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Narrative Technique and the Craft of Creative Writing: Fundamental Concepts, Aspects and Dimensions

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Abstract: In the craft of creative discourse, the method of narration plays a pivotal role. A writer employs a specific narrative technique and takes recourse to a particular narrative strategy with a view to projecting his perception, his vision of art and life, as well as communicating his concerns and commitments in a way that the reader not only appreciates his works in a better manner, but also shares his attitude and sensibility. In addition, the narrative technique resorted to in a text goes a long way in lending artistic freshness and aesthetic effulgence to it. This paper attempts to explore and examine the fundamental concepts of Narrative Technique and its multi-dimensional facets. It invokes relevant critical texts associated with the manifold aspects of narrative strategies for an insightful survey that brings together the numerous nuances of literary devices and techniques in a concise comprehensive form.

Keywords: Narrative technique, Components, Aspects, Dimensions, Relevance.

Introduction

It is a truism that no two writers write alike. Every writer displays one's own unique 'signature' in the 'way' he/she uses a language for creating a narrative. Even if the content or the substance is similar, each writer configures the individual perception and sensibility in a characteristics manner that distinguishes him/her from all others. Even when the two writers have similar perceptions or project the same outlook, the literary creation of one becomes distinctively distinguishable from that of the other. What fundamentally distinguish one writer from another are the individual nature of his or her sensibility and the style of articulation. One may have a lyrical temperament, another may be of a satirical bent of mind, still another may have a mystical strain in his sensibility; One may be highly subjective, another more down to earth. It is for these reasons that different writers exploit different narrative techniques, narrative strategies

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or narrative devices. A specific narrative technique or narrative-device is used in a work of literature by an author, with a view to producing a specific desired effectiveness. Narrative technique is one of the basic elements of a work of fiction along with character, plot, setting and theme. 'Character' is the 'who', 'plot' is the 'what', 'setting' is 'where and when', and 'narrative style' is the 'how' of a story. In very simple terms, it can be said that Narrative technique is the method in which a story is told. All works of fiction tell a story, but what sets them apart is the particular technique exploited to tell a story. As C. Hugh Holman states:

> A novel may concentrate upon character, almost to the exclusion of incident or plot. It may be merely a series of incidents strung together like beads on a string, as the Picaresque novel tends to be. It may be firmly plotted, with a structure as firm and sure as that of a Tragedy. It may attempt to present the details of life with a scientist's detached and objective completeness, as in Naturalism; or it may try by image and linguistic and syntactic modification to reproduce the unconscious flow of emotions, as in the Stream of Consciousness Novel. It may be episodic, loose in structure, epic in proportions – what is called 'panoramic', or it may be as tightly knit as a well made play, bringing its material for word in dramatic orderliness — what is called 'Scenic.' (Holman 354-55).

The study of Narrative-structure, which is termed as 'Narratology' can be defined more closely as the study of how narratives make meaning, and what the basic mechanism and procedures are which are common to all acts of storytelling. 'Narratology', then, is not the reading and interpretation of individual stories, but the attempt to study the nature of 'story' itself, as a concept and as a cultural practice. Tzvetan Todorov coined the term 'narratology' for the structuralist analysis of any given narrative into its constituent parts to determine their functions and relationships. Penguin dictionary by J.A.Cuddon denotes the term 'Narratology' as "theory, discourse or critique of narrative/narration" (533), while M.H.Abrams in *A Glossary of Literaty Terms* writes:

> Narratology denotes recent concerns with the general theory and practice of narrative in all literary forms. It deals especially with types of narrators, the identification of structural elements and their diverse modes of combination, recurrent narrative devices, and the analysis of the kinds of discourse by which a narrative gets told, as well as with the narrate— that is, the explicit or implied person or audience to whom the narrator addresses the narrative. (Abrams 173).

