

Theorizing Plot in the Novel: A Study through Formalism, Narratology, Rhetoric, and Cultural-Context

Urvashi Jhajharia¹, Dr. Veerendra Kumar Mishra²

¹Research Scholar, Department of English, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India

²Former Associate Professor, Department of English, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India

Abstract

Plot has traditionally been regarded as one of the most slippery concepts in literary theory. From its treatment in Aristotle's *Poetics* to modern narratological, rhetorical, and cultural-contextual approaches and theories, it has undergone countless reinterpretations, critiques, and revisions. This paper attempts to provide a historically informed and comprehensive overview of the concept in relation to the theory of the novel, focusing on the four major approaches, namely Formalism, narratology, rhetorical theory, and cultural-contextual criticism. Aristotle, Lukacs, Forster, Bakhtin, Russian Formalists, classical and post-classical narratologists (Genette, Chatman, Bal, Herman), rhetorical theorists (Booth, Brooks, Phelan, Rabinowitz), and cultural critics (Jameson, Moretti, Williams) will be examined as to their definitions and criteria relating to the concept of plot. By identifying the concept of plot as a mediator between form and matter, rhetoric and reception, and reader and writer, this study argues for its enduring theoretical relevance.

Keywords: Plot, Narratology; Formalism, Rhetorical Theory, Cultural Context

Introduction

The term plot is one of the most slippery in literary theory. Plot has been consistently advanced, criticized, revised, and redefined over time, and the concept is still regarded with both universal recognition of its importance and a certain degree of disdain, depending on the theoretical stance and the historical context. As stated by Brooks, despite the "century of criticism," plot remains "an elusive concept" (as cited in Abbott, 2008, p. 426). It has been identified as "a unified whole or shape that underlies events" (Aristotle, trans. 1996, p. 98); as a "progressive or progressive-form structure" (Brooks, 1984, p. 141); or "the design or construction by means of which [the author] produces an envisaged or actualized effect on the reader (Booth, 1983, p. 18). There are at least three approaches to plotting in literary theory: the formalistic – plot as a pattern or structure; the progressive – plot as time, tension, and expectations; and the rhetorical – plot as the author's design to produce specific effects.

In the context of the theory of the novel, plot has often been placed in the shade of character, consciousness, discourse, and material or ideological contexts. In modern narratology, it has often been presented as the neutral structure of the narrative organization of events and focalization (Genette, 1980; Bal, 2009). At the same time, in cultural materialist criticism, it has been deemed a formal constraint designed to resolve social contradictions through symbolic means (Jameson, 1981). In fact, plot is always a mediator between

form (expression) and matter (content) and between the author's intentions and meanings and the readers' receptions and responses. Thus, this paper argues that plot must be reconsidered as the theoretical category in which the novel was created historically as a discursive formation. The present study attempts to revise the concept of plot through the lens of different theoretical approaches, demonstrating its centrality and theoretical fertility within the framework of the theory of the novel.

Methodology

The current paper uses the methodology of the integrative historical survey to examine the concept of plot and its theoretical significance. This choice is based on the fact that plot has traditionally been a part of the discourse of different theories of the novel and narratology, and its status and definitions have changed depending on the dominant theoretical paradigm. The paper integrates the major concepts and approaches in the theory and history of the novel and literary criticism in general, outlining the conceptual genealogy of plot. Among the theoretical traditions to be integrated and analyzed in the paper are Russian Formalism, structuralist and classical narratology, rhetorical narratology, and cultural-contextual criticism.

The selection of these theoretical frameworks for analysis is determined by their conceptual significance and their influence on the subsequent criticism and theory. Thus, Russian Formalism sought to distinguish literature from other forms of art by analyzing literary techniques and devices, including plot (Shklovsky, 1965). Structuralist narratologists such as Barthes and Todorov advanced the study of plots in terms of grammar and structure (Barthes, 1977; Todorov, 1977). Classical narratologists such as Genette and Chatman problematized the very notion of plot and the author's intentions (Genette, 1980; Chatman, 1978). Rhetorical narratologists Booth and Phelan re-examined the role of plot in creating effects and meaning (Booth, 1983; Phelan, 1989). Finally, cultural critics such as Moretti, Jameson, and Williams problematized the historical development and plot's role in social and political processes (Moretti, 1985; Jameson, 1981; Williams, 1977). The current paper attempts to conduct an integrative analysis of the major theories of the novel, exploring the concept of plot.

