

Fragmentation and Narrative Form in the Modern Novel: Temporality, Structure, and the Ethics of Reading

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Abstract

This paper explores the modern novel through the lens of fragmentation and form, seeking to understand how form informs temporality, interpretation, and ethical reading. By appealing to Russian Formalism's insights into defamiliarization (Shklovsky, 1917/1965), fabula–sjuzhet distinction (Tomashevsky, 1925), and Tynianov's (1927) emphasis on the development of form, the paper aims to demonstrate how the novel's capacity to organize narrative discourse is integral to its ability to affect interpretation and ethical engagement. The paper further borrows from the findings of narrative theorists and reader-response critics in its analysis of the temporality of plot, the role of perspective, and the ethics of reading. In particular, the paper argues that the modern novel is a multifunctional system in which fragmentation, structure, and reader-response interact to produce meaning, aesthetic effects, and ethical consequences.

Keywords: Narrative Fragmentation, Modern Novel, Temporality, Narrative Structure, Reader Engagement, Ethical Reading, Formalist Theory

1. Introduction

The modern novel has been historically associated with the capacity to organize narrative discourse in complex ways and explore multifaceted issues in social life. Unlike poetry or drama, which have been traditionally linked to specific aesthetic functions and forms, the novel has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to experiment with time and perspective in order to engage readers in the process of comprehension and evaluation. Formalist critics have been particularly invested in the unique capacities of the novel as a literary genre. Their contributions to the theoretical understanding of the novel's form and structure have been crucial in demonstrating how novels affect interpretation and ethical reading. The present paper argues that the modern novel is a multifunctional system in which fragmented temporal sequences, structural arrangements, and readerly response interact to produce meaning, aesthetic effects, and ethical consequences. The paper appeals to the insights of Russian Formalism and contemporary narratology to explore how the structure of the novel informs ethical reading and encourages readerly engagement.

Viktor Shklovsky's (1917/1965) concept of defamiliarization is particularly useful in understanding how the novel constructs meaning through form. Shklovsky's emphasis on the formal peculiarities of literary language and narrative technique has far-reaching implications for the study of the novel's structure and ethics. In particular, Shklovsky's (1917/1965) discussion of the ways in which literature makes familiar things unfamiliar has important implications for the novel's capacity to affect interpretation and ethical reading. The temporal peculiarities of narrative structure, which have been discussed at length by critics who appeal to Russian Formalism's theoretical framework, are integral to the novel's capacity to engage readers in the interpretive process. Boris Tomashevsky (1925) has demonstrated that the novel's capacity to reorder temporal sequences is inseparable from its ability to affect interpretation. Tomashevsky's distinction between fabula and sjuzhet highlights the ways in which the novel constructs meaning by appealing to the structural peculiarities of narrative discourse. Similarly, Yuri Tynianov (1927) has argued that the development of the novel as a genre has been historically linked to the evolution of formal techniques that shape narrative structure. Contemporary scholars have furthered the discussion of the novel's temporal organization and its implications for interpretation and ethics.

The paper appeals to the findings of reader-response critics and narrative theorists to discuss the ethical implications of the novel's formal structure. In particular, Wolfgang Iser's (1978) analysis of the novel's indeterminacy and the associated readerly expectations is useful in understanding the ways in which the novel engages readers in the interpretive act. Iser's insights into the novel's structure and its impact on readerly response have been complemented by other scholars' contributions, including Wayne C. Booth's (1961) emphasis on the role of the novel's rhetorical strategies in constructing ethical meaning. The paper builds on these findings to discuss the ways in which the novel's structural peculiarities affect temporal perception and, by extension, ethical reading.

The discussion of the novel's formal structure and its implications for ethics and reader response builds on the findings of contemporary scholars. In particular, the paper integrates the findings of studies published in the journals *Narrative*, *Poetics Today*, and *Modern Language Quarterly*. These studies demonstrate that the novel's structural organization, which has been discussed in detail by Russian Formalism scholars and contemporary theorists, plays a crucial role in shaping readerly inference, interpretation, and evaluation. The paper's analysis of the novel's formal structure and ethics benefits from the insights of these studies, which appeal to the methodologies of formalist criticism, reader-response theory, and other approaches to the study of the novel.