The term 'discourse' is used to describe the stylistic choices that determine how the narrative text or performance finally appears to the audience or in other words, the way in which events are narrated in a narrative. For example, one of the stylistic decisions may be to present events in a non-chronological order, say using flashbacks to reveal

motivations at a dramatic moment. The most influential work on 'discourse' is Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse,* which classifies 'discourse' into three basic categories: tense (the relation between story time and discourse time), mood (forms and degrees of narrative representation), and voice (the way in which the narrating itself is implicated in the narrative). On the surface, the narratological distinction between story and discourse seems to match stylistics' distinction between content and style. But on a closer analysis, 'style' and 'discourse' seem to connote different aspects of a narrative. As Dan Shen states:

> The relation between narratology's 'discourse' and stylistics' 'style' is one of superficial similarity and essential difference, because discourse is primarily concerned with modes of presentation that go beyond strictly linguistic matters, and style is in general concerned more narrowly with choices of language. The narratological distinction between story and discourse is one between story and discourse is one between 'what' is told and 'how' to transmit the story; similarly, the traditional stylistic distinction between content and style is one between 'what one has to say' and 'how one says it'. (Shen 136)

The fundamental discrimination upon which all modern narratological theory is founded, is between the two 'levels' of story and discourse; between 'what really happened'— which is the content of the narrative, and how 'what really happened', is told'— which is the presentation of the narrative. In simpler terms it can be said that— the story is the 'what' in a narrative that is depicted; the discourse is the 'how'. Russian formalists of the 1920's such as Victor Shlovsky and Boris Eichenbaum adhered to the two-level model of story and discourse. They made a parallel distinction between the 'Fabula' that is the elemental materials of a story and the 'Syuzhet' that is the concrete representation used to convey the story. Roger Fowler asserts:

> The Russian Formalists half a century ago distinguished between 'Fabula'— story-material as pure chronological sequence- and 'suzet'— the plots as arranged and edited by the shaping of a story-teller, i.e. the finished narrative work as we experience it in a text; no longer pure story but a selective narrative act'. Modern French poetics works with a distinction derived from the Russian distinction: a narrative has two dimensions of structure, 'histoire' and 'discours' story-matter and its manner of delivery. (Fowler 78).

The narrative structure of a play, tale or novel has traditionally been called the 'plot'. M.H.Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* states that 'plot' in a dramatic or narrative work is constituted by its events and action, as these are ordered and rendered towards achieving particular emotional and artistic effects"(224). A plot is the aesthetically oriented structure that, unlike story, is artistically constructed and endowed with

emotional effect. A story aims at information, whereas plot renders aesthetic pleasure through its technique of thematic defamiliarization. The 'story' is the actual sequence of events as they happen, where as the 'plot' is those events as they are edited, ordered, packaged, and presented in what we recognize as a narrative. This is a crucial distinction; the 'story', being the events as they happen, has to begin at the beginning, of course, and then move chronologically, with nothing left out. The 'plot', on the other hand, may well begin somewhere in the middle of a chain of events, and might then backtrack, providing the readers with a 'flashback' which fill up things that happened earlier. The plot may even have elements that flash forward, hinting at events that will happen later. In this regard, Peter Barry asserts:

> Most current North American writing on narratology uses the term 'story', but instead of 'plot' the term 'discourse' is often preferred. This I think, is sensible, because it isn't just 'plot' in the narrow sense which is at issue, but style, viewpoint, pace and so on, which is to say, the whole 'packaging' of the narrative which creates the overall effect. Gerard Genette uses yet another set of equivalent terms, these being 'histoire', which has the same meaning as 'story' or 'fabula', and 'recit', which means the same as 'plot' or 'sjuzhet.'(Barry 223)

