

**The Relative Narrative: An Analytical Reading of
Virginia Woolf's *to the Lighthouse***

By

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ملخص البحث:

يعتمد مفهوم الزمن في العصر الحالي بشكل كبير علي مرحلتين أساسيتين من مراحل تطور الفيزياء التطبيقية: تقوم المرحلة الأولى منهما علي اساس ما قدمه اينشتاين في نظرية النسبية من مفاهيم عن الكون رباعي الابعاد وما ترتب علي ذلك من تغييرات ثورية في الثقافة والوعي الجمالي للعصر. لقد غيرت النسبية الفهم التقليدي للزمن كبناء خطي منطقي ومتربط الي بناء معقد ومتوازي يتم تلقيه بشكل متزامن دون الحاجة الي الاشارة الي زمن معين (ماضي/مضارع/مستقبل). لقد أثر ذلك التحول الجذري في مفهوم الزمن في كل نواحي الحياة الانسانية المعرفية منها والجمالية بما في ذلك أنماط الحكى الروائي. لذا يمكن دراسة ذلك التحول الفيزيائي في مفهوم الزمن من كيان خطي الي تداخلات من الازمنة المتوازية في ضوء التحول في بنية الرواية الانجليزية في القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين. وهكذا فسوف تحاول هذه الورقة البحثية المتواضعة فحص ما تم تطبيقه من تسييل أو تحلل متعمد للزمن في بنية الرواية الحداثية ليس فقط كأحد تداعيات النظرية النسبية، بل أيضا كممارسة ثورية مضادة للفهم الخطي للزمن الشائع في الرواية الانجليزية الكلاسيكية، وبناءا علي دراسة تلك التغييرات في ضوء المحاور التالية:

- ١- اسبقية الحكى علي الحكاية
- ٢- اسبقية الراوي علي الشخصيات
- ٣- اسبقية الازمة علي تطور الاحداث
- ٤- الزمن ككيان فردي

كما سيتم تقديم بعض الاشكال التوضيحية في محاولة لعرض فهم تقريبي لما تطلق عليه هذه المقالة "الرواية النسبية".

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الرواية النسبية، الاشكال الزمنية، النسبية، تطور الأحداث، الأزمة، الزمن الفردي.

1- Abstract:

Two major stages in the history of applied physics are meant to define, or rather, re-define the time conception in the zeitgeist of the era. the first stage has to do with the effect of Relativity as a definition of the fourth dimension/ the fourth density/ time, as well as its direct impact on the cultural and aesthetic consciousness of the era. Relativity, in other words, has changed time conception from linear, sequential, simply ordered, and tangibly perceived structure into a paradoxical simultaneously complex structure perceived synchronously, without any particular singular tense either present, past, or future. This reformation of time, which has traditionally been perceived as the major stake of all human activity, has influenced almost every single field of human knowledge, including conceptions of narrative time. It has changed narrative's conception of tense as sequence now offered as more relative or symbolic than ever appeared in any of the traditional narratives. This transformation from mere linearity to relative simultaneity of events can be best explained in terms of the change of temporal construction from the 18th to the 19th-century narratives. This paper, therefore, is meant to investigate the kind of time liquefaction, or rather, time partial dissemination offered in late 19th and early 20th centuries' modernist narratives, as both counter to 18th-century narrative's absolute linearity, and an implication of Relativity's view of the world. This article will, therefore, discuss these changes

as falling into four reforming practices: firstly, “Narration over narrativity”, secondly, “Narrator over characters”, thirdly, “Crisis over development”, and “Time as the I time”. Charts and figures will be introduced to deliver an approximate explanation of what this paper terms a relative narrative.

Keywords:

Modernist Narrative, Temporality, Relativity, Development, Crisis, I Time,

Introduction:

Born in 1879 in Ulm (Harris 3), young Albert Einstein seems to have suffered from a turbulent childhood; as a “shy and contemplative Jewish child” among a majority of Christian children, Einstein has probably experienced an overwhelming sense of “isolation” (Harris 3). At an early age, Einstein had difficulties with studying “languages, history, and geography”, yet, interestingly, showed unprecedented brilliance at “mathematics”, that he was “a better mathematician than his masters” (Harris 3). He started working on the theory of Relativity when he was only “16 years old” (Shankland 2). Ten years later, Einstein came to an end that “time was a suspect!” (Shankland 2). Afterward, testing and developing the theory of Relativity “had been his life for over seven years” (Shankland 10). Einstein’s theory of Relativity was first introduced to the scientific stream in 1905 when his “first monograph on the theory was published in the Swiss Scientific Journal, the *Annalen der Physik*” (Harris 3). Einstein’s famous 1905 monograph contained four major papers. These are: *On a Heuristic Viewpoint Concerning the Production and Transformation of Light* (the 9th of June), *On*

the Motion of Small Particles Suspended in a Stationary Liquid, as Required by the Molecular Kinetic Theory of Heat (the 18th of July), *On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies* (the 26th of September) and *Does the Inertia of Body Depend Upon its Energy Content?* (the 21st of November) (Einstein's Paper Project). Since then, he initiated a series of thought experiments among whom *The Magnet and the Conductor* (1905) (Norton 135), *Wave-Particle Duality of Black Body Radiation* (1909) (Norton 132), and *The Two Fluid Bodies* (1916) (Norton 138) are probably the most significant. Einstein's persistent thought experimentation ended up setting in clear terms the two theories of General and Special Relativity, through which he "blended the old and the new in equal proportions" in the sense of "combining the old principle of relativity with the new principle of the universality of the speed of light" (Schutz 211).

The philosophies and aesthetic ideals of Einstein, on the other hand, deserve profound contemplation and further studies. "As long as I have any choice, I will stay only in a country where political liberty, toleration, and equality of all citizens before the law are the rule" (Einstein 4). This is how Einstein's crystal-clear rejection of Nazi Germany was declared in his writings during the war. Yet, Einstein's bravery seems to have come at a cost; he was exiled for the next few years. He received offers from "Spain, France, and Britain", but he settled in Princeton as a professor of mathematical and theoretical physics (Harris 4). Being most complicated and "untranslatable into the common tongue" (Harris 2), Einstein's theoretical and mathematical calculations were notably incomprehensible by the majority of the people at that time. His work, Harris argues, can be

measured “only by the few who can follow his reasoning and challenge his conclusions” (Harris 2), which is, particularly, not a common talent. Einstein’s advocacy of humanity and high moral ideals could hardly be more obvious. He has always portrayed himself as a servant of humanity: someone who owes every single part of his being to the world. Einstein states: “a hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depends on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving” (Einstein 5). In this sense, Einstein’s perception of the world, including his views of minorities, war, Nazism, and even God, emerged, one way or another, from his core belief in humanity as the source of all knowledge.

