

RESEARCH ARTICLE

From Narrative to Reality: The Inter/Trans Discourse of Bakhtin's Chronotopes and Lyotard's Metanarratives

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Abstract:

Examining the historical and social geography of a nation requires studying the time and the space so as to give rise to a discourse exploring how people interact with each other as well as with their nation. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope unveils how the inter/trans textual and contextual relationships of narrative time and space intersect with historical moments to generate interactive involvement with certain temporal and geographical scales in the real world. Discussing the chronotopicity of a society is also associated with Jean-Francois Lyotard's concept of metanarratives (aka grand narratives); his ideologies are complementary to Bakhtin's use of the chronotope as an analytical lens; theirs is an inter/trans discourse. The paper seeks to underline the interactive inter/trans discourse between reality and literary narratives from an intertwined Bakhtinian and Lyotardian approach. The article also attempts to accentuate the homogeneity of the concepts of the chronotope and metanarrative because an interactive chronotopic-metanarrative approach facilitates involvement with the reality and makes the oscillation between the fictional and the real possible.

Keywords: Chronotope, narrative, time, space, paralogy

1. Introduction and Review of Related Literature

Literature is an imaginative replica of lived human experiences and cultural attitudes. Unlike his predecessors, Bakhtin's major interest is discovering the particularities of literary imagination and underlining its 'epistemological' function that connects literary imagination with the reality. In the Preface to *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope*, Nele Bemong elucidates that Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope underlines that "literature . . . is not merely an ideational phenomenon, but has to be considered as a unique epistemological instrument that concerns intellectual, imaginative and emotional attitudes" (Bemong et al., 2010, p. III). It also accentuates that through literature, understanding cultural history reflected in a literary work, generally, pursues "transformations of time concepts and spatial representations reflect radical changes in cultural attitudes and lived experience" (Bemong et al., 2010, p. III). Accordingly, the concept of literary chronotope facilitates a link between literary issues and human intellectual, imaginative and emotional attitudes; it fills in the gap between the real and the imaginative. In this sense, Zia Ahmed conceives that the concept of the chronotope is 'different' and 'powerful' because it represents a 'complex' communication between the hero's action/inaction as well as time and space (2021).

The precondition of investigating the relationship between imaginative narratives and the reality starts with analysing the spatiotemporal framing and the background of the cultural context. Didier Coste believes that “the narrative mode of world-representation and world-building is omnipresent and far exceeds the domain of literature” (2017). The transcultural intuition reveals that ‘all the channels of communication, expression, and information can and do ‘tell stories,’ or at least contain fragments of narrative discourse.’ (Coste, 2017). Literature is a verbal art of stories/narratives that exist in imaginative works; whether they were literary or artistic, and in realistic incidents as well as social, cultural and historical moments. Significantly, literary narratives and social values create a link between the narrative aestheticisation and the reality.

Within this context, Wale Adebani italicises that nations in the modern era have become metanarratives in the Lyotardian sense; that view was cultivated through the media narratives of nationhood (2016). Media metanarratives, furthermore, are chronotopic in perspective and serve as a lens for the reality. David Lyle Within this context, Wale Adebani italicises that nations in the modern era have become metanarratives in the Lyotardian Jeffrey also proposes that humane literacy would not probably survive without a grand narrative though the term itself “has been generated and deployed as a term of opprobrium” (1998, p. 53). However, there are also some truths and realistic factors that are pertinent to the social culture in that same “demise of the influence of *any* grand narrative” upon the general culture (Jeffrey, 1998, p. 4). Thus, Jeffrey proposes a paralogical empirical approach for handling metanarratives. Such a type of paralogy is connected to temporality, as “temporality is constructed in various types of narrative;” including the meta-narratives (Vaara-Pederson, 2013, p. 593). Thus, Vaara and Pederson argue, “Mikhail Bakhtin’s notions of time and place . . . [help] us to go beyond chronological notions of time” (2013, p. 593). Accordingly, the intersecting spatiotemporal element in both the Bakhtinian chronotope and the Lyotardian metanarratives are reflexive of the reality.