Critical Gap

Unfortunately, the theory of the novel has been lacking comprehensive discourse on the concept of plot that would integrate various critical traditions and approaches. There has not been a single theory that would fully incorporate formalistic, narratological, rhetorical, and cultural-contextual approaches to the study of the novel and analyze the concept of plot in relation to all of the four. On the contrary, the discourse on the plot has been separated into several theoretical traditions that rarely acknowledge the need to integrate different paradigms. Thus, critics such as Genette and Bal represent the formalistic approach that focuses on plot as the structure of narratives (Genette, 1980; Bal, 2009). In turn, critics such as Jameson and Williams represent the cultural materialist approach that seeks to reveal the ways in which plot hides ideological contradictions and historical content (Jameson, 1981; Williams, 1977). On the other hand, critics such as Booth and Rabinowitz represent the rhetorical approach that analyzes the ways in which plot structures create effects and meaning (Booth, 1983; Rabinowitz, 1987).

Classical Foundations of Plot

The classical understanding of plot begins with Aristotle's division of mythos into narrative action. For Aristotle, plot is the ordered arrangement of events that makes up a narrative. He considers plot to be a "soul of tragedy", and therefore superior to characters, spectacle, or diction (Aristotle, 1965). Aristotle

defines plot as an action that has a certain beginning and end, and is organized according to probability and necessity, binding incidents together into a logically unified whole (Aristotle, 1965). However, Aristotle's understanding of action is goal-oriented and therefore teleological: the structure of narrative action is intelligible to us only from its culmination point, and as such, it serves to explain the significance of narrative events.

In Horace's *Ars Poetica*, the emphasis is on narrative coherence, which is related to the maintenance of a consistent tone and the presence of definite limits (Horace, 2005). Aristotle and Horace's concepts of plot are both grounded in the idea of narrative action being intrinsically linked to the principles of aesthetic representation and intelligibility. This has led to later critics questioning the extent to which plot is dependent on the principle of unity.

Subsequent philosophical and aesthetic writings begin to question the assumption of the unity of action, and to consider plot as an open structure in historical and subjective context. In German idealism, the concept of plot is linked to the idea of historical materialism: World History is conceived of as a process which reveals itself in narrative form, and hence plot structures the ideas of historical actors, as well as their actions (Hegel, 1975). Goethe's concept of *Bildungsroman* also implies that narrative action is formally linked to processes of human development (Goethe, 2004).

These assumptions find further development in Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of the novel. For Bakhtin, the novel is inherently linked to the formation and transformation of social groups: "the semantic and pragmatic center of the novel is the social group" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 274). Plots are open structures because they reflect the diversity of social voices: "There is no single social attitude within the novel; there are many attitudes which exist side by side within it; they struggle with one another to varying degrees" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 280). The novel resists closure and finality, and therefore the formal integrity of a plot is achieved through its capacity to contain multiple, independent time sequences unfolding concurrently. Bakhtin's conception of plot is further complicated by his focus on the relationship between time and space in narrative form. His concept of *chronotope* allows for identifying definite formal patterns by which time and space are organized in narrative (Bakhtin, 1981). Plots are historically variable, and their function is to represent modes of living specific to particular societies. The concept of plot introduced by the classical critics begins to be questioned by subsequent writers who seek to understand plot in terms of historical and social processes.

In the eighteenth century, the emergence of the novel is closely linked to the rise of capitalism and the new social order. The shift from feudal property relations to private ownership structures begins to transform the relationship of individuals to time and events. Ian Watt suggests that in the development of the novel, "experience becomes organized into continuous and interlocking narrative sequences" (Watt, 1957, chapter 2). Plots provide a conceptual framework for understanding time as a continuous series of events occurring independently of social relations.

The classical concepts of plot provide the foundation for understanding the role of narrative organization in general and fictional narrative in particular. The main tension between teleology and openness characterizes the development of the concept of plot from Aristotle to Bakhtin. This tension is also fundamental to the writings of critics who begin to develop a formal understanding of plot in the early twentieth century.