Throughout his lifetime, Einstein had a unique sort of belief in a not-less-unique sort of God; he believed in the glorious entity standing behind the neat and cunning structure of the universe, especially its physical laws and dynamics. Expressing his admiration of God’s work, for example, Einstein states: “subtle is the Lord, but malicious he is not” (Pais 8). Yet, Einstein’s belief in God has never been separated from a constellation of beliefs in “humanity, in a peaceful world of mutual helpfulness, and the high mission of science” (Harris 1). He had a life of prayer, but not the kind of prayer we know. Rather, it was a non-dogmatic prayer of experimentation and deep contemplation in the sanctuary of science for the sake of humanity more than anything else. Pais states: “his was not a life of prayer and worship. Yet, he lived by a deep faith- a faith not capable of rational foundation- that there are laws of nature to be discovered” (Pais 8). In this

sense, Einstein's scientific experimentation has, in one way or another, reflected his philosophies in life, both ethical and religious.

Prior to the coming of General Relativity, time, as one angle in the most classical physical triangle: time, speed, and space, was generally seen as fixed, absolute and measurable. Except for a few philosophical schools, and up to the beginning of the twentieth century, in other words, time was viewed as an "absolute" linearity, independently existing, regardless of any other phenomena (Ferraro 1).

Particularly, after the three thought experiments mentioned above, time absoluteness\neutrality has no longer become claimable. Rather, time was proven to deviate, not only according to the speed, the direction, and the surroundings of the body in motion, but also according to a possible observer's/observers' "frame of reference" (Anderson 217). clock as a "measuring rod" has, in turn, been proven a mere "composite physical system with laws of motion governing their behavior" (Anderson 189). The previously rooted belief of time as fixedly measurable has consequently collapsed, or in best cases, viewed as finite and approximate.

However, such an approximate time was both physically and psychologically crucial for human survival. It was, essential for dividing, ordering, and recording human history. The human linear and accumulative perception of time, in general, and history, in particular, is probably invented, but still indispensable. How the human calendar, including dates, months, and days is set is significantly questioned by Albert Einstein. Through his work, the previously clear borderlines between past, present,

and future, as traditionally perceived throughout human history, seem to dissolve. Such a slight diverge in timing was not, traditionally, identified linearly by Einstein as a past, present, and future series of events. Instead, it was represented as three parallel present views of the same event, or rather, “different three-dimensional spaces/different presents” (Petkov 134). Thus, after Einstein’s experiments on time, Anderson argues, we have to be “extremely careful about using the phrase “at the same time” (Anderson 217). Through “language”, Einstein argues, such blocks of individual timings, lifetimes and personal experiences are “to some extent” comparable and exchangeable (Einstein 10).

More to the same effect, it is not only time that is proven relative through Einstein's work; objects also seem to be relativized. In the Train Paradox, for example, we don’t only get three different views of the same event from three different perspectives. We also get three three-dimensional objects relatively, and almost simultaneously, viewed in three different ways; three observers, three objects, and one event = a fourth dimension in which all things and all possibilities are simultaneously displayed. Petkov argues: “relativized existence of an object means that the observers have different three-dimensional objects, and for this reason the object’s existence is ontologically relativized” (Petkov 126). In short, instead of being fixed, absolute, and measurable, as generally identified in classic physics, time and, consequently, physical objects are now both philosophically and physically proven as relative by Einstein’s General Relativity.

Literature Review:

Einstein's theory of Relativity didn't constitute only a reflection on interrogating the nature of time but also revealed more deeply that it was an enduring acquaintance with the relative nature of almost every single entity in the universe, including narratology as one implication. Time linearity, or rather, "passing away" as Ricoeur terms it, was, in this very sense, widely interrogated at the turn of the century, not only scientifically, but also literary: "where is it coming from, what is it passing through, and where is it going?" (Ricoeur 9). Another problematic implication of time "passing", is "spatia-temporum" (Ricoeur 9). By "spatia-temporum" Ricoeur means "measuring time in relation to measurable period" (Ricoeur 9), such as the period earth takes to rotate around the sun or spin around itself. Utilizing celestial bodies' motion as a measuring unit of time "passing" is generally identified by Ricoeur as "the cosmological reference" (Ricoeur 10). However, this can only be true in a static, or a semi-static universe with limited regular motion, which is particularly proven wrong by Einstein. Einstein's theory of Relativity elucidates an infinite universe with a multi-layered mechanical dynamicity. In this sense, "unextended in space" and having "no duration", in a world of high dynamicity, "time passing" is identified by Ricoeur as a mere mental illusion, both complex and unmeasurable in nature (Ricoeur 9).

In addition to redefining time "passing" as a mere mental illusion, relativity imposed new literary forms in which "time passing" is but an allegory, "an extension of the mind itself" (Ricoeur 10). It consequently opened the door for a whole narrative stream in which time as a temporal marker is sent to the margins, while time's nature as a theme prevailed. Unlike

classic narrative, time's multiple temporal functions including time as a link to reality, time seems to be abbreviated into a malleable sequence holder in the 20th century's modernist novel. A literary notion through which time's "narrativistic nature", as White represents it, is disseminated and time's dilemma came to the upfront prevailing the century (White 142). Among other narrative elements, 20th-century literary critics such as Tzvetan Todorov, Rolan Barthes, and Gerard Genette included time as "propositions", "proairestic code" and "narrative time" respectively (Nayar 36-44). By "propositions", Todorov refers to "the sequences within the text"; it might be "temporal", "logical" or "spatial" (Nayar 36). By the same token, "proairestic code" is represented by Barthes as "the sequence in which the events of a story unfold...and it governs our expectations of a narrative" (Nayar 41). Likewise, Genette's "Narrative Time" hints at "the verbs and their tenses in the telling that indicate the time of the narrative (past, present, future)" (Nayar 44).

