INTRODUCTION

NARRATOLOGICAL THEORY ON TIME

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Introduction

The first volume of the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* (SAGN 1) centred on the figure of the narrator, perhaps the most important criterion for calling a text a narrative. In the present volume we turn to the second most important main constituent of a narrative: time. In Forster's commonsensical formulation, a story is a 'narrative of events narrated in their time-sequence'.¹ As a consequence of its importance, time in narrative has been extensively studied by narratologists. This volume will follow the narratological theories on time of Genette and Bal,² where appropriate, eclectically supplemented with concepts from other theoreticians.³

When discussing time in a narrative text, it may be instructive to start by considering just how much time awareness there is within that text: does the narrator provide us with a precise schedule, marking the years, months, days, and hours, or is the chronology fairly vague? An example of the first type of narrative is Woolf's *The Years*, where the chapter-titles are in the form of years ('1880', '1891', etc.) and each chapter opens with an elaborate description of a season ('It was an uncertain spring', 'The autumn wind blew over England'), while in Duras' *L'après-midi de Monsieur Andesmas* we are confronted with snippets from a man's life without any precise temporal anchoring. Where it is

¹ Forster [1927] 1979: 42. Cf. Mendilow 1952: 17–18; Lämmert 1955: 21 ('Das Gerüst ... muss beim Erzählwerk die fortschreitende und zwar energisch, d.h. von einer Strebekraft, durchwirkte Handlung sein!').

² Genette [1972] 1980: 33–160 and Bal [1985] 1997: 78–114.

³ Mainly G. Müller 1947; Mendilow 1952; and Lämmert 1955. Other narratological works on time, which are not included in the framework of this chapter, are Bakhtin 1981 and Ricoeur [1983] 1984–1985.

impossible to determine the temporal relationships between the various events, we are dealing with an achronical narrative.⁴

Another preliminary observation concerns the temporal relation between the narrative and the events being recounted: the narration can be subsequent (the events have already taken place), simultaneous (the events are taking place at the moment of narration), or prior (the events have yet to take place).⁵ In all ages and all literatures, subsequent narration is the default form. Simultaneous narration is occasionally used in drama, to narrate offstage—usually backstage—events, and some modernists have adopted it for entire novels (e.g. Butor, *La modification*, and Robbe-Grillet, *La jalousie*). Prior narration is used primarily by characters, when they announce—often prophesy—what is going to happen.⁶

In order to describe in more detail the many forms of temporal relationships between narrative and the events recounted, we must turn to one of the cornerstones of narratology.

The distinction fabula—story—text

One of the oldest insights of modern narratology is the distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzet*: the aggregate of related events reported in a narrative in their chronological order (*fabula*), as opposed to those same events in the order and manner in which they are presented in the text (*sjuzet*).⁷ This crucial distinction has been reformulated in many ways, whereby unfortunately the terms have not always been used with the same meaning.⁸ In this volume we adopt the three-layer model devised by Bal: in his *text* a narrator relates a story; the *story* consists of the events of a *fabula* presented in a certain order and manner; and the *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are

⁴ Genette [1972] 1980: 84; Bal [1985] 1997: 97–99.

⁵ Genette [1972] 1980: 215–223.

⁶ At first glance, it may seem that the categories of prior narration and prolepsis overlap, but the former concerns the *form*, the latter the *function*: prior narration usually functions as a prolepsis, but not every prolepsis necessarily takes the form of prior narration; it may just as easily take a past tense.

⁷ Tomashevsky [1925] 1965: 66–67 (“In brief, the story is “the action itself”, the plot “how the reader learns of the action””).

⁸ For a (selective) overview see Martin 1986: 108. Cf. also Forster [1927] 1979: 87; Lämmert 1955: 24–26; and Culler 1975: 169–187.

caused or experienced by characters. In effect, the fabula is nothing but a reconstruction by the narratees, on the basis of the story and text.

As argued in the Introduction to *SAGN* 1,⁹ it may be helpful in certain cases to posit a fourth layer, that of the *material* from which a narrator forms his fabula: this can range from historical sources to the texts of predecessors or traditional stories.