Reconceptualization of Plot: Formalist, Narratological, Rhetorical, and Cultural-contextual Perspectives

The beginnings of the formalist approach to narrative literature are determined by a critical response to the dominant impressionist aesthetics. Formalists propose to study literature through an intrinsic

framework of devices, techniques, and structures. Shklovsky's distinction between fabula and *sjuzhet* has been especially productive for the further development of formalist criticism. According to Shklovsky, fabula refers to the chronological arrangement of narrative incidents, whereas *sjuzhet* denotes the arrangement of these incidents in the narrative (Shklovsky, 1965). The concept of plot is related to neither fabula nor *sjuzhet*, since both chronology and narrative incidents are subject to modification by the author's design. Plot patterns can be identified in both prose and verse. Plot devices serve to re-present reality by introducing perceptual complexity, and as such, they relate to the fundamental device of defamiliarization. Shklovsky's approach to writing has been developed by Tomashevsky, who examines the functions performed by narrative motifs. According to Tomashevsky, these functions can either be conditioned, i.e. derive from the necessities of context, or unconditioned, i.e. arise independently from context (Tomashevsky, 1965). By distinguishing between conditioned and unconditioned functions, Tomashevsky formalizes the concept of the plot further, identifying the ways in which it departs from the logic of context.

Propp's contribution to the formalization of the concept of plot is connected with his analysis of narrative patterns in folk tales. Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* identifies abstract functions which underlie all plots of folk tales, as well as their fixed order (Propp, 1968). Propp's approach to the study of plots is based on the assumption of their conditional nature: the structure of plot sequences always depends on their context. Propp's theory makes it possible to analyze any plot using his set of functions as a framework for discovering regularities.

The formalist approach to plot can be seen as a theoretical framework for identifying regularities in the construction of narrative works. Formalists share the viewpoint of the classical critics who emphasize the role of context in determining plot structure. However, in contrast to them, the formalist critics examine plot structure as the product of authors' activity. Formalist critics examine plots as ordered arrangements of devices which serve to present narrative material in a modified form. The emphasis on the techniques of narrative construction provides the basis for further theoretical approaches to the structure of plots.

Formalist theories of plot find further development in the works of Tomashevsky, Tynianov, and Jakobson. Plot structures are examined as part of the system of fictional discourse. According to Tynianov, plot devices are meaningful only in the context of the entire system of literary devices (Tynianov, 1977). Tomashevsky and Tynianov agree that the development of narrative technique is determined by the history of literary language (Tomashevsky, 1965). Jakobson's view of narrative organization presupposes the existence of an exchange between different functions, which implies that there is no privileged function that dominates narrative discourse (Jakobson, 1987). These formalist critics develop the concept of plot further, examining it in the context of the entire system of literary devices.

The concept of plot, as developed by the formalist critics, has two main characteristics. First, the formalist understanding of plot encompasses all modes of narrative discourse. Second, the formalist approach to plot is purely descriptive, excluding questions of context and value. The formalist description of plot structures influences further research into the mechanisms of narrative construction, especially after the rise of structuralism.

The Formalist Approach to Plot Influences Further Research Into the Mechanisms of Narrative Construction

The formalist conception of plot as a system of devices allows structuralist narratology to build upon the achievements of formalist criticism. Plot structures can be considered as systems of distinctive features by which plots are differentiated from other types of discourse. The structuralist analysis of plot follows the

principles established by the Russian formalists. Todorov's account of plot structure presupposes the distinction between story and narrative. Story is an abstracted representation of narrative discourse, whereas narrative refers to story told within a particular work. Story is presented as a sequence of states of affairs, linked by logical coherence and connected by a transformation from one state to another (Todorov, 1977). According to Todorov, transformation in narrative discourse always presupposes some kind of disruption of equilibrium, which in turn leads to a new state of affairs (Todorov, 1971). By emphasizing transformation, Todorov's approach to plot structures departs from the classical formalist account of narrative construction.

Similar to Todorov, Barthes focuses on the mechanisms of narrative transportation. In his analysis of fiction plots, Barthes draws a distinction between functions, actions, and narration as modes of representing story (Barthes, 1977). Functions are the basic units of plots, which can either serve as kernels or satellites. Plots are differentiated by their mode of constructing time, which is evident from their distribution across three levels: functions, actions, and narration. Barthes's approach to the structure of plots presupposes their open-endedness, and the emphasis on modes of narration allows further examination of the role of focalization in narrative discourse.