The relativist perception of time seems to have pushed language into a tight corner. It enforces an overwhelming state of "enigma" that swings between absolute knowledge and inherent uncertainty. Such a state of "enigma" seemed to prevail in the aesthetic practices of the era in general, and language, in particular. The rigid verbal patterns that represent time as falling into three main categories: present, past, and future are, to say, no longer valid. The specific, the rigid, and the `ultimate, in other words, can no longer include the relative, the liquid, and the immeasurable. Hinting at the illusive nature of such verbo-temporal categories, Ricoeur comments "such different times

do exist in the mind, but nowhere else that I can see” (Ricoeur 8). Here, the work of Virginia Wolfe seems, and the stream of consciousness at large, to find its impetus and most clear embodiment. In *To The Lighthouse*, for example, Lily Brisco used a vivid present imagery to recall the memory of the Ramsays planning for their visit to the lighthouse. Creating what seems to be a time vortex through which the tense trio of past, present and future are simultaneously existing, Lily states: "but it may be fine- I expect it will be fine, said Mrs Ramsay, making some little twist of the reddish brown stocking she was knitting, impatiently. If she finished it tonight, if they did go to the lighthouse after all, it was to be given to the lighthouse keeper for his little boy" (Woolf 5). As it is probably obvious, a troop of heterogeneous tenses, conditionals and time twists are mixed up to keep everything alive and consistent. This has probably opened the door for a new perception of time and its conventional categories as both relative and hypothetical in nature.

Within such a semantic field of hypothetical categories, the “cosmological solution”, or rather, measuring time in terms of celestial dynamicity, can no longer be submitted. Instead, Ricoeur argues, “the investigation will be forced to search in the soul alone” (Ricoeur 9). Thus, the enigmatic nature of time as established by relativity at that time forced parallel enigmatic verbal practices. Words, as identified by De Saussure, are no longer “symbols which correspond to referents”. Instead, they turned into “signs which are made up of two parts: a mark, either written or spoken, called a “signifier” and a concept called a “signified” (Selden 63) which are both mental concepts. However, as one consequence of relativity, language had to develop more

“rigorous manners” of time representation (Ricoeur 8). In the example above, this is obvious in the selection of words, temporal markers and conditionals that represent the complexity of unaccomplished plans recalled from the past and depicted vividly to signal present and future traumas.

Derived by Einstein's iconic formula of $e=mc^2$, for example, language digits including letters and numbers as signifiers get reformulated into symbols, codes, and equations with utterly new signifieds. This is probably how language could cope with the nature of time at that age as relative, metaphysical, and beyond sensual perception through developing a never less symbolic, polysemous, and multicomponent equative language.

Adding space to time as assumed by Einstein's relativity, pushed language another step further. If time is “the measurement of movement”, as Ricoeur puts it, a “quasi-spatial” language is but a must (Ricoeur 8). In this sense, the concept of spatio-temporal language that aligns space and time in the form of equative formulas emerged. A significant question is raised here: if time perception as introduced by relativity is based on celestial movement, and these celestial movements are known to be relative and dynamic in nature, how would narrative processes in such a holographic and hypothetical medium? This question has haunted modernist writers' and critics' imaginations for years. A structuralist narrative notion that investigates the basic single elements of the narrative emerged as a consequence.

As a result of the “developments in chemistry and physics in the nineteenth century that established that all matter was made of molecules and that all molecules were made of

atoms”, Klages argues, Structuralism invaded the 19th and 20th centuries’ thought. Klages defines structuralism as “a way of thinking that works to find the fundamental basic units or elements of which anything is made” (Klages 31). The main concern of Structuralism, therefore, is investigating the main components\ units\ elements of a pattern by dividing it into minuteness. Klages states: “A structuralist is interested in finding the basic elements; the units that make up any system, and in discovering the rules that govern how those units can be combined. and that’s all. Structuralist analysis is not concerned with anything beyond the interrelationship of units and rules” (Klages 31). Structuralist narratology tended to submit “syntax” and “function” as the major “rules” and “units” of any narrative, respectively (Selden 67). structuralist narrative seems to break up with temporal linearity through “canceling history”, inventing “universal” and “timeless” narrative structures as well as representing traditional narrative elements such as the narrator, the time .. etc as mere “arbitrary segments of a changing and developing process” (Selden 77). As such, they are interested in narrative neither as a pleasant literary act (the core of Classic narrative’s identity) nor as a social practice with multiple cultural and philosophical connotations. Instead, they are much more concerned with the systematic pattern underlying the narrative act in its most primal and fundamental form. In this sense, it is no more about the development, the direction, the sequence, or the duration of action as longstanding priorities of Classic narrativity. Rather, other narrative patterns that are significantly “static”, “ahistorical” and not necessarily sequential emerged (Selden 78). Unlike classical narrative, the structuralist narrative is not much concerned with

portraying any “reality” as it views “reality” as simply “beyond human perception” (Klages 33). Instead, it develops a literary notion that tends to investigate the particles over the totalities. It is , in other words, concerned with investigating the human mind’s capacity to organize these particles within a pattern through language, or rather “syntax” as a dominant instrument.

Flourishing in the context of modernism, structural narrative tended to break up with Classic narrativity in both in form and content. By “Modernism”, Habermas refers to “the result of the differentiation of sphere of art from a formerly unified and encompassing world view” (Holub 280). Thus, modernism, in general, and structural narrative, as one of its products, seem both to represent the world as constructed, or rather, reconstructed, fragments of time. It transformed the literary sphere’s view of narrativity from “governed by eternal laws and rules” into a more malleable one that “admits modification over time” (Holub 278); this notion will, particularly, create an absolute narrative mess by the turn of the century.

As such, “challenging some of the most cherished beliefs of the ordinary reader” (Selden 62), the structuralist narrative seems one way or another to turn upside down longstanding traditional narrative elements. It seems to reprioritize narration, structure, narrator, and over narrative, development, and narratee, respectively. First published in 1927, Virginia Woolf’s *To The Light House* seems to have created widespread controversy. Shocked by its extraordinary fluid structure, critics divided acutely into two camps. On one side, stood those who viewed it positively such as Leavis, Walpole, and Madox. Representing it as “a work expressing

the finest consciousness of the age”, Leavis ranks *To The Light House* high side by side with “The Waste Land” and “Ulysses” (Leavis 25). Ranking it even higher, Ford Madox represents *To The Light House* as “the only piece of British writing that has really excited my craftsman’s mind” (Madox 375). Likewise, in his *New States Man and Nation*, Walpole signals Woolf’s *To The Light House* as a “liberating” narrative (Walpole 279). Hinting at the narrative’s deliberate dissociation from reality, on the other hand, Huxley defines *To The Light House* in terms of its “over-refinement and remoteness” more than anything else (Huxley 330). Sugarcoating his rejection, Conrad Aiken describes the narrative as having “an odd and delicious air of parochialism” (Aiken 330). *To The Light House* will be examined in this paper as an exemplar of a structuralist/Modernist narrative that reflects the relative perception of time. The temporal patterns of structuralist narrative as detected in *To The Lighthouse* and identified in the light of Einstein’s relativity can, therefore, be displayed as the following:

1- Narration over Narrativity & Narrator over Characters:

Submitting the “density of the occurrence of minimal units of plot” as a major building unit, Yevseyev constitutes a statistical method of measuring the narrativity of any text (Yevseyev 122). By the “minimal unit of plot,” Yevseyev means “a pair of temporally, causally, and logically connected events” (Yevseyev 122). Yevseyev’s study could legitimately or seemingly point out that “longer texts”, as Yevseyev terms them, are less narrative than “shorter ones” (Yevseyev 118). Yevseyev states: “one of the most telling results of the study

was that longer texts, as a rule, were less narrative than shorter ones in terms of the density of taxis units in them” (Yevseyev 118). Consequently, with a level of narrativity that is less than “2.0”, Yevseyev argues, “the courtly romance, the heroic lay, the nineteenth and twentieth-century novel, and the travel literature” ranked down on the list of the examined novels (Yevseyev 122). Offering only three main actions in 175 pages, *To The Lighthouse* would rank really down on Yevseyev's list.