2. Methodology

Demonstrating the interactive inter/trans discourse between reality and literary narratives from an intertwined Bakhtinian and Lyotardian approach requires explaining separately Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of ‘chronotope’ and Jean-François Lyotard’s ‘metanarrative.’ The analysis attempts to reveal how the ‘chronotope’ connects fiction with the reality by creating a time-space relationship that articulates the interconnectedness of real human life with fictional narratives. As for the concept of ‘metanarrative’, the article attempts to expound how Jean François Lyotard used it to criticise the devaluation of all values in the modern consumer culture that has relegated history into narrative, i.e. fiction. The discussion clarifies how the modern metanarratives have substituted truth and became the parameter that connects fiction with reality. Accentuating the homogeneity of the concepts of the chronotope and metanarrative, the article underlines to what extent they are compared and how they are intersected.

3. Discussion

3.1. Mikhail Bakhtin’s Chronotope

The Russian literary theorist and philosopher of language Mikhail Bakhtin (195-1975) has developed literary and philosophical ideas are world-widely celebrated. Perceivably, his writings have had a great impact upon the Western thought in respect of linguistics, literary theory, cultural history,

and aesthetics. However, his “concept of the chronotope has been received by literary scholars probably with more enthusiasm than any other of his concepts, and has been widely applied in [sic] different fields of study and to literature” (Steinby, 2013, p. 105). The concept of the chronotope is immensely appreciated because it has proved itself the basic element in the historical development of the novel, as Bakhtin underlines in his writings (Bakhtin 1981a, 1981b, 1984, 1986, 1988 & 1993). As an approach, the chronotope is applicable to various fields, other than the literary (i.e. education, politics, mathematics, physics, medicine, . . . etc.) to underscore the vitality of the time-space relationship.

In his book, *The Dialogic Imagination*, Mikhail Bakhtin defines the chronotope as “the artistic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity” (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 84). Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope is a lens that is employed to explore the temporal and spatial relationships in a literary text. Bakhtin asserts that this same concept is invoked in Einstein’s theory of relativity as the analogy between the literary and the mathematical use of the term “serves as a means of measuring how, in a particular age, genre, or text, real historical time and space as well as fictional time and space are articulated in relation to one another” (Gasner et al., 2006, p. 2). As a consequence, the use of the term ‘chronotope’ is not only confined to literary works or to scientific matters but also extends to real human life in form of “intrinsic connectedness.” Bakhtin limits the scope of his definition by adding, “what counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time as the fourth dimension of space . . . we understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature” (1981b, p. 84). Bakhtin’s concern is with the inseparability of time and space. Therefore, the chronotope is deemed essential device in literary analysis. It is used to unveil complex textual and contextual relationships, as the chronotope turns them into historical forms which help readers closely read cultural and discursive texts. In addition, the chronotope is a means to connect the world outside, i. e. the real world, with the world inside the narrative. In confirmation, Bakhtin contends, “Out of the actual chronotopes of our world (which serve as a source of representation) emerge the reflected and created chronotopes of the world represented in the work” (1981b, p. 253). Thus, there is social significance of the chronotope in narratives because it offers the audience the opportunity to connect and assess their actual values through comparing them with those in a narrative. Likewise, there is a historical significance of a chronotope in a narrative serves as an index of historicity as it becomes obvious from the plane of *content* of works that allow the readership to assimilate the historical background of the public and private spaces that “encompass[es] the spirit of a time, a generation” (Amaral & Rodrigues, 2015). The holistic function of the chronotope is the Bakhtinian breakthrough in literary analysis as it could ‘link at least two elements – time and space – as complementary, i.e., as combined to enhance and emphasize each other qualities” (Tarvi, 2015).