1.1 Research Gap

Although the previous scholarship on the novel provides an extensive basis for interpreting its formal, temporal, readerly particularities, as well as ethical relevance, each of these questions has been addressed in isolation from the others. Russian Formalism of Propp, Shklovsky, Tomashevsky, and Tynyanov drew attention to the centrality of form and its distinctive devices, as well as to the problems of composition, presentation, and differentiation between story and plot. Later narratologists tackled the question of time, duration, frequency, perspectives, and focalization that distinguish different modes of storytelling. Reader-response critics have focused their efforts on the question of reception, emphasizing the role of the reader's expectations, involvement, and judgments. Finally, the critics concerned with ethics attempted to relate aesthetics and ethics, asking how the problems of fiction relate to practical judgment. All these problems have been addressed separately, despite the fact that the novel as an art form is multi-faceted and raises fundamental questions in more than one domain. The central issue of the novel's fragmentariness provides a theoretical basis for integrating these topics, since the nature of this particular quality has not been fully revealed yet. Indeed, while most scholars tend to agree that fragmentariness is one of the most salient characteristics of the modern novel, its origins, mechanisms and patterns are still unclear.

Indeed, fragmentariness in the novel has been considered either as a form-related issue, a temporal disruption peculiar to certain genres, or a problem of construction that demands the reader's special attention. Fragmentariness has been related to formal innovation, as the hallmark of modernist or postmodernist writing that puts an accent on form. It has been considered a rupture of chronology, a deformation of the time pattern, as well as a special narrative mode with distinctive temporal features. It has been regarded as a problem of reconstruction of facts and events, as well as the special role of brackets and ellipses in the narrative act. These issues, indeed, are closely intertwined, and the ways in which formal patterns affect the form of temporality, as well as the readers' responses and ethical judgments should be carefully examined. The present research endeavour will attempt to bridge the gap between Formalism's preoccupation with form, later narratological and reader-response accounts of time and ethics and offer a new perspective on the nature of the novel. The novel as an art form constructs temporality in a distinctive way that warrants further investigation. The main questions raised in this research project will relate to ethical and readerly particularities of the formal disruptions of chronological order, and the ways in which such disruptions shape the reader's temporal experience and ethical judgments.

1.2 Objectives of the study

- i. To examine Formalism's perspective on the nature of the formalistic elements as well as their role in elucidating the structure of the modern novel.
- ii. To find out how the fragmentation helps to represent the structure and the chronological organization of the plot.
- iii. To identify the role of the readers in constructing the impression of fragmentation and multifarious forms of the literature.
- iv. To concentrate on the form of fiction, reader-response, and ethics of novels.
- v. To gain an intensive understanding of the structure of the novel and the multiple approaches to its representation based on the analysis which combines Formalism, narratology, reader-response criticism, ethical theory, and historical-cultural contextualization.

1.3 Methodology

The research will adopt a qualitative and interpretive approach to studying relationships and interconnections between such literary devices as the novel's form, including fragmentation and temporality, reader-response, and ethics. It will employ a predominantly theoretical and analytical nature based on examining Russian Formalism narratological, reader-response, rhetorical, and ethical methodologies, and approaches to the novel from cultural-historical studies.

Firstly, the study will be based on an analytical review of the critical literature and articles concerned with the nature of the novel's form and reader-response to it. In this context, the works of Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Tomashevsky, Yury Tynjanov, Valentinian Vladimirovich Prop, Wolfgang Iser, Wayne Booth, Ricoeur, Gerard Genette, James Phelan, David Herman, Georg Lukacs, Mikhail Bakhtin, Fredrick Jameson, Franco Moretti, and other critics and scholars. Furthermore, the current research will include a comparison of the approaches described above to analysing the novel's form to highlight their differences and similarities.

A comparative and interdisciplinary analysis of the concepts and methods used in the study of the novel will be the basis of the current paper. In this regard, the paper will attempt to establish connections between the concepts of defamiliarization, Fabula/sjuzhet, and formal transformation, developed by Russian Formalism, with such narratological categories as temporality, perspectives, and points of view. In addition, this study will explore the concepts of response, expectation, and reception from the reader-response theory in connection to the rhetorical and ethical methods of analyzing the novel. At the same time, this research will not focus on the differences between the approaches but instead will highlight how their various methods and concepts intertwine to provide a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of the narratological characteristics of the novel, including temporality, and ethics. As such, the study will argue that form(time) and ethics in the novel are interconnected.