Thus, when it comes to narrativity, 19th and early 20th century modernist novels wouldn't be the best answer. In terms of Yevseyev's criterion of offering as many logically and temporally sequential events as possible, the modernist narrative would come last as it offers the least possible number of sequential events. Both in form and content, modernist novel seems to adopt narrative patterns that would, forthrightly, favor narration over narrativity. It founded a narrative style through which “narrativity” is totally and non-negotiably swept under the umbrella of “narration”. Commenting on the narrative style of the Modernist novel, Kraus argues: “narrativity becomes recognizable –apparent- as a result of the act of narrating performed by a narrator, who thereby creates a fictional world in which his or her narrative is situated” (Kraus 267). As is perhaps obvious, Modernist narrative assign the narrator as the creator, the main performer, and the beholder of the whole narrative. It is, in other words, no longer about what but how events are weaved together within the narrative by conventional concepts of before and after. It is no more about the quantity of writing, the number of actions, or the capability to weave these actions into a tangible sequential

patterns. Instead, the modernist narrative is particularly originality-centered. It is more concerned with delivering experimentally unique forms both thematically and structurally.

As one implication of ranking over narrativity, the modernist novel seems to embed the narrator into a troop of authoritative practices over other –formerly untouchable– narrative elements including the main characters’ centralization, plot, and temporal structure. Modernist novel characters, for example, are identified as “the anthropomorphic figures the narrator tells us about”, which, in turn, Bal argues, “creates the effect of the character” (Bal 114). Interestingly, throughout *To The Lighthouse*, multiple characters, both major and minor, as well as the omniscient narrator take turns depicting, analyzing and sometimes projecting over each other. This representation seems one way or another, to embed these supposedly secondary characters into a notable sense of superiority over the main characters. In Woolf’s *To The Light House*, for example, it is MRS Ramsay who is probably the central character. Yet, other secondary characters including Lily Brisco, Bankes, and most significantly, an anonymous, but inherently omniscient and dominant narrator seem to take over the discourse. Despite not speaking about themselves, the voice of these marginal characters remains the loudest, the most frequent, and the most prevalent throughout the text. Ronchetti observes:

if one compares part I and II of the novel, part I is largely about the life of the Ramsay family as experienced by the Ramsays themselves and as observed by William Bankes and Lily Briscoe, who are not only outside the family circle, but

may be considered marginal individuals beyond their relationship to the Ramsays as well (Ronchetti 62).

In this sense, it is the narrator (in its many forms) to whom modernist characters owe their identity and influence, according to Bal. In her *Introduction to The Theory of Narrative*, Bal negates characters' humanity. A character, in her terms, is "not a human being, but it resembles one" (Bal 115). They are virtual beings that lack "psyche", "personality", "ideology" or "competence to act" (Bal 115). Instead, they are mere carriers through which "psychological and ideological descriptions are possible" (Bal 115). It is the narrator, therefore, who roots characters into existence and establishes its long-lasting influence through a troop of exceptional permissions such as mind-reading, thought vocalization, and time deformation. Highlighting Mrs. Ramsay's unconditionally caring and probably over-protective attitudes towards others, for example, the omniscient narrator comments: "yes, he did disagreeable things; Mrs Ramsay admitted it was odious of him to rub this in, and make James still more disappointed; but at the same time she would not let them laugh at him" (Woolf 5). Thus, despite weakening Mrs. Ramsay's proposal of visiting the lighthouse, Tansley's opinion is still approved by her so as not to hurt his feelings. This was probably the omniscient narrator's way of red-flagging Mrs. Ramsay's submissive and unself-asserting attitudes at the very beginning of the narrative. He embedded the reader into not only an inquiry but also a decision to make concerning Mrs. Ramsay being a caring or an internally insecure character based on its development throughout the narrative.

Breaking up with the classic pattern of characterization through which the main character and the narrator were mostly one, modernist narrative constituted a narrative style through which the main character and the narrator are not only split but also hierarchal. It brought into existence a characterization pattern that brings the main characters to light by having them portrayed through the eyes of several marginal ones. In his *Narratology: An Introduction*, Schmid differentiates between two different “components” of “narrative discourse”: “narrator’s discourse” and “character’s discourse” (Schmid 118). Logically, Schmid argues, a character’s discourse is always perceived as “having existed before the act of narration, and as being merely reproduced in the performance of the act” (Schmid 118). However, though seemingly precedent to the narrator’s discourse, the character’s discourse in the structuralist narrative seems to be sent to the margins, embedding the narrator’s discourse as the ultimate space and the loudest voice. Structuralist narrative, in other words, seems to shift characters into narrators of different degrees with exceptional observing, mind-reading, and talkative powers. As an undeniably feminist voice that is probably intentionally included to distinguish and oppose Mrs. Ramsay's typical Victorian femineity, Lily Brisco takes the wheel as a narrator in part three of the narrative. Signaling Mrs. Ramsay's male-biased attitudes, for example, Lily observes: "she had the whole of the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance..." (Woolf 6). As such, despite being a secondary character, Lily's characters is sometimes, intentionally,

promoted, over other main characters such as Mrs. Ramsay's discussing, analyzing and investigating its motives and intentions.