Bakhtin, in his way to produce meaning for his concept of a chronotope, forges a historical plane so as to link content and form as well as text and context. He asserts, ‘Every entry in the sphere of meaning is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope’ (1981b, p. 258). Thus, the chronotope becomes an entrance to both the real and symbolic realms, as it produces meaning through mingling the temporal and the spatial elements in order to forge a concrete whole. Dealing with the larger parameters of space and time, the chronotope turns into an “optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring” (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 425-26). In a

word, the chronotope as an analytical device that makes time visible and space related to time, and it also underlines “mutually interdependent relations between humans in their real locations and in real time (here-and-now)” (Markovà & Novaes 2019, p. 117).

Attempting to explore the relationship of people and events to time and space, Bakhtin finds out that the narrative genres of literature are an instrument in which “any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another” (1981b, p. 243). Moreover, the narrative genres are distinguished with their “destiny and concreteness”. They provide a parable to the various ways helping people to understand their relation to the world. However, such an understanding necessitates examining many concrete and highly detailed possibilities which are to be found in the narrative genres. Each one of these possibilities defines the “living impulse” and “form-shaping ideology” of a chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 250). Thus, a mutual interaction is engendered between the realm inside the narrative and the one outside it. “Generalizing, one could say that Bakhtin’s vision not only of literature, but of the very human history is chronotopic” (Pushkin, 2017, p. 436).

3.2. Jean-Francois Lyotard’s Metanarrative

As for Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998), he is a French philosopher, sociologist and literary theorist. His best-known work *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) won him a grand international fame, especially when it was translated into English in 1984. He is the first one to introduce the term ‘postmodern’ in Western philosophy, in addition to its use in literature and arts. Compared to Bakhtin, Lyotard is also concerned with the issue of narrative but from a different perspective that focuses upon diagnosing the devaluation of all values in the consumer culture. He is distressed by the fact that history has turned into a narrative. Compared to all the philosophers, whether preceding or following him, Lyotard's ultimate zeal is truth which is the standard representing universal human reason; in other words, metanarratives. Due to the metanarratives’ totalising nature, Lyotard cannot find this truth in the metanarratives which are used to explain historical experience or knowledge. As a metanarrative simply means a story about a story; thus, a metanarrative is incredulous. Lyotard argues:

Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements— narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive and so on . . . Where after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside? (1984, p. xiv)

Lyotard’s stance towards a universal truth imposed through the metanarratives is ‘incredulity’. A metanarrative, “is a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience” (Stephens, 1998, p. 92). Compared to metaphysical philosophy in the past, a metanarrative gives rise to the ‘crisis’ of inability to find a legitimating truth because Lyotard finds out that this “global or totalizing cultural narrative schema”, defined as a metanarrative, is reduced to a mere narrative in which truth is lost while paying attention to “narrative language elements.” Thus, a metanarrative is reduced to a “story” which might not be truthful or bound to justice knowing that “we judge without criteria” (Lyotard & Thébaud, 1985, p. 14) because there are “no ontological or

theoretical foundations for our ethical and political claims for justice” (Lyotard & Thébaud, 1985, p. 44). Thus, to accept a ‘story’ as believable legitimating truth is to prove those claims and to prove the proofs in an *ad infinitum* process. Due to the impossibility of this process, Lyotard denies that a metanarrative can ever be a legitimating device, as it has been reduced to a mere heuristic one.

Lyotard denies the metanarratives because they ignore the variety of human existence and, hence, fail to “produce the social competences by which individuals orient their speech and action” (Burdman, 2020, p. 305). He confirms, “Each of us lives at the intersection of many of these. However, we do not necessarily establish stable language combinations, and the properties of the ones we do establish are not necessarily communicable” (Lyotard, 1984, p. xiv). For Lyotard, each society is divided into subgroups which contain lots of smaller contexts where people act and have definite roles. A metanarrative cannot legitimate knowledge and courses of actions in such smaller contexts because of their versatile forms which are not ‘necessarily’ public, i.e. ‘communicable’. This may only take place when fragmenting a discourse into thousands of localised roles which provide legitimation in their limited contexts. Accordingly, denying metanarratives gives way to little narratives which effectively judge actions and knowledge and prompt the type of truth lacking in the metanarratives.