Finally, based on the approaches described above, the methodology will allow the research to adopt a primarily theoretical and conceptual framework. The study will be based mainly on interpreting the selected theories and criticism. However, the current research will not follow a predominantly theoretical methodology because, first of all, the paper focuses on reader-response analysis rather than quantitative analysis of the novel's form. Secondly, this study will develop a set of hypotheses concerning the connections between the form(time) and ethics in the modern novel.

1.4 Theoretical Framework: Formalist Theory of the Novel

The theoretical basis for this paper's analysis of the novel's structure and ethics is provided by the findings of Russian Formalism. Formalist critics have been instrumental in advancing the understanding of the novel's formal peculiarities, including the ways in which it constructs meaning through structure. The present paper integrates a number of Formalism's theoretical contributions to the discussion of the novel's structure and ethics. In particular, the paper appeals to Viktor Shklovsky's (1917/1965) insights into the ways in which literary language and narrative techniques contribute to the novel's capacity to affect interpretation and ethical

reading. Shklovsky's (1917/1965) analysis of defamiliarization is particularly relevant to the study of the novel's formal structure and its implications for ethics. Shklovsky's (1917/1965) discussion of the ways in which literature disrupts the natural flow of perception informs the analysis of the novel's capacity to reorder temporal sequences and engage readers in the interpretive process. The analysis of the novel's formal structure and ethics benefits from Shklovsky's (1917/1965) emphasis on the formal peculiarities of literary discourse, including the novel's formal techniques that disrupt the natural flow of perception.

Another important contribution to the study of the novel's structure and ethics comes from Boris Tomashevsky (1925). Tomashevsky's analysis of narrative structure and its impact on meaning construction has far-reaching implications for the discussion of the novel's ethics. The discussion of the novel's formal structure begins with Tomashevsky's (1925) emphasis on the temporal peculiarities of narrative discourse, which have been demonstrated to be integral to the novel's capacity to affect interpretation and ethical reading. In particular, Tomashevsky's (1925) distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzhet* highlights the ways in which the novel constructs meaning by appealing to the structural peculiarities of plot organization. The insights of Tomashevsky (1925) and Shklovsky (1917/1965) are further complemented by Yury Tynianov's (1927) analysis of the novel's formal structure. Tynianov (1927) argues that the novel's development as a genre has been historically linked to the evolution of structural techniques that shape temporal organization and narrative discourse.

The paper's analysis of the novel's formal structure and ethics benefits from the findings of contemporary scholars. In particular, the discussion of the novel's structure and ethics appeals to the insights of reader-response theorists and narrative scholars. The findings of reader-response critics inform the discussion of the novel's implications for ethical reading. The analysis of the novel's temporal organization and structural techniques draws on the findings of narrative theorists, who have examined the implications of formal structure for the process of interpretation. The paper integrates the findings of such studies as published in the journals *Poetics Today* and *Narrative*. These studies highlight the importance of formal structure in the novel's capacity to affect interpretation and ethical reading. The paper further appeals to the findings of secondary literature published in a variety of journals to discuss the ways in which the novel's structural peculiarities contribute to the interpretive and ethical engagement with narrative discourse. The discussion benefits from the insights of critics who appeal to both Formalism's theoretical framework and contemporary approaches to the study of the novel's structure.

The analysis of the novel's formal structure and implications for ethical reading begins with the discussion of fragmentation. In particular, the paper examines the ways in which the novel's formal structure disrupts chronological temporality to affect interpretation and ethical engagement. Fragmentation has been discussed in detail by Russian Formalism's critics, including Tomashevsky (1925) and Shklovsky (1917/1965). The analysis of fragmentation benefits from the findings of contemporary scholars, including Vladimir Propp, who examined the narrative structure of fairy tales. Propp's (1928/1968) discussion of the ways in which fairy tales appeal to formal structure to affect narrative discourse is useful in understanding the novel's capacity to reorder temporal sequences to engage readers in the interpretive process. Fragmentation is further examined in relation to other formal structural techniques that appeal to chronological temporality to shape the reader's responses to narrative discourse.