It should also be noted here that in the case of an overt external narrator, who has a great deal to say about himself, his act of narration and his own time, the level of the text may undergo considerable expansion, occasionally turning into a narrative in its own right. In the present volume, this phenomenon will be discussed under the heading of ‘reference to the narrator’s own time’ motif.¹⁰ An example is: ‘The district is of historic, no less than of topographical interest. The vale was known in former times as the Forest of White Hart, from a curious legend ... In those days, and till comparatively recent times, the country was densely wooded. *Even now* traces of its earlier condition are to be found in the old oak copses and irregular belts of timber that yet survive upon its slopes, and the hollow-trunked trees that shade so many of its pastures’ (Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*; my italics).

The threefold distinction fabula—story—text makes possible a precise analysis of the various temporal procedures which narrators have at their disposal: they can change the order of events (*order*), they can spend more or less time on recounting events (*rhythm*), and they can recount events only once or more often (*frequency*).

Order: analepses and prolepses

One of the oldest and best known temporal procedures is the change of the chronological order of events or, as Genette has called it, anachrony.¹¹ We can distinguish between *prolepsis*, the narration of an event which will take place after the point in the story where we find ourselves, or *analepsis*, the narration of an event which took place before the point in the story where we find ourselves. An example of a prolepsis

⁹ *SAGN* 1:9. Cf. Lämmert 1955: 25 (‘Stoff’).

¹⁰ For this motif see also *SAGN* 1: index.

¹¹ Genette [1972] 1980: 33–85; Bal [1985] 1997: 80–98. Cf. also Mendilow 1952: 158–199, who refers to the phenomenon as ‘time shift’.

is: 'We shall see, in due course, that for quite another reason, the memory of this impression was to play an important part in my life' (Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*). For an analepsis we may think of: 'We saw each other for the first time, drinking bad South African sherry because of the war in Spain. I noticed Sarah, I think, because she was happy ... I liked her at once because she said she had read my books and left the subject there—I found myself treated at once as a human being rather than as an author. I had no idea whatever of falling in love with her.' This passage occurs in the third chapter of Greene's *The End of the Affair*, when the narrator returns to the beginning of the affair which is already over at the start of the book; the analepsis is signalled through 'for the first time'.

The scale of prolepses and analepses may vary: some are brief, so as not to disrupt the flow of events in the main story, but they can also get the upper hand. Thus in Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, the analeptic narrations of the lives of the five people who die when the bridge collapses take up a large part of the novel. Prolepses are often used to create suspense or tension among the narratees about how things are going to develop, while analepses often fill them in on the background of characters or the 'prehistory' of the narrative they are reading. Just as prolepses heighten the narratees' expectations of what is to come, analepses may cause them to revise their previous interpretations.¹²

There seem to be no narratives which are totally devoid of anachronies, and their presence is one of the major points on which fabula and story differ: the fabula is the—reconstructed—chronological order of events, while the story usually displays deviations from that chronological order. An important consequence of this fact is that usually the *time span* or *extent* of story and fabula differ. To explain this, I use the well-known example of the *Odyssey*. Both fabula and story deal with the events which take place during Odysseus' ten-year journey home from Troy, but in the story a large number of these events are recounted by a secondary narrator, Odysseus, in a long embedded narrative, while the primary narrator concentrates on the last 41 days of his return. This means that while the time span of the fabula is ten years, that of the main story is 41 days (and that of Odysseus' embedded narrative ten

¹² For a discussion of the dynamics of the narratees' prospection and retrospection see Sternberg 1985: 264–320.

years minus the last 41 days).¹³ Likewise, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* deals with one day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway (main story), but on the basis of the many recollections of her and other characters, a fabula can be reconstructed which spans her life up to this point.