It can thus be said that the 'Narrative Technique' employed by an author is instrumental in shaping the plot or discourse of a particular literary work. All narratives are uttered, whether metaphorically or literally, by the voice of a narrator. That voice may be presented as completely disembodied, as that of a narrator who is nothing more than a voice or a mere telling- medium, an 'it' rather that a 'he' or 'she', entirely uninvolved in the events recounted. In addition, the voice of a narrator may be presented as that of a complexly developed character deeply involved in those events. The voice of the narrator may occupy any one of a potentially infinite number of intermediate positions between these extremes, involving perceived degrees of personality or abstraction, participation or non-participation, knowledge or ignorance, reliability or unreliability. In this regard, Norman Friedman enumerates the multiple questions that a narrator faces in adequately transmitting his/her story to the readers:

> Who talks to the reader—the author in third or first person, the character in person or ostensibly no one; from what position or angle regarding the story does he tell—periphery, center, front or shifting; what channels of information does the narrator use to convey the story to the reader—author's words thoughts and actions or character's thoughts, perceptions, feelings or actions and at what distance does he place the reader from the story- near, far or shifting. (Friedman 1162)

The disembodied narrating-voice that narrates the story with neutrality, transparency and omnipotence is called 'non-dramatized' narrator. The other kind of narrator is the

one who is identified as a distinct named character with a personal history, gender and individual personality. Such a narrator is called 'dramatized narrator', who can either be a 'heterodiegetic' narrators, (who is not a character in the story he or she narrates, but an outsider to it), or a 'homodiegetic' narrator who is present as a character in the story he tells). A homodiegetic narrator' describes his or her personal and subjective experiences as a character in the story and so, such a narrator cannot know anything more about what goes on in the minds of any of the other characters than is revealed through their actions. A 'heterodiegetic narrator' describes the story events as if they are seen through the eyes of a third person. Omniscient narrators are necessarily heterodiegetic. In a third person narrative, the narrator is someone outside the story proper who refers to all the characters of the story by name, or as 'he', 'she' or they.

The third-person point of view can be further categorized into various kinds. It can be the omniscient point of view, where the narrators knows everything that needs to be known about the agents, actions and events and has privileged access to the characters thoughts, feelings and motives. The third person narrator may even possess editorial omniscience, which signifies a completely unlimited variety of 'point of view'. The story may be seen from any or all angles at will. It could be seen from center, the periphery, or front. The author could choose any of the angles or he could shift from one angle to other as often or rarely as he pleases. The reader, accordingly has access to the complete range of possible kinds of information. The distinguishing feature of 'Editorial Omniscience' is the thought, feelings and perceptions of the author himself. He is free not only to inform the readers about the ideas and emotions within the mind of his characters but also of his own. The characteristic mark of Editorial Omniscience is the presence of authorial intrusions and generalizations about life, manners and morals, which may or may not be explicitly related to the story at hand. In Neutral Omniscience, there is the absence of direct authorial intrusions. Thus in the Neutral Omniscience point of view, the intrusive narrators is one who not only reports but also comments and evaluates the actions and motives of the characters and sometimes expresses personal views about human life in general. On the other hand, the Omniscient narrators may even be unobtrusive or impersonal, who for the most part describes, reports or shows the actions in dramatic scenes without introducing his own comments or judgments. In some cases third person narrator , could also be with limited point of view, i.e. the narrator tells the story in the third person, but stays inside the confines of what is perceived, thought, remembered and left by a single character within the story. The technique of 'limited point of view' has, further development into 'Stream of Consciousness' narration, in which the narrate or the fictive reader is presented with outer observations only as they impinge on the continuous current of thoughts, memory, feelings and associations which constitute a particular observers total awareness. Thus the 'Stream of Consciousness' technique,

also called the interior monologue is a device for the direct introduction of the reader into the interior life of a character, without any interventions in the way of explanation or commentary on the part of the author. It is also a device for the expression of the most intimate thoughts, those that lie nearest to the unconscious mind. It would be worthwhile here to consider the remarks of Roger Fowler in this regard:

> The novelist ultimately controls the actions of his characters, their thoughts, their speech, their appearance and all their other qualities; he knows everything about them. But in his presentation of his characters, he need not seen to be omniscient or omnipotent he may or may not choose to appear as a knowing puppet-master. He has a number of options as to how much, and how, he reveals; to what extent he allows the character's consciousness to be liberated from his own, and to what extent their thoughts are infiltrated and coloured by the quality of his own thoughts. (Fowler 89)

Narrators are further differentiated from each other by the way they operate. A narrator may present himself more overtly by drawing the reader's attention to his own role and establishing very clearly, what his own attitude and opinion are. He may behave more covertly by remaining in the background instead and keeping his opinions to himself. The narrator may even be reliable or unreliable or be situated at any point on the scale between these two positions. Quite often, a narrator is 'reliable' when he is sovereignly detached and distanced from the action he describes and thus his narrative is entirely objective, and so external narrators mostly are reliable narrators. A narrator is 'unreliable' at times, when the narrative voice belongs to a character-narrator, who recounts form personal knowledge or hearsay, the doings of his fellow characters and whose narrative objectivity is coloured to some extent by his limited knowledge and by his personal attitude towards the characters.

Narrative structure is both syntagmatic, as regards the linear temporal sequence of the story and paradigmatic, as regards the shape of the particular discourse chosen to related the story. French narrtologist Gerard Genette has established three basic temporal categories, namely 'order', 'duration' and 'frequency'for answering the questions of When, How long and How often respectively. The category of order may contrast the 'real' chronological order in which the events of the story took place and the order in which they are recounted by the particular narrative discourse. Thus events occurring in the story in the order '1-2-3-4-5' would also be recounted in the order '1-2-3-4-5' in a completely neutral discursive ordering. But for other types of cases, Genette catalogues a number of anachronies or deviations from this neutral mirroring of the chronological order. They are 'analepis' or the flashback and 'prolepis' or the flashforward. Such anachronics may be either 'external', involving the narration of events 'before' or 'after' the main or primary narrative time or they may be 'internal' involving the narration of events within the main narrative time.

The category 'duration' contrasts the amount of 'real' time elapsed in the story and the amount of 'discourse' time, which is the textual space involved in presenting it. The unit of measurement of duration is the discursive speed, classified in terms of acceleration or deceleration. Genette has proposed five canonical tempos —'ellipsis,' 'summary', 'scene', 'stretch' and 'pause'. The 'ellipsis' is the maximum discursive speed, where the relevant events are not reported at all. In the 'summary', story time is finitely greater than discourse-time. For example "After three years of hard work at university, she emerged with a brilliant academic-degree"; or "Time passed, and the children grew up into youngsters"; —such are the example of 'summary'. In the 'scene', the story-time and discourse-time are theoretically equal, as in the case of dialogue. In 'stretch' or slow motion, story time is less than discourse-time, as in the slow motion coverage of an event. The 'pause' finally is the minimum discursive speed, where more or less lengthy passage of narration of a descriptive or reflective or essayistic nature corresponds to no event at all in the story or the story-time is infinitely less than the discourse-time in the sense that the story-time is zero.

The category of 'frequency' refers to the number of times an event really happened in the story and the number of times it is narrated. Regarding frequency there are four basic possibilities: singulative narration (the most normal kind that recounts once what happened once), repetitive narration (recounts more than once what really happened only once), iterative narration (recounts only once what really happened more than once in the story) and irregular frequency (occurs when what really happened several times is also recounted several, but a different number of, times).

The multifarious ways in which characters emerge from the words on the page are the most fascinating aspects of narrative theory and narrative practice. The process of characterization involves three intersecting processes — a process of construction by the author, a process of reconstruction by the reader, and a process of pre-construction by contextual constraints and expectations. The Russian Formalist, Thomashevsky has set out three kinds of characterization. They are direct characterization, 'indirect characterization' and 'mask'. In 'direct characterization', the author may characterize the figure directly by a straightforward report, he may have other characters discuss about a particular character, or he may have the character tell about himself in a confession of some sort. In 'indirect characterization', the character portrays himself through his actions or conduct.