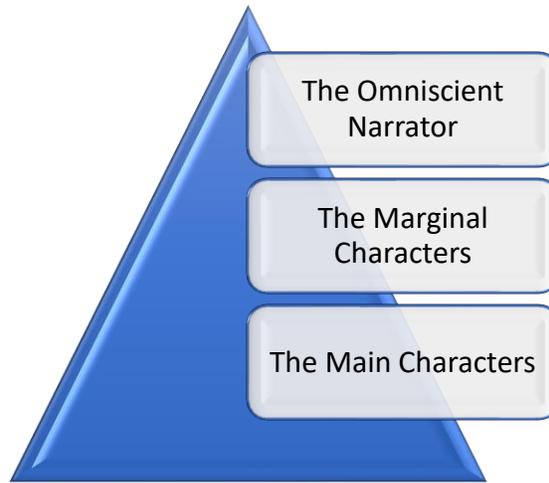
Unlike Classic novels where main characters simultaneously and unconditionally perform as narrators, the structuralist narrator seems to master further powers such as insinuating characters' minds, creating achronological temporal transitions, and practicing unlimited verbosity. As a typical classic narrative, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* submitted Crusoe's character, to whom the narrative owes its nomination, as not only a sole and a whole dominant character but also as a first-person narrator, commenter, pace holder, etc. Despite carrying some colonial connotation, such authorial narration practices are still most common in most of the 18th-century novels such as *Tristram Shandy* (1759), *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), *Candide* (1759), and *Clarissa* (1747). Adopting what seems to be a collectivist attitude, particularly prevalent in its context, Modernist narrative widened the scope of narration to include the main, the minor, and even the absent characters. Modernist narrator, in its various forms, had the potential not only to penetrate characters' thoughts but also to "modify the character's discourse in a particular way, which becomes apparent when he can occasionally be observed" (Schmid 119). The narrator's discourse, in this very sense, controls the degree of observation any character gets within a structuralist text. In *To The Lighthouse*, for example, the omniscient narrator's comments and observations of other main characters were more revealing than any quote or statement made by the character itself. This embeds the reader into an observant eye that is more able to identify the characters

independently regardless of any character's camouflaging discourse. Highlighting William Bankes' anxiety and internal conflicts, that wouldn't probably have been voluntarily revealed by Bankes himself, the omniscient narrator observes: "That was why he preferred dining alone. All those interruptions annoyed him...looking at his hand he thought that if he had been alone dinner would have been almost over now; he would have been free to work. Yes, he thought, it is a terrible waste of time" (Woolf 74).

The structuralist narrator's role, therefore, seems to exceed the traditional task of narration, particularly relevant to Classic narratives, to other dimensions through which he functions as a text expander. He is responsible for pushing the actions, as slow, few, and irrelevant as they might seem, forward within a discourse of relative, or rather, hollow temporal patterns. Additionally, he creates and manages a verbal playfield through which the reader is free to choose between the said and the unsaid, the told and the untold, and most significantly, between the conscious and the unconscious. Thus, through excessive verbosity, the structuralist narrator seems either intentionally or unintentionally to operate as a "mediator between author and the narrated world" (Schmid 1), another feature that he has in common with the Classic narrator.

In *To The Light House*, for example, the reader can spot three narrators of different authoritative degrees (Figure 1). At the bottom of the pyramid, comes the main characters with the least presence both in action and discourse. Throughout the narrative, the sound of the characters' thoughts is louder than the sound of their words. Only a few superficial, pretentious, and mostly insincere comments with

multilayered psychological, social, philosophical, and sexual connotations came on the tongue of the main characters. Part one, for example, starts mid-action, where Mrs. Ramsay seems to answer a question- we have never heard- made by Mr. Ramsay. She replies: “yes, of course, if it’s fine tomorrow...but you’ll have to be up with the lark” (Woolf 4). The firmness and confirmation in MRS. Ramsay’s tone probably touched MR. Ramsay’s masculinity. Yet, a few hours and about 100 pages later, through another simple statement, she could drop the case and win him back. She said: “yes, you were right. It’s going to be wet tomorrow. You won’t be able to go” (Woolf 99). As such, though seemingly scarce throughout the text, the main characters’ comments were undeniably revealing and sometimes carriers of emotional signs, social attitudes, and sometimes philosophical thoughts.



(Figure 1)

The Hierarchical pattern of narrators in the Modernist Narrative

In the second place, marginal characters are assigned as ultimate observers with exceptional permissions to minutely penetrate, delineate, and review the thoughts of the main characters. Through such adherence to entanglement between the omniscient narrator as an ultimate observer, on one hand, and the mind of the main characters, on the other hand, the untold, the unsaid, and most importantly the unmeant to be said were all vocalized. In *To The Light House*, Mrs. Ramsay's character is only dominant through being portrayed by several marginal ones such as Lily, Tansley, Mr. Ramsay, and her children. Touching core insecurities and contradictions in Mrs. Ramsay's mind, for example, Lily Briscoe could perfectly capture and delineate moments of "attention and respect" craving, "mania for marriage and matchmaking", "anti-intellectualism", "self-effacement", "worship of her husband's mind" and most significantly, "her apparent devotion to her traditional role as a nurturer of men and advocate of their well-being" (Ronchetti 66). Observing and highlighting MRS. Ramsay's attitudes Lily states:

And so then, she concluded, addressing herself by bending silently in his direction to William Bankes- poor man! Who had no wife, and no children and dined alone in lodgings except for tonight...how old she looks, how worn she looks, Lily thought, and how remote. Then when she turned to William Bankes, smiling, it was as if the ship had turned and the sun had struck its sails again...she pitied men always as if they lacked something- women never, as if they had something... (Woolf 71-72).

At the top of the pyramid comes the omniscient narrator with limitless “glimpses and in-depth views of the various forms Mrs. Ramsay’s artistry takes hour by hour” (Ronchetti 66). He is an omnipresent observer of the observers who owns the potential to simultaneously penetrate the minds of both main and marginal characters. He is embedded into a bird's eye that views the interiors and exteriors of not one or two but all of the characters individually and collectively. Commenting on Lily as a character and as a narrator of a second layer and most importantly as an observer, the omniscient narrator states:

Lily Brisco knows all that. Sitting opposite him, could she not see, as in an X-ray photograph, the ribs and thigh bones of the young man’s desire to impress himself, lying dark in the mist of his flesh- that thin mist which convention had laid over his burning desire to break into the conversation? (Woolf 75).

As such, assigned as an observer of an observer, the omniscient narrator is fully granted the right not only to insinuate observers’ minds but also to read, analyze, and review his thoughts, making inquiries, comments, and conclusions.

Such a trinity of narrators pretty much attunes to Einstein’s theory of relativity. The portrayal of the same scene/ feeling/ character from three different perspectives, none of which is entitled to absolute reality, speaks directly to Einstein’s Train Paradox. In his “Train Paradox”, instead of having three sequential views of the same event (simultaneously) watched by three different in-relative-motion viewers, we get three present views of the same event

from various perspectives, none of which could be proven either right or wrong. Adding space to the equation, Einstein offered a new view of time that is changeable according to the speed, the mass, and the direction of a relevant in-relative-motion observer/ observers. Changing the speed and direction of the observer/observers, light reaches each in slightly different timings. The multi-layered and hierarchal narration pattern offered by the structuralist novel, therefore, seems one way or another, to trace back to Einstein's concept of frame of reference.