The concepts analepsis and prolepsis can be further refined. In the first place, we can distinguish between *internal* analepses/prolepses, which concern events which take place *within* the time span of the main story, and *external* analepses/prolepses, which fall *outside* this time span. Thus in the *Iliad*, where the time span of the main story is a period of 51 days, starting with the arrival of Chryses and ending with the burial of Hector, the account of the quarrel with Agamemnon (1.370–392) which Achilles gives his mother Thetis is an internal analepsis; Odysseus' recollection of the gathering at Aulis (2.299–330) an external analepsis; the narrator's announcement that Hector was destined to be 'short-lived' (15.612–614) an internal prolepsis; and Priam's moving depiction of the fall of Troy (22.59–76) an external prolepsis.

But, as Bal notes, not all narratives are so clear-cut,¹⁴ and often a commonsensical approach is the best way to define the main story and determine which prolepses and analepses are external. Where does the main story of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* begin? With the arrival of Charles Bovary at school (chapter 1) or with the fateful night when he meets Emma Bovary for the first time (chapter 2)? If we choose the first option, then the sixth chapter, dealing with Emma's years in the convent, is an internal analepsis; if we choose the second option, it is an external analepsis. Similarly, what do we make of the typical fairy-tale ending 'and they lived happily ever after': is this the last element of the main story or an external prolepsis?

Sometimes we even come across events which are not merely external to the main story, but which do not seem to fit the fabula either, dealing as they do with a wholly different 'diegetic content'; these are called *heterodiegetic* analepses and prolepses.¹⁵ An example is the analep-

¹³ For the notion 'main story', cf. Genette [1972] 1980: 48 ('We will henceforth call the temporal level of narrative with respect to which anachrony is defined as such, "first narrative"'); Bal [1985] 1997: 88 ('primary story-time'). For the notion 'time span', cf. Genette [1972] 1980: 48–49 ('The anachrony itself can ... cover a duration of story that is more or less long: we will call this its extent', 'the extent of the first narrative'); Bal [1985] 1997: 92 ('span').

¹⁴ Bal [1985] 1997: 88.

¹⁵ As opposed to the normal *homodiegetic* analepses and prolepses. Cf. Genette [1972] 1980: 50, 71.

sis we find when the Prince de Faffenheim enters the story of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*: a digression of several pages informs us about the vicissitudes of his career up to this point.

Within the group of internal analepses we can further distinguish between *completing* analepses, which fill in earlier gaps in the story, and *repeating* analepses, which cover the same ground as the story. In the case of a repeating analepsis, it may be relevant to compare the two versions, while the repetition may in itself underline the importance of an event. Some completing analepses have a surprise effect, when the information sheds new light on an existing situation. A completing analepsis may go hand in hand with what Genette calls a *paralipsis*—and what classical scholars know as narrative delay: when a narrator withholds crucial information, in order to release it later, to greater effect.¹⁶ He gives as an example the death of Swann and its effect on Marcel, which is recounted later, not at its proper place: 'The death of Swann had been a crushing blow to me at the time'.

Another important distinction is that between *narratorial* and *actorial* prolepses and analepses. An example of an *actorial* analepsis is:

"That is all", she said, looking at the fishmonger's. "That is all", she repeated, pausing for a moment at the window of a glove shop where, *before The Jewish War*, you could buy almost perfect gloves. And her old Uncle William *used to say* a lady is known by her shoes and her gloves. He *had turned* on his bed one morning *in the middle of The Jewish War*. He *had said*, "I have had enough". Gloves and shoes; she had a passion for gloves; but her own daughter, her Elizabeth, cared not a straw for either of them.
(Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*; my italics)

Of a *narratorial* analepsis:

I have dropped the curtain over this scene for a minute,—to remind you of one thing,—and to inform you of another. What I have to inform you, comes, I own, a little out of its due course; for it should have been told a hundred and fifty pages ago, ...
(Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*)

In the case of prolepses, it is particularly relevant to distinguish between narrator and characters, since what a narrator announces is more likely to take place than what characters think, who may merely dream or

¹⁶ Genette [1972] 1980: 52. For narrative delay see Fraenkel [1950] 1962: III 805 ('on the postponement of certain important details in archaic narrative').