2. Fragmentation and Narrative Form

The theoretical framework discussed in the previous section informs the analysis of the novel's form, which has been demonstrated to be integral to its capacity to affect interpretation and ethical reading. In particular, the analysis appeals to Tomashevsky's (1925) discussion of the temporal organization of plot to examine the ways in which the novel disrupts chronological temporality to engage readers in the interpretive act. The novel's structural techniques, which appeal to non-chronological temporality, are further examined in relation to the implications for ethical reading. In addition, the analysis of fragmentation examines the ways in which it contributes to the novel's capacity to construct meaning by appealing to the structural peculiarities of narrative discourse.

The discussion of the novel's formal structure begins with Tomashevsky's (1925) analysis of the temporal organization of plot. The novel's temporal peculiarities have been demonstrated to be integral to its capacity to engage readers in the interpretive process. Tomashevsky's (1925) discussion of the narrative structure of the novel informs the analysis of fragmentation as a structural technique that appeals to non-chronological temporality. Fragmentation, which has been discussed at length by Shklovsky (1917/1965) and other Formalism scholars, is integral to the novel's capacity to disrupt the natural flow of chronological time. Fragmentation can be seen as a structural technique by which the novel appeals to temporal organization to affect narrative discourse and shape the reader's responses to the narrative content.

The structural implications of fragmentation are further examined in relation to the novel's capacity to construct meaning by appealing to narrative form. The analysis of the novel's formal structure benefits from Propp's (1928/1968) discussion of the ways in which fairy tales appeal to formal techniques to shape narrative discourse. Propp's (1928/1968) analysis of the structural peculiarities of fairy tales informs the discussion of the novel's structural techniques, including the ways in which it appeals to fragmentation to disrupt chronological temporality. The analysis of the novel's formal structure and implications for meaning construction further appeals to the findings of contemporary scholars who examine the relationship between temporal organization and the interpretive process. In particular, Ricoeur's (1984) discussion of the novel's capacity to appeal to narrative temporality is useful in understanding how the structural techniques of fragmentation affect interpretation and ethical reading. Ricoeur's (1984) analysis of the ways in which the novel constructs narrative temporality informs the discussion of fragmentation as a means by which the novel engages readers in the interpretive act.

The analysis of the implications of the novel's formal structure for ethical reading further appeals to contemporary scholarship. In particular, the discussion benefits from the findings of reader-response theorists who examine the ways in which the novel shapes the reader's responses to narrative content. The analysis of the novel's formal structure and ethical implications integrates the findings of studies published in journals such as *Narrative*. The studies examined in these journals highlight the ways in which the novel's structural techniques, including fragmentation, contribute to the reader's capacity to participate in the interpretive process. This aspect of the analysis appeals to Iser's (1978) discussion of the novel's indeterminacy and the associated readerly expectations, which are integral to the novel's capacity to affect ethical engagement. In particular, Iser's (1978) analysis of the novel's indeterminacy is useful in understanding the ways in which the structural techniques of fragmentation contribute to the reader's ability to participate in the interpretive act. By disrupting the natural flow of chronological temporality, fragmentation creates opportunities for the reader to become engaged in the interpretive process, which has been demonstrated to be integral to ethical reading.

The discussion of the implications of the novel's formal structure for ethical reading further appeals to the insights of contemporary narrative theorists. In particular, the analysis benefits from Booth's (1961) discussion of the novel's rhetorical strategies, including the ways in which they appeal to the reader's responses to narrative content. Booth's (1961) analysis of the novel's rhetorical strategies informs the discussion of fragmentation as a means by which the novel engages the reader in the interpretive act. Fragmentation, as a structural technique by which the novel appeals to non-chronological temporality, is integral to the novel's capacity to shape the reader's responses to narrative content. By appealing to the structural peculiarities of narrative discourse, fragmentation disrupts the natural flow of chronological time to create opportunities for the reader to become engaged in the interpretive process. Such engagement, which has been demonstrated to be integral to ethical reading, enables the reader to participate in the construction of meaning.