3.3. Time-Space Element Between Lyotard and Bakhtin

The time-space element is vital in narratives; in other words, a narrative whether historical or socio-cultural is chronotopic in essence, and subdividing it into smaller narratives/chronotopes is an instrument to consider ethical matters. For Lyotard, investigating truth, justice, legitimation and inexorable socio-cultural and political issues requires dividing metanarratives into smaller ones because metanarratives are concerned with comprehensive totality of matters not with investigating the truth. However, this means that Lyotard thinks of ‘truth’ as a mere narrative.

Paradoxically, this revival of an essentially narrative view of “truth”, and the vitality of small narrative units at work everywhere *locally* in the present social system, are accompanied by something like a more global or totalizing “crisis” in the narrative function in general, since, as we have seen, the older masternarratives of legitimation no longer function in the service of scientific research - nor, by implication, anywhere else. (Lyotard, 1984, pp. xi-xii)

Lyotard is incredulous toward metanarratives because they invoke a ‘totalizing crisis’ and, hence, are incapable of legitimation. Therefore, they cannot reflect the truth because there are always plurality of opinions and language games. He suggests, “We have to judge case by case,” (Lyotard & Thébaud, 1985, p. 47), and this is possible when metanarratives are subdivided into smaller ones. In this case, investigating the truth becomes easier for both the sender and the addressee, as the sender would “be able to provide proof of what he says” and would “be able to refute any opposing or contradictory statements concerning the same referent” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 23). The “nineteenth-century” rule of “verification” and “twentieth-century” rule of “falsification . . . allow a horizon of consensus to be brought to the debate between partners (the sender and the addressee).” Nonetheless, Lyotard warns that “Not every consensus is a sign of truth; but it is presumed that the truth of a statement necessarily draws a consensus” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 24).

Likewise, Bakhtin’s chronotope is “a conceptual and analytical tool that allows reaching a sociocultural and dialogical understanding of human action and interaction in space-time” (Ritella et al., 2020). It is “the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied” so as to define a “literary

work's artistic unity in relationship to an actual reality" (Bakhtin, 1981b, pp. 250, 243). It is worthy to mention that Bakhtin's interest is to interpret the real world as he has ever considered himself a philosopher not just a literary scholar. However, he has been unfortunate; as he lived in the era of the 1920s, the golden days of Communism in the Soviet Union; an era when touching political matters would send anyone to exile. He has passed almost all of his life hiding and eschewing political liability by turning to literary analysis, while, in fact, his intention is "to do philosophy" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 37). In accordance, Bakhtin tackles his moral and ethical responsibility in an indirect manner. Unlike his contemporaneous neo-Kantian philosophers, he endeavours to define truth by rejecting their methods of investigating truth, knowing that their methods depend upon analysing the abstract and the universal. With introducing the concept of the chronotope and many other new terminologies, however, Bakhtin "attempted to ground such truths in a kind of phenomenology of concrete presence" (Parslow, 2020). Thus, he rejects the dominating notion that truth and meaning dwell in "that which is repeatable and constant" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 37). For him, the abstracts are "alibis in existence," and are incapable of a truly ethical and responsible act because anyone should hold the conviction that the "responsibility for my actions springs from my unique, un-repeatable position in the universe vis-à-vis other subjects" (Schyttsova, 2013, p. 115). Bakhtin attempts to materialise the fictional into reality; he alludes to this when defining the function of the chronotope.

Thus the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for *concretizing representation*, as a force giving body to the entire novel. All the novel's abstract elements -- philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect -- gravitate toward the chronotope and *through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work* [emphasis added]. Such is the representational significance of the chronotopes". (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 250)

Bakhtin believes that art is a heuristic methodology; therefore, artists should tackle the responsibility by making their works represent real life so as to educate people how to act. Introducing the notion of the chronotope, accordingly, allows Bakhtin to 'concretize' narrative 'representations' because all the abstract narrative elements are attracted by the chronotope. In accordance, an artistic work is moved from the imaginary to the real world so as to shoulder its reforming responsibility. Bakhtin is deemed "out of step with his age" (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 38) because his approaches are effective instrument for serious socio-cultural study.