The narrator, however reliable he or she may prove to be, cannot be said to be the ultimately authoritative source of the narrative encountered by the readers. There is an agency called 'implied author' who directs the readers to the synthesis of the story. He is identical neither with any narrator nor with the real author. The 'implied author' emerges only from the overall reading of the positions, values and opinions espoused

by the narrative text as a whole, re-constructed by that reading as the semantically necessary authorial stance demanded by the particular text. These opinions and values may or may not be the same as those of the real author.

'Narration', which is the process of transforming story into text, can also be termed as a combination of a number of acts of arrangements performed by the implied author involving certain essential elements. These are: Chronologization— or the arrangement of time, transforming action into plot; Localization—the arrangement of space, transforming place into setting; Characterization — the arrangement of personality traits, transforming actors into characters; Focalization — the arrangement of narrative perspective; Verbalization—the arrangement of words on the page, duly received by the reader as the voice of the narrator and Validation of the narrators degree of reliability. The relationship between the implied author and the narrator is thus an essentially ironic one, for while the narrator always deals in semantic information, the implied author, as 'silent narrator' behind the narrative voice, always deals in the signal information that tells the reader how the semantic information should be understood.

The basic narrative mode can either be 'mimetic' or at other times 'diegetic'. Those parts of a narrative that are 'dramatized' and presented in a 'scenic' manner along with dialogues in direct speech, are said to be presented in a mimetic manner. On the other hand, those parts of narrative which are just told or referred to in a summarizing' rapid way are said to be presented in diegetic manner, where the narrator just 'says' what happens, without trying to show it as it happens. Peter Barry points out that:

> In practice, of course, writers use the two modes in tandem, moving from mimetic to diegetic, and back again, for strategic reasons. This is partly because an entirely mimetic novel would tend to be infinitely long, and an entirely diegetic one could hardly be more than a couple of pages, and would read like a plot summary (Barry 231-232).

The narrator and the implied author are not the only agents involved in the narrative transaction on the relevant diegetic level. Not only is the story told on respective diegetic levels by the narrator, the implied author and the real time author, there is another kind of 'telling' going on too. Thus, between narrator and author, there is one more narrative level, that of narration constructed by the 'implied author' and his/her counterpart, the 'implied reader', i.e. the hypothetical reader who is perfectly attuned to every textual nuance incorporated into the narrative by the implied author. The implied author is never seen or heard and so his presence can only be inferred. Wayne C. Booth's observation in this regard, explains this point further:

> Even the novel, in which no narrator is dramatized, creates an implicit picture of an author who stands behind the scenes, whether as stage manager, as puppeteer, or as

> an indifferent god, silently paring his fingernails. This implied author is always distinct from the "real man"— whatever we may takes him to be, who creates a superior version of himself, a "second self," as he creates his work. (Booth 151)

'Focalization' is the most important and most subtle means of manipulation available to the narrative text. The story is presented in the text through the mediation of some 'prism', 'perspective'. 'Angle of vision' verbalized by the narrator though not necessarily his; and this mediation is called 'focalization' (Kenan-72). The focalizer is not a person or an agent in the way that the narrator or implied author is a narrative agent, but rather a chosen 'point'— the point from which the narrative is perceived as being presented at any given moment. Focalization has both a subject and an object. The subject (focalizer) is the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the object (the focalized) is what the focalizer perceives. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan remarks:

> The overall language of a text is that of the narrator, but focalization can 'colour' it in a way which makes it appear as a transposition of the perceptions of a separate agent. Thus both the presence of a focalizer other than the narrator and the shift from one focalizer to another may be signaled by language. (Kenan 84)