The analysis of the implications of the novel's formal structure for ethical reading builds on the findings of contemporary scholarship. In particular, the discussion of the novel's structural techniques and their impact on interpretation and ethical engagement appeals to the findings of studies published in journals such as *Modern Language Quarterly*. The analysis integrates the findings of such studies to demonstrate the ways in which the novel's formal structure, including fragmentation, contributes to the reader's capacity to participate

in the interpretive process. In particular, the discussion benefits from the findings of studies that examine the relationship between the novel's formal structure and the reader's ethical engagement with narrative content.

Reader Engagement and Narrative Ethics

The issues raised under the discussion of the fragmented narrative of the novel lead back to the question of reader engagement with the form of the book. Thus, if the application of narrative techniques to disrupt narrative discourse and reorganize it into new structures transforms chronological organization, it also transforms the conditions for obtaining reader participation. A brief summary of this aspect of narrative discourse is included below.

The Role of the Reader in Narrative Meaning

Wolfgang Iser was among the first to analyse the role of the reader in the narrative text. More specifically, his theory of implied reader highlights the need for engaging the audience via the distribution of responsibility for the meaning derived from the text (Iser, 1978). In the simplest terms, the text of fiction does not deliver a precise message about the events described. Instead, it leaves blanks that need to be filled by the reader, which in turn involves the audience in the process of narrative construction. The presence of gaps, the distribution of narrative focus, and the interplay of voices produce the mechanisms by which novels engage readers.

This aspect of fiction has been explored by other critics and philosophers as well. In particular, Wayne C. Booth developed the idea of the implied author, describing the ways in which novels influence the audience by appealing to their ability to form judgments during the reading process (Booth, 1961). For Booth, the fundamental requirement for creating a novel that fulfils its moral duties is the obligation to lead readers to appropriate conclusions by engaging their judgment. Subsequently, the narrative technique becomes the tool through which the author's intentions are communicated to the audience, creating the basis for reader participation.

In turn, the role of narrative engagement has been related by several philosophers to the broader ethical framework. Ricoeur's understanding of hermeneutics implies that a novel's capacity to organize human experience in a certain way affects the meaning derived from it (Ricoeur, 1984). The implication of this approach is that the readers participate in the process of constructing the meaning of the narrative. This is especially evident in the way plots help people formulate ideas about the motivations and behaviours of different characters and the consequences of their actions. Thus, novels affect the moral development of readers by positioning various options for action before them.

The Role of Ethical Engagement in Fiction

The concept of ethical engagement connects reader participation in fiction to the responsibilities of the audience. This issue has been discussed in several pieces published in reputable journals, including *Style* and *Narrative*. The works of Phelan in particular highlight the need for ethical evaluations of novels based on the interactions between authors and their audiences (Phelan, 2007). For Phelan, this aspect of the narrative tradition is connected to the rhetorical approach to narration, including Booth's notion of the implied author. In particular, the engagement of readers in the process of constructing meaning is what leads to their ethical evaluation of a novel's significance and its impact on them. The implication inherent in this conclusion is that the obligations of fiction to its audience outweigh the responsibilities of the readers in understanding the work of art.

The issue of ethical engagement connects to the responsibilities of the reader in several other ways. First, as discussed by Booth, the ethical responsibilities of the reader are connected to their ability to understand the intentions of the implied author. The mechanisms for fulfilling this obligation change depending on whether the narrative techniques suggest a consistent point of view. In other words, in novels featuring unstable or dishonest narrators, readers must recognize this limitation and evaluate the information provided in accordance with this context. Moreover, this aspect of the discussion connects the ethics of reading to the structure of the narrative itself.

Narrative Structures and Reader Participation

As mentioned above, the presence of structural elements in a novel that appeal to the reader's ability to construct meaning from form is connected to their ethical responsibilities. The implications of this observation have been discussed by several researchers in the field. The writings of Style reviewers demonstrate that researchers continue to be interested in the ways in which narrative structures engage participants on both sides of fiction. In particular, Phelan's rhetorical narratology extends the discussion of reader participation by highlighting the need for analysing readerly constructs as tools used to fulfill the obligations of readers (Phelan, 2007).