Structuralist analysis of plot structure also builds upon the formalist distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzhet*. Genette distinguishes between story (*histoire*) and narrative discourse (*recit*), which presupposes the distinction between basic chronological ordering of events (plot) and their representation in a given work (Genette, 1980). Genette identifies three aspects of temporal organization of story in narrative works: order, duration, and frequency of events. His account of plot structure is concerned with the ways in which they differ, depending on the arrangement of the temporality of events. By emphasizing the importance of distinctions in temporal organization, Genette builds on the structuralist assumptions of Barthes and Todorov. He further extends the structuralist analysis of plot through the introduction of the distinctions between levels of story (levels of narrative) and different aspects of story (point of view).

Greimas's approach to plot represents a further development of the structuralist approach to narrative discourse. Greimas suggests that plot sequences can be analyzed as networks of actantial functions, which are distributed among participants in the plot (Greimas, 1983). The structuralist account of plot construction departs from the classical and formalist assumptions of contextuality by examining plot sequences as abstract systems of functions. Greimas's approach presupposes that plots are structurally similar across different cultures, since their functions can be arranged using the same oppositions (Greimas, 1983). By postulating general principles of plot construction, Greimas's account goes beyond the descriptive goals of Russian formalism.

The structuralist approach to plot construction examines the mechanisms of narrative transportation, emphasizing temporal organization and distribution of functions. However, by focusing on these aspects of narrative construction, structuralist critics fail to consider the role of context in the interpretation of plots. As was suggested by critics such as Todorov and Genette, the structuralist method allows the construction of a descriptive framework for the analysis of plot structures.

The descriptive approach to the analysis of plot structures is further developed by critics who focus on the role of mediation in narrative discourse. Structuralist narration presupposes the existence of various levels of representation: in order to represent story, narrative discourse should be organized according to specific conventions. The distinction between story and narrative discourse draws attention to the fact that plots are constructed by means of different levels of representation, including levels of focalization. Genette distinguishes between three types of focalization: zero, internal, and external (Genette, 1980). The role of

focalization in the construction of plots is further specified by classical narratologists who examine its impact on such aspects of narrative discourse as suspense, surprise, and irony.

The structuralist and classical narratology analysis plots as levels of narration, pointing to their transformation as a function of focalization. Classical narratologists attempt to account for the effects of mediation and interpretation which are inherent in narration. The focus on mediation leads narratologists to examine the role of voice in narrative discourse. According to Genette, differences between focalization and narrator determine the structural aspects of narration (Genette, 1980). The distinction between focalization and narration further underscores the fact that the mediation is essential to narration.

The role of mediation in narrative discourse complicates the structuralist separation of story and narrative, since focalization affects both levels. Ways in which mediation impacts the construction of narrative discourse are further examined by critics who analyze the role of narrative voices. Classical narratologists discuss the implications of narration that does not follow accepted conventions. Rimmon-Kenan notes that deviations from the established expectations of narration serve to represent specific aspects of story (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). Violations of structural coherence inherent to narration undermine our ability to follow the logic of plot construction, and require contextual analysis. The emphasis on the role of mediation and interpretation complicates structuralist narration, and points to the role of ethics in narrative discourse.

Wayne Booth's analysis of narrative discourse highlights the ethical aspects of narration, examining the ways in which narrative voices represent the attitudes of the implied author. Booth draws attention to the ways in which the author's attitudes are related to the construction of plot: "It is not only what the story says, then, that must be weighed, but also how it says it – that is, what values the author has attached to the things that have happened or are happening in the fictional world" (Booth, 1983, p. 145). By emphasizing the role of the implied author, Booth's account of narrative discourse departs from the formalist view of story as autonomous from the author's intentions and actions. The analysis of ethical implications of narration suggests that plot construction is not simply a matter of structural transformations of story.

Classical narratologists attempt to account for the complexity of the mediation in narration, examining the role of focalization and voices. In examining the levels of mediation, narratologists further explore the ways by which meaning in narrative discourse is transformed and made more complex. The focus on representation leads critics to revisit the structuralist distinction between story and narrative.