Focalization can be either external or internal to the story. Peter Barry explains the term 'focalization' as 'viewpoint or 'perspective', which is to say the point-of-view from which the story is told, and speaks of 'external' and 'internal' focalization in these terms:

> In 'external' focalization, the viewpoint is 'outside' the character depicted, so that we are told only things which are external or observable— that is, what the characters say and do, … in the opposite, 'internal focalization', the focus is on what the characters 'think' and 'feel' . (Barry 232-33)

The vehicle of focalization called 'focalizer' may be perceived as external-focalizer in some cases, where as internal-focalizer to the story presented, in other cases. The external focalizer is usually a 'narrator- focalizer', while the internal focalizer is usually a 'character-focalizer'. A threefold distinction is made between types of focalization. In the 'fixed focalization' the same focalizer is maintained throughout a narrative. In 'variable focalization' two different character focalizers are employed; and in 'Multiple focalization' several different types of internal, external, fixed and variable focalization are employed. Focalization, however involves not only a subject of focalization, or focalizer, it also involves an object of focalization— the focalized. Characters can be focalized either 'from outside' or 'from within'. When focalized from without, a character is 'seen' by the focalizer as impenetrable, non-transparent, opaque object, as viewed from the outside only. Therefore, the focalizer's vision simply registers the focalized with a certain degree of objectivity or subjectivity. But, when the character is focalized 'from within', that is 'seen' by the focalizer 'from within', the focalizer can read the mind of the

character, he could see through them as transparent rather than opaque objects; so, the focalizer's vision can be transmitted, to a greater or lesser extent, into the vision of the focalized. Combined with the fact that focalization can be either internal or external, this potential transformation of focalized and focalizer provides a whole series of new perspectives. There are three levels of focalization— simple, compound and complex. Simple focalization, involving a single focalizer, can be said to occur when a single narrator also functions as focalizer for the entire duration of the text under consideration. Simple focalization even occurs in case of multiple narrators, as long as each individual narrator functions sequentially as sole foclozier for the duration of that portion of text under consideration. Simple focalization is limited to narrator-focalizers. Compound focalization always involves whether explicitly or implicitly, some form of embedded focalization, where one focalzation is contained within another. The narrator is thus always a focalizer, having no choice whether to focalize or not. He has the choice of only how to do so. The narrator, thus, has a particular 'vision' of the narrative world he/she projects. Character focalization is always compound; complex-focalization provides simultaneously with too much and too little information to make a definite decision as to the location of the focalizer. Complex focalization is thus essentially characterized by indeterminacy. Sometimes a novelist gives the descriptions is a way as if it can freely enter the minds and emotions of most of the characters in the tale and can authentically reveal their thought and feelings. This kind of narrative can be said to have 'Zero focalization' as in such cases no conceptual or perceptual constraints govern what is being presented. The more familiar name of 'Zero focalization' is 'Omniscient narration'.

Stories are not always presented by novelists in 'straight' manner. For narration of a story, the writers of fiction often make use of 'frame narratives' which contain within them 'embedded narratives'. Frame narratives are also called 'primary narratives' while the embedded narratives are called 'secondary narratives'. Primary narrative really just means the narrative that comes first, rather than the main narrative, which in fact it usually is not. The secondary narrative is the one that is embedded into the primary narrative. The secondary narrative is usually the main story. Gerard Genette calls the embedded narratives 'meta-narratives' —which is "a narrative within the narrative" (Genette.228). For instance, the individual tales of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales,* which are embedded within the frame narrative of the pilgrimage to Canterbury, are meta-narratives, that is, tales within a tale. Roger fowler refers to two different types of structures in any piece of literary work, namely 'surface structure' and 'deep structure'. Readers can comprehend surface structure directly, but "retrieve deep structure, or meaning, only by a complex act of decoding" (Fowler 6).