The cognitive approach to understanding reader engagement in fiction is represented by Herman's study of the mechanisms of narrative comprehension (Herman, 2013). His ideas connect reader participation with the production of cognitive constructs that help make sense of stories. These structures are formed by the reader using the context of the narrative discourse. The implications of this approach to the study of novels are profound, but its relevance to the discussion of reader participation is evident. The observations of Herman suggest that the engagement of readers in the processes of constructing the meaning of a novel is inevitable, but their responses to this challenge are subject to significant variation.

In turn, the ethical responsibilities of the reader in the interpretation of stories are the context within which narrative structures influence reader participation. This relationship has been explored by critics discussing the role of novels in shaping the morality of their audiences. The articles published in such journals as *Modern Language Quarterly* and *Narrative Inquiry* suggest that literary narratives fulfill their ethically binding obligations to the readers by inviting them to evaluate various options for action (*Modern Language Quarterly*, *Narrative Inquiry*, 2011). By constructing alternative visions of the outcome of the protagonists' decisions and inviting the audience to judge the characters, novels produce ethical engagement, which in turn influences participation and reading experience.

Moreover, the discussion of ethical participation highlights the necessity of the reader's evaluation of alternative visions of the same set of events. This aspect of the narrative structures' relationship with the audience is another component of the broader phenomenon of participation. The context of a novel, including the ways in which it positions the motivations and behaviours of narrative agents, influences the ethical evaluation that the reader will perform. For the most part, such assessments remain implicit and can be identified only as the responses of the audience to a particular work. In this light, the analysis of the reader's ethical engagement with fiction is useful in determining the ways in which novels influence the behaviour of their audience.

Therefore, by considering the responsibilities of the reader in relationship to the narrative structures of novels, the discussion provides evidence for the need to consider literature in its broadest sense as the medium through which human experience is interpreted. The role of fiction novels suggests that their engagement is a responsibility, but the manner in which it manifests itself varies depending on the structures utilized by the authors. The evidence presented above demonstrates that narrative techniques shape the participation of the reader by inviting them to take part in the construction of the text. The implications of this mechanism range from the distribution of obligations between the reader and the author to the introduction of ethical components to the engagement. Thus, the role of narrative structure in the novel is to position the reader in the role of an active participant whose responsibilities are defined on an individual basis.

This particular aspect of the reading experience highlights the importance of examining other aspects of the interaction between the reader and the novel. More specifically, the analysis of the responsibilities of participation should include the examination of narrative techniques within their broader social context. The evidence presented by critics from both theoretical and empirical backgrounds demonstrates that the techniques utilized by authors in both modern and past novels are the results of the social conditions within which they were developed.

Historical and Cultural Context of Narrative Form

Discussion of the implications of reader participation in the narrative technique of novels suggests considering this issue through this lens. It is evident from the descriptions of readerly constructions that readers utilize their personal experiences in order to facilitate the process of comprehension. However, if structures designed to appeal to the audience's ability to construct meaning are the result of the author's attempt to communicate with them, the manner in which this intention manifests itself depends on the relationship between the reader and the writer. The analysis of this aspect of fiction has been undertaken by various literary critics from both theoretical and empirical backgrounds. This body of research represents the connections between reader participation and the broader role of fiction in society.

The Role of the Reader in the Historical Context of the Novel

The most prominent theories on this topic include the ideas presented by Lukács and Bakhtin. The critic's accounts of the emergence of the modern novel highlight the unique nature of the relationship between readers and novelists. As discussed by Lukács, this literary genre appeared as the result of the transformation of modern consciousness during the age of modernity (Lukács, 1920/1971). As such, the structure of the novel differs from the forms of pre-modern fiction, such as poetry and epic poetry, in a number of significant ways. The researcher's perspective suggests that this distinction is due to the unique nature of the consciousness of the reader. As a consequence of social changes, the public at large has been positioned as the bearer of fragmented and disintegrated consciousness throughout the history of the novel, as compared to the more holistic consciousness that preceded it. Thus, the narrative techniques of the modern novel shape the readers' experience of engaging in textual meaning construction in accordance with this characteristic of their minds.