3.4. Combining the Concepts of Bakhtin's Chronotope and Lyotard's Metanarrative

In their diligent search for the truth, Bakhtin's concept of chronotope and Lyotard's metanarrative are intersected at three major props upon which their concepts are established; namely, inter/trans discourse, unity and legitimation.

3.4.1. Inter/Trans Discourse

For Bakhtin, a chronotope invokes an inter/trans discourse as it is not only a representative of time and space but of man, as well. While he asserts that in 'the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole,' he also insists, and this is far important to him, that 'the image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic' (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 85). A chronotope is the way to represent human actions through 'concrete time markers' so as to document his experience by means of literary narrative.

The chronotope [...] provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events. And this is so thanks precisely to the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers – the time of human life, of historical time – that occurs within well-delineated spatial areas. It is this that makes it possible to structure a representation of events in the chronotope (around the chronotope). It serves as the primary point from which ‘scenes’ in a novel unfold. (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 250)

Human experience when represented in ‘well-delineated spatial areas’ that are accentuated by *dense* and *concrete* ‘time markers’ underlines the events *within* and *around* the chronotope. In case of narratives, action (that Bakhtin calls ‘scenes’) within a narrative unfolds from the vantage point that is provided by the chronotope which is, in effect, an analytical lens. Considering the fact that Bakhtin’s novel literary concept *a priori* intends to analyse the reality by means of applying the concepts of literary criticism, an inter/trans discourse between a narrative and the reality is effectuated so as to represent human experience. In this sense, space and time are the props for prompting an inter/trans discourse which analyses not only the contexts of the novel, but also the reality; in other words, the planes of culture and history.

Compared to Bakhtin, Lyotard coined a set of new terminologies to explain the falsity of metanarratives, such as paralogy and setting performativity as a parameter of detecting the truth. His incredulity towards metanarratives reflects his interest in man and intention to make of his approach an instrument that prompts an inter/trans discourse with the reality. Lyotard ‘speaks approvingly of a “deligitimation” of “grand narratives” because he is “much more interested in the individual than the collectivity” (Sim, 1986, p. 9). He describes ‘grand narratives’ as outmoded, and that its rejection will affect the individual more than the system. Therefore, there should be an alternative.

We no longer have recourse to the grand narratives – we can resort neither to the dialectic of Spirit nor even to the emancipation of humanity as a validation for post-modern scientific discourse. But as we have seen, the little narrative remains the quintessential form of imaginative invention, most particularly in science.’ (Lyotard, 1984, p. 64)

For Lyotard, deligitimating “grand narratives” and giving way to “little narratives” urges non-commitment to “any predetermined pattern or conclusion as grand narrative enforces” (Sim, 1986, p. 10). Little narratives would help individuals underline the details of his life as he goes along; little narratives are capable of generating a legitimate inter/trans discourse with the reality.

Applying the analytical lens of the chronotope on little narratives reveals that a chronotope is analogous to a little narrative; both “wage war on totality” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 19). The chronotope and small narratives explain the anomalies and explicate the old language games by invoking ‘verbally-fluent, charisma-based narrative which will seek to deflect it [little narrative/the chronotope] from connecting with any narrative rooted in a collective action’. As a consequence, they would be able to produce social change. Evidently, Bakhtin coincides with Lyotard in making of the chronotope, which is somehow compared to a little narrative, the basic constituent of understanding both the narrative and the reality; exploring the reality; and legitimating the system which gives way to power. Accordingly, the chronotope and the little narrative hit for a homogenous and compared objective that prompts an inter/trans discourse with reality, the same way they generate an inter/trans discourse with each other.