speculate about the future.¹⁷ The following is an example of such a 'dreamy' actorial prolepsis:

"*He must propose to-morrow*", thought Rebecca. "He called me his soul's darling, four times; he squeezed my hand in Amelia's presence. *He must propose to-morrow.*" And so thought Amelia, too ... Oh ignorant young creatures! How little do you know the effect of rack punch! ... There is no headache in the world like that caused by Vauxhall punch. ... Through the lapse of twenty years, I can remember the consequence of two glasses! ... and Joseph Sedly, who had a liver complaint, had swallowed at least a quart of the abominable mixture.

(Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*; my italics)

Here the expectations of the female characters are immediately contradicted—for the benefit of the narratees—by the narrator.

But reliability or certainty is not the only respect in which narratorial and actorial prolepses may differ: there is also their emotional colouring or, more generally, their focalization. The effect they produce may also differ: a narrator may sovereignly, perhaps even moralisingly, anticipate the outcome of events, while a character optimistically or anxiously looks ahead to the future. Finally, it should be noted that not all narratorial prolepses are necessarily certain. There is the well-known type of the false prolepsis or misdirection (snare, *trügerische Vorspiegelung*).¹⁸ Conversely, certain characters, such as seers or wise advisers, may be—as good as—omniscient as regards the revelation of the future.

In the case of analepses, too, it is likewise relevant to distinguish between the narratorial and the actorial ones, again mainly because of their focalization and effect. In Galsworthy's *The Man of Property*, Soames' courtship of Irene, which took place before the start of the main story, is both recalled by the narrator and Soames: 'It [Soames' courtship of Irene] had been one of those real devoted wooings which books and people praise, when the lover is at length rewarded for hammering the iron till it is malleable, and all must be happy ever after as the wedding bells', versus 'And memories crowded on him with the fresh, sweet savour of the spring wind—memories of his courtship. In the spring of the year 1881 he was visiting his old school-fellow and client ... [there follow two pages of analepsis] An enigma to him from the day that he first saw her, she was an enigma to him still ...'

¹⁷ Lämmert 1955: 143–192. Cf. esp. 175: 'Die Zukunft, wie sie sich im Laufe der Erzählung den handelnden Personen darbietet, ist von grundsätzlich anderer Realität als die, welche der Erzähler ... vorwegnimmt'.

¹⁸ Genette [1972] 1980: 77; Lämmert 1955: 186–189.

Comparing the two analepses, we may note the difference between the cynical narrator, who makes it clear that the courtship was forced and hence from the beginning contained the seeds of the later bitter estrangement between Soames and Irene, while Soames looks back at it as sweet but enigmatic.

In addition to prolepses, which are usually marked as such in one way or another (through the use of a future tense, through an explicit comment such as 'little could I know', 'as I will have reason to tell later', or by the use of verbs which concern the future, such as 'hope', 'fear', 'expect', etc.), narratives often feature other, more implicit, types of foreshadowing. We may think here of natural phenomena or embedded narratives which contain a message for the narratees. An example of the former is: 'Leaning her elbows on the parapet, she contemplated the River Arno, whose roar was suggesting some unexpected melody to her ears' (Forster, *A Room with a View*); this sentence concludes the chapter, in which the lovers-to-be, Lucy and George Emerson, have for the first time spent some time together.

A special type of foreshadowing is the *seed* (hint or advance mention): the insertion of a piece of information, the relevance of which will only later become clear. The later event thus prepared for becomes more natural, logical, or plausible. One example is the opening line of Forster's *A Passage to India*: 'Except for the Marabar Caves—and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary'. The narrator then continues to describe the city of Chandrapore, the setting of the narrative to follow. But mentioned in passing, the Marabar Caves already entered the story, and will soon become the scene of the central event of that story: the joint visit to these caves by the Indian Aziz and the English woman Adela Quested.

Finally, there is what might be called foreshadowing *by convention*. When a character in Herodotus is very happy or laughs, the narratees know this character will come to a bad end. Or when a character in a fairy-tale is allowed to make a wish, we know for sure that the outcome will not be what he or she expected.

