the manipulation of the way(s) in which information is released, where and when these gaps will have an appreciable impact on the universal meaning of the narrative text.

It must also be added that “authorial intent” is not a guarantee that the reader’s interpretation will coincide with any such “intent”. Rather, one could say that the author is “loading the dice” by placing indicators within the text, which should ensure that a certain effect is achieved by these gaps, which set out to deliberately create focus on what might establish the significance of the event, character, situation, etc.; in not only that particular context but within the global context of the novel.

As a concrete example, we look once again at Duras’ text *The Lover*, and recall the ten or so times that the “ferry crossing” is repeated. Yet after reading the novel one can with certainty say that this was the most important and determining event in the young narrator’s life, but when initially faced with this event recurring the second, third or even fourth time, the reader is entitled to

question its significance. This question, which is in essence the “gap”, placed by the author, induces the reader to search for a connection between the event and the fact of its recurrence. In short, the “authorial intent” of delineating focus has been achieved, regardless of the outcome or the reader’s interpretation of this gap. The point of fact is that this event has been incorporated into the meaning system of the novel in such a way that the readers’ understanding thereof affects not only their interpretation of that particular moment of the story, but their perspective toward the entire context is transformed.

Emma Kafelnos, elucidates the significant role understanding has on the realization of the novel:

Understanding that events are related requires at least some understanding about how they are related. For one to be able to grasp a number of events as a configuration entails – being able to grasp individual relationships between event and event, and between event and configuration. These individual relationships, when combined, form a network of relationships that seeing-events-together implies.

(Kafelnos in Herman 1999: 39)

The framework provided by Genette furthermore allows us to perceive the ways in which the author manipulates the text by placing indicators at the significant moments of the story—i.e. by leaving gaps in the information and temporal relationships. Perhaps now we can deal with the question of the author, was

s/he well and truly buried by Barthes in 1968 in his *Death of the Author*, or is she/he still alive to the text. Well, as Rimmon-Kenan and Ginsburg in *Reading Jazz*, emphasize:

The author temporally anteceding the text, he is its origin, privileged owner, and authority, controlling and limiting its meanings. [...] In other words, the construction of meanings in the process of reading is, *a priori*, restricted by him.

(Ginsburg & Rimmon-Kenan in Herman 1999:69)

The authors' relevance should be foregrounded because by their very authorship they are the prime producers of meaning in the text. To me it seems impossible not to acknowledge the author, for how else have signifying systems been integrated into the text to become an autonomous whole, in which meanings proliferate, meanings, which affect the text differently for different readers.

Under no circumstances do I wish to dismiss the narrator, yet its discussion is not relevant to this argument, because the two; author and narrator, are two different and separate elements in and of the text:

"Narrators", we remember, is part of a model designed to account for temporal operations, whereas "author", in our sense, concerns the production of meaning. Consequently, whereas "narrator" is an instance inside the text, the "author" looks both ways, inside and outside.

(Ginsburg & Rimmon-Kenan in Herman 1999:75)

In this instance it is by virtue of the dynamism of the temporal relations that the author's presence is really "felt", this "presence" reverberates throughout the narrative text, creating an awareness of the "hand" controlling the temporal signifiers of meaning "...dynamism envelops the entire of reciprocal relations in which the whole and each participant is potentially in constant change. This potentiality of change signals another difference, not only in the scope but also in the kind of dynamism..." (Ginsburg&Rimmon-Kenan in Herman 1999:75).

This dynamism can be seen to be prevalent in especially the temporal interaction of the novel. It is Genette's systematic definition, which creates awareness for the reader or analyst of the authorial presence in the text. Genette's study and analysis of the role of "time" in the narrative facilitates the exploration of the significance of temporal distortion in a particular novel, when we become aware of the indicators that have been placed at certain points along the time continuum.

I should like to conclude by saying that the temporal categorization and analysis of Genette, provides a sound and provable basis for whatever findings and conclusions the reader/analyst might draw, which result from such systematic exploration; in the end the tools of analysis provided by Genette are not prescriptive nor are they assumptive, but offer a technique that allows the reader/analyst the measures, allowing them to conclude that their interpretation and understanding of a novel is influenced by what the author writes and more importantly how and when the information is distributed

throughout the text. Seymour Chatman underlines the validity and significance of Genette's work:

Thus Genette's formulation is very powerful and comprehensive. It accounts, largely, for the various temporal relations that exist in narratives as functions of the relation between story-time and discourse-time. Naturally, some future narrative artist may devise a form, which cannot be accounted for by any combination of the above features. But until then, Genette's schema will enable us to analyze time-relations in narratives in a much more rigorous fashion than has hitherto been possible.

(Chatman 1974:368)

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