Another inspiration for structuralist narrative's narrator trinity is probably Freud's work. The dissociation of narrative views can be traced back to the "Freudian topography of the self-identification, the ego, and the superego" (Thiher 241). In his work, Freud portrays writing as a defense mechanism through which writers not only project their neurotics but also preserve their identity from dissociation. A narrative, according to Freud, is a space for legal and even appealing free dissociation in the form of a story. It is a literary vortex through which all parts of the human "self" operate freely, collaboratively, and even contradictorily. Through Freud's work, an author can be assigned as "an obdurate neurotic who, by his creative work, kept himself from a crackup but also from any real cure" (Wellek 76). Thus, structuralist narrative, as Freud views it, does not only embed the writer into a literary free dissociation but also an escapism mechanism. Representing this mutual impact, Thiher argues: "it is pointless to speak of Freud's influence on these modernists, though many of them knew his work quite well. Their works all spring from a postromantic matrix in which conflict, loss, and alienation are the essential themes to characterize the self

in its relation to a world that always deceives it” (Thiher 242). In this sense, structuralist narrative can be viewed as a double vortex through which the multiple parts of the human self, simultaneously, operate with/against each other, and with/against the world. It is a common area between two worlds: internal and external.

2- Crisis over Development:

Unlike classic narrative, structuralist narrative offers structures in which “crisis” prevails over “development”. By “development”, Bal points to “the global significance built up slowly from the strings of events, the insights of the actors, and their mutual relationships” (211). *Crisis*, by contrast, is “the representative characteristic of the actors and their relationships” (211). While development progresses outwardly through a troop of events, *crisis* seems to interrogate characters’ interior complexes within a specific moment. Offering few, distanced, and mostly insignificant events, the structuralist narrative seems to break up with “development” as the most defining feature of Classic narrative.

To The Light House, for example, offers only three main events: the dinner ceremony, and the death of Mrs. Ramsay and the family voyage to the lighthouse. These three major events are included within a wider frame of the argument between Mr and Mrs. Ramsay concerning visiting the lighthouse. Starting at the very early moments of the narrative, the argument progresses only ten years later when the family actually visits the lighthouse. Such temporally hollow narrative patterns side by side with the scarcity of events break up with classic narrative patterns through which actions, or rather, chronologically ordered actions, are

centralized. There is a deliberate dissolution of events or happenings conventionally understood as movements of characters through time and space. Instead, there is an equal concentration on the anatomical dissection of momentary feelings and ideas. Initiated in the middle of an ongoing conversation, *To The Lighthouse* starts as: "ye, of course, if it's fine tomorrow said Mrs. Ramsay. But you'll have to be up with the lark, she added..." "but", said his father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window, "it won't be fine" (Woolf 4).

Yet, the structuralist novel, of which *To The Lighthouse* is but an example, seems to enforce different forms of crisis that discuss the whole, the general and the universal through investigating the part, the personal, and the private. In the example above, readers can see how the inward psychological and personal problematics take precedence over any outward or superficial complexities of social or cultural relationships.

Extended as it is, the structuralist crisis seemingly represents no visible global, social, or political concerns. On the contrary, it seems to magnify and centralize momentary, fleeting and mostly internal actions that occupy neither a time nor a space in reality. Structuralist narrative, therefore, is not much concerned with representing relations between characters as a sign of development in action. Instead, it is more about characters' internal conflicts, thoughts, and struggles. In other words, the defining signatures of actions are not in themselves offered by the action, whenever it may happen and whatever in may be, but within characters' own self-absorbed understanding and conceptions of this very action. In this example of *To The Lighthouse*, it does so by

magnifying naturally minuscule, even trivial, action while focusing only on its psychological and subconscious sides.

Structuralist crisis, in this particular sense, is a present “moment of being” interrupted by past “blows analogous to physical shock that disrupts the ordinary flow of perception” (McIntire, Gabrielle 167). It is a turbulence in the flow of the present through past attacks that doesn’t only change the present but also embeds it into constantly changing temporal deviations. Such consecutive temporal overlapping through which structuralist crisis is offered, as Bal suggests, by “referring forward within a back-reference” (98). It is, in this sense, a temporal stumble through which actions move forward by going back; by regression. This going forward by going back, offering action by dissecting and reducing action to its smallest most negligible details, is a relative distribution of narrative time; a dissolution of the classic idea of sequence. In such narratives, it is difficult to “continue to talk about a certain direction” of events, adhering to lineament of traditional narrative formulas (Bal 98). Such temporally dissolved narrative forms open the door for experimental narrative forms that are a-chronic and directionless in nature which Bal defines as “a deviation of time which cannot be analyzed any further” (Bal 97). Thus, the early roots of post-modernist narrative experimentation can be traced back to the nineteenth century’s structuralist novel through which previously sacred narrative elements such as direction, logical sequence, and chronology got, one way or another, disseminated, and replaced by relative dissolution of the sovereignty of action.

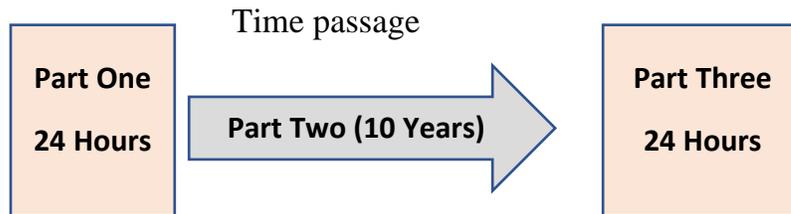
Such fleeting, nostalgic, non-linear, and directionless forms of crisis are frequent in Virginia Woolf’s *To The*

Lighthouse. In this narrative, crisis operates as a two-way passage through which the past is not only accessible by the characters but also transportable to the present moment. This brought to the literary stream innovative narrative patterns through which temporal linearity is decreased to the minimum. Past for Woolf is a “physical” pathway that is “tangible”, “accessible” and “infinitely desirable” in nature (McIntire 169). It is an infinite entity; a parallel universe made of “substantial matter that can neither be created, nor destroyed” (McIntire 169). In *To The Lighthouse*, for example, MRS. Ramsay goes through what seems to be a *déjà vu*, she recalls:

MRS. Ramsay thought she could return to that dream land, that unreal but fascinating place, the mannings’ drawing-room at Marlow twenty years ago; where one moved about without haste or anxiety, for there was no future to worry about. She knew what had happened to them, what to her. It was like reading a good book again, for she knew the end of that story... (Woolf 77).