An alternative but similar explanation of the peculiar nature of the novel's impact on the modern reader has been offered by Bakhtin. His discussion of the dialogic nature of the novel suggests that it is the ability of this literary genre to respond to the plurality of the reader's social consciousness that makes it different from previous forms of writing and speech (Bakhtin, 1981). This property of the novel is reflected in the ability of readers to approach the text from the standpoint of any of its existing or implied discourses and to interact with it accordingly. It is evident that both theories connect the historical context of the emergence of the novel to its peculiarities in terms of the relationship to the reader.

The historical position of the literary genre of the novel has also been examined by other critical voices that emphasize its role as the mediator between readers and writers. In particular, later critics highlight the dialogic nature of the relationship between the two entities involved in the act of literary creation. More recently, this aspect of the genre has been connected to the ability of novels to reflect changing historical realities. One of the most prominent representatives of this body of research is Fredric Jameson, for whom the reflection of historical processes in literary texts takes precedence over other considerations (Jameson, 1981). According to this critic, the structural peculiarities of novels reflect the changes in the social order in accordance with the shifts in historical stages that literature undergoes. As such, the novel is the mediator between readers and writers, which informs the role of the narrator as the mediator between the reader and the author.

As seen from the analysis of the historical context of the novel, this literary genre presupposes the presence of dialogism between its participants. Therefore, both reader and writer are obliged to consider the position of the other in the relationship. This aspect of the novel is reflected in the narrative technique that allows both parties to build their engagement with the reader in accordance with their own intentions. The implications of this characteristic range from the distribution of responsibilities on both sides of the dialogue to various adjustments in the structure of the narrative, including the use of multiple points of view and varied focalization.

The relationship between form and context is also relevant to a further discussion of this topic because it highlights the importance of examining the role of reader participation from other perspectives. In particular, the considerations of the relationship between reader and narrator can include the examination of the changing

nature of narrative forms that occurs within the historical context of this relationship. The discussion of the role of form in novels is included below.

Narrative Form in the Context of Other Issues

The discussion of the role of form in novels connects back to the analysis of the implications of reader participation in the process of engaging with the text. As mentioned above, reader constructs play a considerable role in the determination of the meaning derived from the reading experience. However, the mechanisms of interaction that make such engagement possible differ from the mechanisms utilized by other literary genres. The reasons for this peculiar nature of the reader's involvement have been discussed from both theoretical and empirical perspectives by numerous scholars, including Style reviewers.

In particular, the implications of appealing to the reader's ability to participate in the meaning construction have been discussed in the context of changing trends in the development of the genre. The reviews published in this journal indicate that novelists tend to follow the trends of literary creation that emerged among their peers in order to conform to the general public's perceptions and expectations. Therefore, the changes in form affect both the reader's engagement with the novel and the broader context of this relationship. Similarly, the discussion by other researchers of the role of the novel in reflecting historical realities supports the need to examine the role of engagement by analysing the relationship between reader and narrator within the broader context of society.

For example, both Phelan and Herman discuss the ways in which the reader constructs cognitive structures that assist in the understanding of the narrative. It can be inferred from their findings that the role of these constructs in novels makes the engagement of readers in the reading process inevitable. Moreover, such participation may presuppose the reader's ability to take on a number of cognitive tasks. At the same time, the analysis of the empirical component of reader participation in the construction of the meaning of the novel shows that the impact of such engagement varies from reader to reader. The mechanisms by which the reader constructs meaning from the narrative of the novel are subject to modification in accordance with the changing historical and cultural context.

This evidence highlights the necessity of examining the implications of reader engagement from various perspectives. Such a study would allow identifying the ways in which the interaction between reader and reader constructs shapes the meaning derived from the novel, as well as the role of such participation in the broader context of readership.

The considerations discussed above illustrate the role of reader engagement in the context of the novel as a literary genre. This aspect of interpretation is crucial to the discussion of the role of the reader in fiction in general and the novel in particular. Therefore, in order to expand upon the findings of the review of the current state of research, it would be important to explore the implications of reader participation in the creation of meaning from the novel both from the theoretical and practical perspectives.