Classical narratologists analyze the representation of plot, examining the ways in which story is transformed as it is embedded within narrative discourse. In the first place, the representation of plot is related to the levels of mediation. As the narrative discourse adds levels of representation, it transforms story, presenting it in a modified form. As such, narrative discourse constructs plot as an abstract structure of story. Plots are presented in accordance with specific conventions, which allow for distinguishing between different types of narrative. In distinguishing between various levels of representation, structuralist and classical narratology accounts highlight the fact that plots are not simple chronological orders of story. Plots presuppose specific transformations of story which are performed by narrative techniques such as focalization, narration, and voice. In this respect, the analysis of representation helps to distinguish between different types of plots.

According to Mieke Bal, narration constructs story by using various narrative strategies. The structure of narrative strategies distinguishes between the plot levels: "The plot levels are levels of distribution and

levels of narrative strategies. The plot strategies determine the plot distribution by which the narrative operates to gain control over the story (Mieke Bal, 2009, p. 333).

The analysis of representation allows the structuralist and classical narratologists to examine the transformation of story as it is embedded in the narrative discourse. This transformation of story takes place by virtue of story being presented in accordance with specific conventions and strategies. These conventions and strategies determine the distribution of story within the plot structure.

The classical narratologists attempt to account for all levels of complexity involved in the construction of plots. Their analysis suggests that plots are abstract sequences of story constructed by narrative strategies such as mediation and multiple levels of representation. Plots are not simply chronological organization of story: they presuppose transformation of story's distribution, as well as modification of its representation. Although the structuralist analysis of plot structures allows for distinguishing between various types of narrative, it remains focused on the descriptive aspects of narrative construction. The structuralist account of plot makes it possible to discuss the relationship between plot and story in terms of transformations of distribution. However, it does not sufficiently account for the motivations of plot construction, or the role of these constructions in facilitating readerly engagement. By examining these aspects of narrative construction, critics further advance the discussion of plot structures, conceptualizing them as acts of representation.

The turn to rhetorical theory marks a transition in narrative studies from descriptive analyses of plot-voice-focalization-reliability relations to an exploration of communication strategies that narrative discourse employs to engage the reader's interpretation and responses. While classical narratology attempts to define and differentiate mediating strategies by which stories are told, rhetorical narratology reconsiders plot in terms of the intentions of the authorial agency as manifested in the rhetoric of fictional texts.

Wayne C. Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* provides a textual basis for this turn to rhetorical theory by challenging the objectivist assumptions of structuralism and poststructuralism. Plot is revealed as a 'persuasive ploy' by which the author's ethos is communicated to the reader (Booth, 1983). Booth problematizes the very objectivity of plot as a privileged category of literary discourse because he detects a persuasive bias in the ways plots are thought to be formulated and organized. Booth's discovery of the implied author's ethos in narrative progression has been expanded upon by subsequent researchers who investigate the narrative strategies by which writers lead their readers to believe this or that in the context of fiction.

Peter Brooks's *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* builds upon Booth's account of the rhetorical functions of plot by rethinking this term in terms of desire and economy. Brooks's psychoanalytic reading of plot leads him to posit this term as signifying the 'structuring of desires' that generates fictitious worlds via the dialectics of postponement and fulfillment (Brooks, 1984). Plot here acts as a narrative economy that regulates the tension between the reader's expectations and the story's developments that occur in the context of the unfolding fictional present and the associated suspension of chronological time. Brooks's model of intentions and expectations that govern narrative temporalities serves as an essential basis for examining the plot devices by which novelistic plots are organized in time. James Phelan's *Rhetorical Strategies in Fiction: A Synthesis of Narrative Functions* contributes to the turn to rhetorical theory by making explicit what previous critics have said about narrative intentions. Phelan demonstrates how the author's intentions to mislead and surprise the reader inform the choice of plot devices and thus help generate such rhetorical effects as sympathy and surprise (Phelan, 1989). His

account of plot makes it clear that this term encompasses various strategies for organizing story events to achieve specific rhetorical, mimetic, and thematic effects (Phelan, 2007).