Besides forcing various deviated temporal patterns, the form of crisis offered by structuralist narrative had other implications both on the form and the meaning of the narrative. The apparent balance in nature between action and the duration in the narrative, particularly relevant to the classic narrative, seems to get destabilized. The long preserved and untouched balance between the number of events within a narrative and their relative durations, in other words, was intentionally deconstructed in the structuralist narrative. Other examples in which even fewer events are represented into even more intentionally prolonged durations

are present. Unlike events abundance offered by *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, *To The Lighthouse* offers only three: the dinner, MRS. Ramsay’s death and the family’s visit to the lighthouse. These three events are narrated into a relatively non-proportional timeline that investigates neither reality nor classic time-action-space parallelism. As shown in Figure 2, part one of the narrative represents only one main action taking place in a single night but occupies 99 pages within the body of the narrative. In part two, time seems to accelerate representing ten years within 18 short chapters with one seemingly central event: MRS. Ramsay’s death. This part offers speedy cycles of seasons; “night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together” (Woolf 113). Part three is wholly dedicated to the family’s return and visit to the lighthouse. It covers a period of only one-night, occupying 10 chapters in the body of the narrative. The chapters of the narrative, in turn, are relative in their tempo-formal structures; they range between one sentence (part one chapter 2) and 21 pages (part one chapter 17) long.



(Figure 2)

Time as non-proportional Juxtaposed fragments in
Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*

Such irregular actions-time proportion doesn't only speak directly to the relative concept of time's dilation but also offers a new definition of narrative as temporally indefinite and approximate. Thus, sending regular temporal patterns to the margins, modernist narrative embeds the literary stream into a new narrative style that is fundamentally relative and a-sequential. Modernist narrative, in this very sense, seems to deprive the reader of the mental pleasure of temporal identification but offers a deeper pleasure of relative absolutism. Unlike classic readers, modernist ones are generally lured into an overwhelming state of uncertainty, not only with regards to anticipating their future forms, but to the very understanding of their very start or end points, their progress, and duration. The general relativity, in this very sense, speaks directly to the era's new conception of time as malleable entity rather than fixed unchangeable progression.

3- Time as The I Time:

Before Einstein, gravity had always been thought of as the sole law through which motion, both celestial and terrestrial, is measured. Yet, Einstein's theory of relativity has, generally, emerged as a "response to the failure of classical relativity to explain the propagation characteristics of electromagnetic waves" (Bergmann 109). By "Classic Relativity", scientists always refer to "the notions of space and time that have dominated physics until the beginning of the twentieth century", particularly those "strongly bound to the thought of Isaac Newton (1642-1727)" (Ferraro 1). In the Encyclopedia of Physical Science and Technology (2001), Einstein's Relativity is also defined as "the invariance of the laws describing physical systems concerning Lorentz

transformations between observers moving with uniform velocity relative to each other” (Anderson 181).

Thus, after Einstein, Newton’s concept of “universal or absolute time, on which Newtonian kinematics is based” was to be “abandoned” (Stachel 101). By the same token, Newton’s essential law of gravitation was proven to be a mere illusion. It is no longer gravitation that joints and coordinates universal motion. Objects no longer attract each other according to their mass. Instead, they distort time and space, curving both towards their bodies; this is Einstein’s redefinition of what has, previously, been known as “gravitation” as TIME DILATION. Through a number of thought experiments, of which “Train Paradox”, “Twin Paradox” (Anderson 217), and “Clock Paradox” (D’inverno 24), are peculiarly instructive examples, “dilation” was proven to be a genuine time property (Hartle 61).

This seems to have brought into existence parallel discursive narrative patterns in which, and within which, time is represented as a relatively dilative entity. influenced by Einstein’s concept of “time dilation”, in other words, relative temporality was a common practice in structuralist narrative construction. In structuralist narrative, time seems to get dilated more according to the psychological and emotional state of the characters than any other narrative element. Such discursive narrative mood seems to be traced back to the Classic narrative, where the general mood swings, intense feelings, and sudden transformations of the main character used to dominate the work. Yet, it seems to develop and gain more credentialism a narrative form through the structuralist narrative.

Significantly, the structuralist narrative was dedicated to verbalizing/vocalizing what Virginia Woolf sees as a human “moment of being”. In her work, Woolf seems to view time in two major categories according to our “consciousness of time” (Poole 366). First, “moments of being”, Woolfe argues, are when “the mind is aroused, aware of its pleasures, and alert to its pains” (Poole 366). “Moments of non-being”, on the other hand, “take up most of our waking life and are spent in largely unconscious activities” (366). Thus, intentionally or unintentionally, the narrative act becomes subject to consciousness’. More importantly, “awake” does not necessarily mean “aware” or conscious and visa versa. Structuralist narrative, in this sense, tends to offer inherently subjective or relative experience of reality. It is, in short, a fundamental representation of an intense moment of being regardless of any presumed logical/ chronological/ structural or even emotional coherence. One of the most influential moments of being in *The Light House* is probably spared for delineating Mrs Ramsay’s anxious and perplexed feelings at the beginning of the dinner party. The omniscient narrator observes:

Raising her eyebrows at the discrepancy- that was what she was thinking, this was what she was doing - ladling out soup- she felt, more and more strongly, outside the eddy; or as if a shade had fallen , and, robbed of colour, she saw things truly. The room (she looked around it) was very shabby. There was no beauty anywhere. She forebore to look at Mr Tansley. Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her. Again she felt, as a fact without hostility,

the sterility of men, for if she did not do it nobody would do it, and so, giving herself a little shake that one gives a watch that has stopped, the old familiar pulse began beating, as the watch begins ticking- one, two, three, one, two, three. And so on and so on, she repeated, listening to it, sheltering and fostering the still feeble pulse as one might guard a weak flame with a newspaper (Woolfe 70).

Significantly, Mrs. Ramsay's intense anxiety and obsession over "merging", "flowing" and "creating" seems to turn a mere fleeting moment of silence into an extending contemplative period with multiple revealing connotations. Representing the male role in life Mrs. Ramsay comments: "again she felt the fact without hostility, the sterility of men, for if she did not do it nobody would do it". Such comment on males' "sterility" in such a situation tells about Mrs Ramsay's beliefs concerning gender roles, which is probably the source of her anxiety. She believes that women, and only women, can manage such social occasions. While nothing of real consequence has happened in the real world, inside Mrs Ramsay's mind and on the paper, much has. Her concept of reality is just that, her concept of reality, but more significantly it is her whole reality; her whole being presented as this very reality. Time stops and ends with her understanding no matter how subjective and personal, which, by itself begs to question all of us about whether or not we all have "our own realities" to promote. Such time-bending narrative practices are reflective not only of Einstein's concept of time dilation but also of the imperative impact it had on the zeitgeist.