All discourse choices are ultimately motivated, determined, justified, patterned and explained in terms of the author's silent communicative design. From the reader's

side, everything goes in reverse. French theorist and the exponent of poststructuralist theory, Roland Barthes asserts that a text is focused on the reader for being decoded, who "holds together in a single field all the traces buy which the written text is constituted" (Barthes 148); for it is the reader's 'de-coding' which makes sense of all of the factors that narratives bring into play. Faced with the data as transmitted, the reader progressively infers and if necessary, remakes some line of transmission along which they assume operative shape: the one presumably designed by the ultimate, reticent yet self-conscious communicator, readers' opposite number. By self-consciousness, it is meant the discoursers awareness of addressing an audience, while transmitting a message through the medium of a fictional tale.

Quite often, Narrative texts implicitly keep promising the reader that the best is yet to come, thus stimulating readers' interest, curiosity or suspense. This is done by means of the narrative technique of delay and gaps. Regarding this narrative strategy, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan states that:

> Depending on the temporal dimention to which the withheld information belongs, delay can create suspense of two different types— future-oriented and past-oriented (i.e. oriented towards the future or the past of the story. The past oriented delay consists in keeping alive questions like 'what happened?' 'Who did it?', 'why', 'what is the meaning of all this?' Here story-time may go on, but reader's comprehension of the narrated events is impeded by the omission of information, i.e. the creation of a gap about the past or the present. Delay thus turns the reading process (or one of its aspects) into a guessing game, an attempt to solve riddle or a puzzle. (Kenan 126-27)

No tale can be told in its entirety. No matter how detailed is the narration or the presentation, further questions can always be asked and in this way, the gaps in any narrative always remain open, which give the opportunity to the readers to use their own faculty for establishing connections and filling in the gaps left by the text itself. Referring to the use of 'gaps' as a narrative-device, Shlomith Rammon-Kenan states that :

> The most typical gap in narrative fiction is the hermeneutic (also called 'information gap'). … The hermeneutic aspect of reading consists in detecting an enigma (a gap), searching for clues, forming hypotheses, trying to choose among them and (more often than not) constructing one finalized hypothesis. Hermeneutic gaps can range from very trivial ones, which are either filled-in automatically or do not require filling in, to gaps which are so crucial and central in the narrative as to become the very pivot of the reading process. (Kenan 129-30)

Temporary gaps result from a discrepancy between story-time and text-time. A past oriented delay necessarily involves a gap. A prolepsis may also create a gap by leaving

out various stages between the first narrative and the predicted future. An analepsis, on the other hand, often fills-in an anterior gap, but it may also create a new gap by giving a different slant to already-narrated events, thus making it difficult to reconcile fresh impressions with 'old' ones. Created by temporal displacements, such gaps exist in the text alone. In the abstracted story, the withheld information will appear in its appropriate place in the chronology. Permanent gaps, on the other hand, exist in both story and text, the information is never given. Thus, a gap in the story entails a gap in the text, but a gap in the text need not entail a corresponding gap in the story. Gaps are thus used to enhance interest and curiosity gaps of the reader, prolong the reading process and they contribute to the reader's dynamic participation in making the text signify. In this way 'delay' and 'gaps' are the two ways of slowing down comprehension and creating suspense thereby making the narrative more interesting for the readers.

Conclusion

In the formulation of narrative technique or narrative strategy in a work of fiction, a writer has to take into account all aforementioned basic factors upon which the fabric of a narrative discourse rests. To project a specific information, message or vision in a way that the reader not only understands the information conveyed, but also shares the attitude and sensibility of the author, it becomes imperative that the most tellingly appropriate narrative technique shall be employed in the narrative. To convey the vastness and complexities of experiences and life, a writer has to experiment with various techniques of narration that can facilitate the projection of his sensibility, vision and themes in a most effective manner. For a proper understanding of a literary work, particularly a novel, the reader requires to zero in on 'how' the writer says rather than 'what' he says, because it is only the specific narrative strategy or technique resorted to in the novel today that matters most.

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