Theoretical Synthesis: Towards an Integrated Model of the Novel Essay

The above discussions centred on literature around the novel as a type of writing, addressing it from different angles, such as the structural properties identified by the Formalist critics, the involvement of the readership in the reading process, and the historical preconditions for developing new narrative techniques, among others. As much as each perspective offers valuable ideas in understanding narrative as a whole, it appears that an integrated theoretical synthesis capable of capturing all aspects of the reading process and the literary structure of the novel can help understand it better. The key to such a synthesis lies in recognizing that the novel represents a system of literary devices, a communication strategy that engages the readers, and a product of historical development in literature that informs the cultural context.

The structural approach to studying narrative offered by the Formalist movement serves as a useful basis for the synthesis, as critics who employed this approach unraveled the role of literary techniques and devices utilized in plot construction. Indeed, the insights developed by the Formalists and further explored by

subsequent critics offer an opportunity to consider the role of narrative structure and literary devices as tools that allow writers to shape the audience's perceptions and create a sense of meaning. This view implies that while any plot structure, including the chronological narration of a fictional story, conveys the message and constructs an aesthetic experience based on this message, literary devices facilitate the delivery of this message, its impact on the audience, and the overall narrative flow. In other words, Formalism points to the importance of the structure and technique applied by the writers in the construction of the novel, without which the narrative's ability to create a cohesive discourse would have been limited.

In this regard, it is important to recognize that the structural properties of the novel as a literary genre are deeply intertwined with the processes by which a reader interprets narrative texts. Indeed, the reader's progress towards understanding the plot and assessing the novel's meaning involves interpreting both the story and formal elements of the text. As such, narrative techniques and structural arrangements play an integral role in ensuring the reader's engagement in the communication process initiated by the author or reader. For example, Genette's (1980) theory of focalization suggests that the arrangement of information in terms of story and discourse perspectives can limit or expand the readers' vision and awareness, affecting their engagement with the plot. Similarly, the complexity of the story's discourse impacts the readers' ability to understand the connections between various events, which helps explain the increased cognitive effort of the readership in postmodern fiction. The integration of these ideas, along with the rhetorical approaches discussed below, allows for a better understanding of how literary devices and structural elements of narrative inform the reader's interpretation of the story's plot and meaning.

In addition to facilitating the reader's progress towards interpreting the narrative, the formal properties of the novel serve other pragmatic roles, such as reflecting cultural developments and informing the historical context in which the given story was created and written. For example, Moretti's (2005) research-centric approach to studying the novel and the history of narrative structures demonstrates how the changes in culture impact the structural properties adopted by writers at different times. The structural patterns shaping the modern narrative were developed and implemented in response to the historical context in which they were created. As the literary output of society and its reflection in the arts, the structure of the novel informs the current state and further evolution of the narrative as a literary genre.

Overall, the synthesis of different theoretical paradigms applied to the examination of the novel as a literary device provides an opportunity to better understand how this type of narrative shapes the readers' interpretations of its plots. Each paradigm offers valuable insights, ranging from the basic principles of narrative structure described by the Formalists to the complex relationships between story components and readers' cognition discussed by narratologists. As the structural patterns shaping the narrative form the basis of this literary genre, while the pragmatic approaches clarify how these patterns affect the readers' engagement and interpretation of the story, an integrated theoretical approach offers new opportunities to examine and understand the literary structure of the novel.

Conclusion

The present discussion examined literature by focusing on the role of narrative structure in informing the reader's interpretation of the plot. Starting with the ideas developed by the Formalists, the analysis demonstrated how the formal properties of the novel influence its impact on the readers. As the literary critics who subscribed to Formalism's structural approach to narrative realized, writers employ a variety of narrative devices to shape the readers' perceptions and create a sense of meaning in their stories. While the basic structure of the plot as a chronological narration of the events informs the audience about the story, other elements, such as focalization and story discourse, help the writer to communicate the message and shape the readers' interpretations and judgments. In addition, examining the reader's role in engaging with the novel helps understand how the formal properties of the narrative guide them towards analyzing the plot and interpreting the story. Lastly, as the synthesis of theoretical paradigms used to examine the novel shows, its structural patterns affect its reflection in culture and the historical context in which the narrative exists within literature.

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