Order: beginnings and multiple storylines

Analepses and prolepses are the most conspicuous, but not the only aspects of order. Order is also involved in the opening of narratives. By its very nature the opening of a narrative is an element to which nar-

rators devote much attention, doing their utmost to captivate their narratees.¹⁹ Standard ingredients are time plus setting: ‘While the present century was in its teens, and on one sunshiny morning in June, there drove up to the great iron gate of Miss Pinkerton’s academy for young ladies, on Chiswick Mall, a large family coach...’ (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*).

But openings also have to do with relative time: does the beginning of the story coincide with the beginning of the fabula or do we start *in medias res*, that is, at some point further on in the fabula? Narrative texts where the beginning of story and fabula coincide exactly are rare, since few narrators would pass up the opportunity to add a ‘prehistory’ to their (main) story by means of external analepses. The *in medias res* opening is, of course, famously exemplified by the *Odyssey*, where we start in the tenth year of Odysseus’ return and are informed about the preceding years through an embedded narrative by the hero himself. A modern example is Greene’s *The End of the Affair*, which indeed starts near the end of the affair and where its earlier and middle phases are filled in by means of analepses, notably the diary of one of the main characters, Sarah, which at some point the narrator gets hold of.²⁰

Not seldom do narrators elaborate on the effort involved in finding the right point to start their narrative: ‘A story has no beginning or end: arbitrarily one chooses that moment of experience from which to look back or from which to look ahead. I say “one chooses” with the inaccurate pride of a professional writer who has been praised for his technical ability, but did I in fact of my own will choose that black wet January night on the Common, in 1946, the sight of Henry Miles slanting across the wide river of rain, or did these images choose me?’ (Greene, *The End of the Affair*).

A topic not broached by either Genette or Bal is the case where a narrative contains two or more storylines. The crucial question here is how the temporal relation between the two parallel storylines is

¹⁹ Cf. N. Miller 1965; Nuttall 1992; and Morhange 1995.

²⁰ It should be noted that in its original definition by Horace in his *Ars Poetica* 147–148, the concept of *in medias res* also refers to an author selecting only the most interesting parts of the life of a character, as against starting *ab ovo*, from the birth of that character. Here he is adopting ideas of Aristotle, as set out in chapter 8 of his *Poetica*. Both Horace and Aristotle are therefore talking about the choice of the *fabula* (e.g. the ten years of Odysseus’ return) out of the *material* (the life of Odysseus from his birth). In later times *in medias res* has become exclusively associated with the choice of the beginning of the *story* as opposed to the *fabula*.

handled: does the narrator who switches from storyline or character A to storyline or character B return in time to fill in what happened in B while the situation in A was evolving, or has time ticked on and does he proceed with B at the point where he left A? An example of a narrator who, generally, goes back in time is Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*; for example, 'We must now take our leave of Arcadia, and those amiable people practising the rural virtues there, and travel back to London, to inquire what has become of Miss Amelia'. In the *Forsyte Saga*, however, the narrator usually moves from one character to the next without retracing his steps.

Rhythm

Another important difference between fabula and story, apart from the order of events, is their speed. While in the—reconstructed—fabula events take up the same amount of time they would in real life, their duration in the story may be different; narrators may vary the pace of their narration, moving from quick to slow and back again. Narratologists use the term '*rhythm*' (duration, speed) to refer to the amount of time which is devoted to an event in the story (story-time) as compared to that in the fabula (fabula-time).²¹ Since, as Genette remarks, in practice it is very difficult to measure variations in actual time between fabula and story, the rhythm of a narrative is usually defined in terms of the amount of *text* devoted to an event.²² The narrator of *The Great Gatsby* recounts one memorable summer in which he was Jay Gatsby's neighbour, got to know him well and was nearby when he was murdered. Certain days during this summer are singled out and recalled in great detail. Thus the first three chapters deal with his meeting with Gatsby's great love, Daisy, and her husband Tom; then with Tom and his mistress (the wife of the man who will kill Gatsby), and with the mysterious Gatsby himself. The narrator explicitly draws attention to

²¹ Cf. Genette [1972] 1980: 86–112 ('duration'); Bal [1985] 1997: 99–111. Roughly, rhythm covers the older distinction between *erzählte Zeit* (the time covered in a narrative) and *Erzählzeit* (the time needed to recount a narrative); cf. G. Müller 1947: 15–17; Mendilow 1952: 65–73 ('conceptual' vs. 'fictional' time).