3.4.2. Unity

Considering unity, it is an essentially vital element in the concepts of chronotope and little narrative; they suggest that understanding life is based upon delving into the tiniest details because human experience is not linear and cannot be regarded or standardised according to universal principles. Versatile human experiences should be considered in respect of transformations of time and space within a specific culture; thus, Lyotard's concept suggests unity when he analyses the "state of culture" in respect of "the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts." He places all "these transformations in the context of narratives" (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiii). Thus, Lyotard reduces them all into 'narratives'; which is a uniting principle. To assert his repulsion for universal regulating principles, Lyotard asserts, "Science has always been in conflict with narratives. Judged by the yardstick of science, the majority of them prove to be fables" (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv). He equates science with narratives because both of them appeal to some world that is detached from the reality. Accordingly, justice is a remote possibility the same way the truth is. He argues:

If a metanarrative implying a philosophy of history is used to legitimate knowledge, questions are raised concerning the validity of the institutions governing the social bonds: these must be legitimated as well. The justice is consigned to the grand narrative in the same way as truth. (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv)

Lyotard thinks that any type of knowledge which is legitimated by a grand narrative ignores the protean forms of human natures and discourses. Consequently, the validity of the institutions promulgating for such a type of knowledge as truth is refuted because they are "obliged to legitimate the rules of [their] own game" (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiii). Furthermore, Lyotard's concept marks an ethical shift in the socio-political practice, "utterances [are] expected to be just rather than true" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 10). However, justice as a unifying aspect complicates the legitimation of socio-political practice the same way the promulgation for truth does because they both slip in the pitfall of mere rhetorics; "justice being a far less logical concept than truth and more exposed to techniques of persuasion and emotional manipulation". In accordance, justice becomes incapable of expressing certainties as it is rendered into "a question of language and its indeterminacies" (Sim, 1986, p. 8) which would be neither just nor true. Lyotard repulses the universal principle of justice the same way he repulses truth because they have relegated themselves to some form of a metanarrative, a fable, which does not represent the reality.

For Lyotard, unity requires generating knowledge not totalisation, knowing that knowledge is not merely concerned with truth and justice, as "knowledge exists if, first, the statement is intelligible, and second, if 'cases' would be derived from the experience which 'corresponds' to it" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 77). He suggests a unity of perspective that seeks "impart[ing] a stronger sense of the unrepresentable" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 81); the 'unrepresentable' experiences are there in the small narratives. In this sense, he proceeds that "it must be clear that it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 81). These 'allusions' would replace truth and justice since they do not exist; they belong to the totalitarian fables of the metanarratives that are based upon a consensus which is accounted pivotal for conceiving them as real. Thus, 'allusions to the conceivable' cater to engender unity when probing the tiniest details of experience.

Bakhtin's interest in the philosophy of culture prods him to deal with literary works from a dialogic perspective combining both reality and fiction. When analysing a novel, he addresses the issue of unity; "unity not as an innate one-and-only, but as a dialogic concordance of unmerged twos or multiples" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 289). Bakhtin understands that unity does not necessitate uniformity because heterogeneity is expected between things existing under the same title. For example, a novel contains versatile chronotopes, however, it is represented as a homogenous work of art. Examining the Greek romance, he perceives that it "utilized and fused together in its structure almost all genres of ancient literature" (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 89). Hence, one novel is an index of the experiences of former genres. Bakhtin argues, "The novel . . . dramatizes the gaps that always exist between what is told and the telling of it, constantly experimenting with social, discursive and narrative asymmetries" (Bakhtin, 1981a, p. 385). If a novel is taken as an example of a metanarrative, it solves the problem that the scientific metanarratives meet because a novel contains versatile chronotopes and the narrative form fills in the gaps between them.

Bakhtin holds a chronotopic vision not only of literature but of human history, as the chronotopes of history becomes a point of exigent interaction. He proceeds:

Even in segmentation of a modern literary work we sense the chronotope of the represented world as well as the chronotope of the readers and creators of the work. That is, we get a mutual interaction between the world represented in the work and the world outside the work. (Bakhtin, 1988, p. 255)

The chronotopic unity in even a historical/modern literary work invokes effective interaction between the author and the readership, which, in turn, prompts interaction between imagination and reality. This type of unity, which is triggered by the chronotopes, plays a quintessential role in the plane of historical process as well as in the 'literary creativity'.