Finally, Peter J. Rabinowitz's *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and Politics of Interpretation* examines the ways in which narrative conventions facilitate the reception of plot. This critic focuses on the rhetoric of reading, which determines the interpretive strategies that the reader must apply to appreciate the narrative as a literary construct. According to Rabinowitz's theory, conventional plot devices guide the reader in her reading of the story as a self-consistent whole by implying specific patterns of expectations-fulfillment that govern the interpretation of story events (Rabinowitz, 1987).

These four contributions to the theory of the novel represent the turn to rhetorical theory by investigating the intentions of the authorial agency that seek to persuade the reader in the context of plot construction. As can be seen, each of these critics makes a unique contribution to rethinking the category of plot from the perspective of narrative rhetoric. Booth's discovery of the implied author's ethos in narrative progression has far-reaching implications for novel theory. Plot is revealed as a persuasive instrument by which the author seeks to influence the way the reader interprets the story and perceives the world. Brooks's examination of desire and economy, Phelan's study of intention, and Rabinowitz's analysis of reading strategies expand upon this finding by exploring the ways in which the author's intentions inform the rhetorical strategies of deception and persuasion.

This rhetorical approach to the examination of plot makes it possible to conceptualize this term in a more comprehensive manner. Plot structures not only the plot but also the reader's perceptions, judgements, and beliefs. This realization prepares the ground for a cultural and contextual analysis of plot that explores the ways in which this narrative device is involved in constructing our understanding of time and history.

Reference

1. Aristotle (1996) *Poetics*. Trans. M. Heath. London: Penguin.
2. Bakhtin, M.M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
3. Barthes, R. (1977) *Image–Music–Text*. Trans. S. Heath. London: Fontana.
4. Bhabha, H.K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
5. Booth, W.C. (1983) *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. 2nd edn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
6. Bremond, C. (1980) 'The Logic of Narrative Possibilities', *New Literary History*, 11(3), pp. 387–411.
7. Brooks, P. (1984) *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. New York: Knopf.
8. Culler, J. (2002) *Structuralist Poetics*. London: Routledge.
9. de Beauvoir, S. (2011) *The Second Sex*. Trans. C. Borde and S. Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage.
10. Eagleton, T. (1983) *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
11. Felski, R. (2008) *Uses of Literature*. Oxford: Blackwell.
12. Forster, E.M. (1927) *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Edward Arnold.
13. Genette, G. (1980) *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. J.E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
14. Goldmann, L. (1975) *Towards the Sociology of the Novel*. Trans. A. Sheridan. London: Tavistock.
15. Greimas, A.J. (1983) *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*. Trans. D. McDowell et al. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

16. Herman, D. (2002) *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* . Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
17. James, H. (1884) 'The Art of Fiction', *Longman's Magazine* , 4, pp. 502–521.
18. Jameson, F. (1981) *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* . Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
19. Jakobson, R. (1987) *Language in Literature* . Ed. K. Pomorska and S. Rudy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
20. Lukács, G. (1971) *The Theory of the Novel* . Trans. A. Bostock. London: Merlin Press.
21. Moi, T. (1985) *Sexual/Textual Politics* . London: Methuen.
22. Moretti, F. (2005) *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* . London: Verso.
23. Phelan, J. (1989) *Reading People, Reading Plots* . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
24. Propp, V. (1968) *Morphology of the Folktale* . 2nd ed. Trans. L. Scott. Austin: University of Texas Press.
25. Rabinowitz, P.J. (1987) *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* . Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
26. Ricoeur, P. (1984) *Time and Narrative* , Vol. 1. Trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
27. Said, E.W. (1983) *The World, the Text, and the Critic* . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
28. Schmid, W. (2010) *Narratology: An Introduction* . Trans. A. Starritt. Berlin: De Gruyter.
29. Shklovsky, V. (1965) 'Art as Technique', in Lemon, L.T. and Reis, M.J. (eds.) *Russian Formalist Criticism* . Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 3–24.
30. Showalter, E. (1977) *A Literature of Their Own* . Princeton: Princeton University Press.
31. Todorov, T. (1977) *The Poetics of Prose* . Trans. R. Howard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
32. Tomashevsky, B. (1965) 'Thematics', in Lemon, L.T. and Reis, M.J. (eds.) *Russian Formalist Criticism* . Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 61–95.
33. Williams, R. (1977) *Marxism and Literature* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
34. Woolf, V. (2009) *A Room of One's Own* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.