²² Genette [1972] 1980: 'the speed of a narrative will be defined by the relationship between a duration (that of the story, measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years) and a length (that of the text, measured in lines and pages)'.

this rhythm at the end of the third chapter: 'Reading over what I have written so far, I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary, they were merely casual events in a crowded summer, and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs.'

Theoretically, there are an infinite number of possibilities when it comes to rhythm. In practice, however, narratives typically modulate between *scenes*, in which events are told in great detail, often including the words spoken by a character, and we come close to—but of course never really match—their real-time duration, and *summaries*, where events are dealt with in broad strokes and without a great deal of detail. An example of the typical combination of summary and scene is found in Galsworthy's *The Man of Property*:

[*summary*:] The winter had been an open one. Things in the trade were slack; and as Soames had reflected before making up his mind, it had been a good time for building. The shell of the house at Robin Hill was thus completed by the end of April. [...]

On April 30 he had an appointment with Bosinney to go over the accounts, [*scene*:] and five minutes before the proper time he entered the tent which the architect had pitched for himself close to the old oak tree.

The accounts were already prepared on a folding table, and with a nod Soames sat down to study them. It was some time before he raised his head.

"I can't make them out", he said at last ... [There follows a scenic conversation between the two men]

The choice of one of these forms of rhythm can be highly effective. A telling example is found in the first chapter of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*: 'The next Christmas they were married, and for three months she was perfectly happy: for six months she was very happy'. The summary makes clear how brief the happiness of Paul Morel's parents was, soon to be followed by years of fighting and estrangement.

Sometimes the modulation or transition between scene and summary is gradual, and we notice how the narrator accelerates or slows down. Slowing down may be effected by the increase of details.²³ An

²³ Genette [1972] 1980: 95 suggests the category of slowing down, what he calls 'slow motion', but does not consider it sufficiently widespread to be included in his four-fold typology of duration.

example is: ‘On the morning appointed for her departure Tess was awake before dawn—at the marginal minute of the dark when the grove is still mute save for one prophetic bird, who sings with a clear-voiced conviction that he at least knows the correct time of day, the rest preserving silence, as if equally convinced that he is mistaken. She remained upstairs packing ...’ (Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*). Here, as so often, the slowing down marks a decisive moment in the narrative.

The narrator may even bring the flow of events of his story to a complete standstill (*pause*). An example of such a pause is the two-page description of Chandrapore which opens Forster’s *A Passage to India*. Real pauses are, however, seldom; often, though the story seems to come to a standstill, it later turns out that time has ticked on. One example is the extended description of Yonville-l’Abbaye, at the opening of part 2 of *Madame Bovary*; it is preceded by the departure of the Bovarys from Tostes and followed by their arrival in Yonville.

A final form of rhythm consists in simply passing over events (*ellipsis*). Most instances are quite casual and the result of narrative efficiency (‘Some two weeks later ...’), but occasionally the gap is emphatically flagged by the narrator, as in Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*: ‘What were the adventures of Mr. Osborne and Miss Amelia? That is a secret. But be sure of this—they were perfectly happy, and correct in their behaviour.’