Another major implication of such narrative subjectivity is probably creating narrative patterns through which the personal, psychological, mental, and social lives of the author are merged to compose a character\ character that might\ might not be representative of him. Inherent subjectivity in modernist narrative, in this sense, seems to highlight a deep seated uncertainty in readership about characters' identities as they merge the social/personal and the general/public. It adopts auto, or at least, semibiographical narrative patterns through which numerous fragments of personal lives are, either consciously or unconsciously, deployed throughout the text. Signaling this entanglement of the personal in the modernist novel, Selden observes: "language had been thought of as a reflection of either the writer's mind or the world as seen by the writer. In a sense the writer's language was hardly separable from his/her personality it expressed the author's very being" (78).

Both in her "perfectionism" and "being her own most critic", Mrs. Ramsay, for example, offers an analysis of Woolfe herself (Javidshad 241). Shedding light upon her anxious sense of time, for example, Woolfe states: "past is broken up even as it is returned and restored to the present, so that what might initially be greeted and enjoyed as a moment of exhilaration ultimately subsides into a mood of retrospective anticipation, in which one recalls what it was like to be anxious about a future yet to unfold and already behind one" (Poole 365). Likewise, in *To The Light House*, Mrs. Ramsay hopes if things were "immune from change" in the face of "the flowing", "the fleeting" and "the spectral"

(Woolf 86). At the end of the dinner, for example, she wishes for this moment to last forever, she states:

She thought, looking at them all eating there, from husband and children and friends; all of which rising in this profound stillness... she felt, carefully helping Mr Bankes to a specially tender piece of eternity; as she had already felt about something different once before that afternoon; there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant is immune from change, and shines out ...in the face of the flowing, the fleeting the spectral, like a ruby; so that again tonight she had the feeling she had had once today, already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, the thing is made that endures (Woolf 86).

As such, MRS. Ramsay's burning desire for the eternal and the enduring derived most of her thoughts and feelings. She, desperately, attempts to catch and portray fleeting moments and events (like the dinner) and turn them into everlasting moments of being. This tendency of time resistance speaks directly to not only MRS. Ramsay's but also Woolf's anxious sense of time. In other words, it translates General Relativity's newly discovered definition of time as flexible and dependent on other factors like speed and mass.

Embedding the reader into a bird's eye view over the domestic atmosphere in which Woolf used to perform as a child, Poole states: "born into a large connection, born not of rich parents, but well-to-do parents, born into a very communicative, literate, letter writing, visiting, articulate, late nineteenth-century world" (Poole 362). The Ramsays seem to offer the same family pattern of Woolf as a child. MR

Ramsay the philosopher, the father, and the emotionally distant arrogant, on one hand, echoes some of the personal, emotional, and intellectual features of Leslie Stephen. Mrs. Ramsay's excessive social networking, lounging with on-spectrum cultured friends such as Lily Brisco, William Bankes, and Charles Tansley, and fondness of marriage matching, on the other hand, establishes an analog of Julia Prinsep Jackson.

The ambiguous sense of toxicity that insinuates the reader's mind on reading *To The Light House* probably traces back to the dysfunctional family pattern Woolf herself suffered as a child. Representing Woolf's poor family ties, Poole comments: "an ambivalence never fully resolved in Woolfe's relation to family, as if something vaguely toxic seeped throughout the polished veneer of a family that was, Woolf later remarked as a complete model of a Victorian society" (Poole 363). An equally notable, yet uncatchable sense of toxicity is offered through the Ramsays' attitudes. The codependent, insecure, and swinging relationship between MR and MRS. Ramsay reflects an externally shining, yet internally ruthless family pattern. Reflecting on the ups and downs and the nonverbal conflict MR and MRS. Ramsay regularly went through in the text, the omniscient narrator observes: He liked to think that she was not clever, not book-learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful...then she became aware that she wanted him to say something...say anything, she begged, looking at him, as if for help. He was silent...he wanted something-wanted the thing she

always found it so difficult to give him; wanted her to tell him that she loved him... a heartless woman he called her; she never told him that she loved him (Woolf 98-99).

Thus, structuralist narrative, in general, and *To The Light House*, in particular, seem to break up with classical temporal patterns, particularly relevant to conventional narratives. It offers, then, newly invented narrative forms that cut down the realistic sense of time to the minimum and claims no depiction of any tangible temporal sequence. Adopting the philosophical, physical, and psychological concepts of its time, such as time dilation, fragmentation, and stream-of-consciousness structuralist narrative, brought into existence a narrative style that is not only reflective of its time but also paves the way for a whole literary stream that prioritizes “originality” over “historical accomplishment” and “experimentation in forms and with words” over “relinquish any impact on readers” (Holub 277-278).

In its non-proportional, quasi-chronological, and directionless time patterns, the modernist narrative constitutes an early model of a wholly elastic narrative temporality. It does not only send time to the far margins as a sequence holder, but also experiments with time nature as the most trending practice in all fields of knowledge in the age. Modernist narrative, in this particular sense, opens the door for a whole literary stream through which nonconventional and innovative time patterns, if any, are to be discovered and presented.

Findings & Conclusion:

This paper investigated the Modernist narratives exemplified by Virginia Woolfe’s *To The Light House* in

terms of its early experimental practices both thematically and formally. It this novel's temporal patterns in the light of Einstein's laws of motion, or what is generally identified as the general theory of relativity. Interestingly, a number of re-prioritization such as prioritizing narration over characterization, minor characters over main ones, and crisis over development has been detected and analyzed. An acute shift in time patterns from an independent or an external element to a more personal "I" time has also been identified and explained. These time-distorting practices have probably paved the way for a more radical postmodernist experimentation in narration as shown so far. This paper also investigated the unconventional modernist temporal functions such as pause, fragmentation, stream of consciousness, prolongation and crisis. Supported by clarifying figures, selected quotes from *To The Lighthouse* as a typical modernist narrative, are discussed to exemplify each specified function.

Modernist narratives offer an era of cautious narrative experimentation. It has reluctantly shaken conventional functions of time as a specifier frame of direction/ duration/ pace. It offers seemingly liquified temporal patterns through which the main focus is significantly shifted from narrativity to narration as a free dissociation process. A troop of re-prioritizations is represented through modernist narrative to cope with the relative perception of time as dependent on space. This seems to have yielded a three-dimensional modernist narrative through which time, space, and the reader, interact to create reality.

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