Whether implicit or explicit, ellipses can be highly significant. Thus the end of the first part of Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (‘Quand on partit de Tostes, au mois de mars, Mme Bovary était enceinte’) is, as Bal notes,²⁴ telling: ‘by skipping the conception and enhancing this skipping by the rapidity of the narrator’s sentence ... the great disappointment of Emma’s marriage, specifically its sexual poverty’ is underlined. The exercise of the narratees’ imagination when events are suppressed has been amply analysed by Iser under the heading *Leerstelle*.²⁵

A special kind of ellipsis, which is highly relevant when discussing ancient Greek literature, is that occasioned by the fact that to a great degree this literature is traditional, that is, it deals with the same stock of mythological narratives over and over again. Counting on the narratees’ knowledge of the *totality* of a narrative, a narrator may tell a story in an elliptical way, presenting only *parts* of it, or merely alluding to it.

²⁴ Bal [1985] 1997: 91–92.

²⁵ Iser [1976] 1978.

Frequency

A final temporal relationship between fabula and story is frequency: the number of times an event from the fabula is recounted in the story. The default form of frequency is the *singulative* mode: each event is recounted once. But a narrator may choose to present an event more than once (*repetition*). An extreme example is Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, where the central event, a murder, is presented no less than thirty-nine times. But small-scale repetitions occur in virtually all narratives. The repeated presentation of the same action or event may be distributed over narrator and characters or over different characters, which will bring with it differences in focalization and effect. We have already encountered the repeating analepsis (as opposed to the completing analepsis). And even analepses may be themselves repeated. For example, young Jolyon's affair, which led to a long brouille with his father, the old Jolyon, in Galsworthy's *The Man of Property* is recalled by many characters:

[James Forsyte speaking] "Jolyon, he will have his own way. He's got no children" and stopped, recollecting the continued existence of old Jolyon's son, young Jolyon, June's father, who had made such a mess of it, and done for himself by deserting his wife and children and running away with that foreign governess. ... She [Aunt Ann] thought of June's father, young Jolyon, who had run away with a foreign girl! Ah, what a sad blow to his father and to them all. Such a promising young fellow! A sad blow, though there had been no public scandal, most fortunately, Jo's wife seeking for no divorce! A long time ago! ... [Old Jolyon thinking] The two had not met for fourteen years. And not for the first time during those fourteen years old Jolyon wondered whether he had been a little to blame in the matter of his son.

As this example makes clear, repetition may also be effectively used for the gradual information of the narratees, who are filled in, step by step, on the exact details of the brouille between father and son.

The reverse of repetition is *iterative* presentation, whereby several identical events are presented only once. Not surprisingly, this form is often used to convey characteristic habits or to summarize. Galsworthy avails himself of this technique when characterizing the subject of his trilogy, the Forsyte family; for example, "They had all done so well for themselves, these Forsytes, that they were all what is called "of a certain position". They had shares in all sorts of things. They collected pictures, too, and were supporters of such charitable institutions as might be beneficial to their sick domestics ... Like all Forsytes of a certain age

they kept carriages of their own, and never took cabs if by any means they could avoid it.'

A special use of iterative narration, which is often encountered in classical texts, is omnitemporal narration, where a narrator describes natural phenomena (the waves which always roll towards the shore), or the habits of immortals gods.

Conclusion

Before concluding my *tour d'horizon* of narratological theory on time, I would like to stress that, as always in narratological analysis, the model and concepts set out are intended only as instruments which may help to identify new phenomena and to describe similar phenomena in the same terms, thus facilitating comparisons (highly important in an enterprise such as the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, which undertakes to write the history of a literature which spans some twelve centuries, and covers some eight genres). However, the model should never become a straightjacket, into which texts are forced. Narratology, often called the grammar of narrative, indeed is comparable to our grammars, in that it helps us to order and understand certain aspects of the texts we study.

The handling of time is one of the central tasks of a narrator and one of the most powerful instruments which he has at his disposal to influence the interpretation by the narratees, by placing accents and foregrounding or downplaying events. Because of its vital role in shaping narratives, it is to be expected that ancient Greek authors, though perhaps not as 'obsessed' with time as twentieth-century authors,²⁶ did focus considerable artistic attention on this element. To establish the precise manner, degree, and effect of their handling of time is the object of this volume.

²⁶ So Mendilow 1952: 3–22.