Time and space merge ... into an inseparable unity ... a definite and absolutely concrete locality serves at the starting point for the creative imagination... this is a piece of human history, historical time condensed into space. Therefore the plot (sum of depicted events) and the characters ... are like those creative forces that formulated and humanised this landscape, they made it a speaking vestige of the movement of history (historical time), and, to a certain degree, predetermined its subsequent course as well, or like those creative forces a given locality needs in order to organise and continue the historical process embodied in it. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 49)

In the chronotope, time and space form 'inseparable unity' that gives way to creativity in a dialogical process that starts a constant interaction between the imaginative work and the reality. Thus, a creative work becomes 'a piece of human history' sparking a temporal relation the moment a text is read. Noting that such a relation unites the present, the past and the future through the act of reading that makes the time of a creative work moves. "Chronotopes," accordingly, serve as the "spatiotemporal currency between two different orders of existence and discourse, between the historicity of the lived world and the literary world" (Browne, p. 150). The spatial-time unity within the chronotope catalyses a dialogic unity between 'the literary world' and the 'lived world', i.e. the reality.

3.4.3. Legitimation

Legitimation is a major issue for Bakhtin and Lyotard, as well. Unlike metanarratives, novels, considered as they are a threshold for the symbolic and the real, are legitimated through dividing them into multiple chronotopes because “a literary work's artistic unity in relationship to an actual reality is defined by its chronotope” (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 97). For Bakhtin, chronotopes are associated with temporal experience that would speculate the future through representing the past and the present (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 97). In “The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism,” Bakhtin echoes the same idea when he asserts that real time is experienced as an ‘emerging whole, an event’:

The ability to *see time*, to *read time*, in the spatial whole of the world and, on the other hand, to perceive the filling of space not as an immobile background, a given that is completed once and for all, but as an emerging whole, an event – this is the ability to read in everything *signs that show time in its course*, beginning with nature and ending with human customs and ideas (all the way to abstract concepts). (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 417) [Italics in original]

Chronotopes reflect human experience and facilitates for man experiencing moments of enlightenment, as the past is integrated in the current moment of consciousness. Thus, abstract time is replaced by representations of the concrete dynamics of experience. In the modern novel, Bakhtin ascribes the changes that a hero goes through occur in “real historical time, with all of its necessity, its fullness, its future, and its profoundly chronotopic nature” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 415). Perceivably, Bakhtin underlines the fact that a work of art crosses the boundaries of the fictional to those of the real. Therefore, human experience is legitimated by oscillating between the fiction and the reality. Bakhtin’s target is to catalyse a legitimate ‘fullness’ of the spatial and the temporal to assist man produce a better future. The past “produces in conjunction with the present a particular direction for the future, and, to a certain degree, predetermines the future. Thus, one achieves a fullness of time” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 47). Artistic perception has the ability to change the reality and the future of man. The multi-task of the concept of the chronotope accentuates the importance of the faculty of imagination for man.

Unity of a work of art is legitimated through the motifs and other structural aspects of the novel which “enter as constituent elements into plot, not only of the novels of various eras and types, but also into literary works of other genres [. . .] although it is true the chronotope is developed in different ways in the various genres” (Bakhtin, 1981b, p. 97). These aspects are the regulating universal principles of the novel, in general. As for the chronotopes, they are of an interactional nature; they take advantage of the spatial and the temporal dimensions to document both the reality and fiction. In accordance, they create involvement and interactional effect through legitimating historical moments that belong to certain temporal and geographical scales. Due to the chronotopic analysis, novels do not face the same problem of legitimation that metanarratives do. No matter whether the chronotope represents variety of discourses and protean experiences, it is formed according to regulating universal standards. Possessing an interactional and involving advantage as it is, a novel has the potentiality to easily oscillate between real and symbolic realms and, in either situation, it is accredited with believability. Nonetheless, a metanarrative does not possess such a privilege.

Considering Lyotard, he finds out that neither the metanarratives nor performativity (or how well knowledge performs) are ideal instruments to legitimate knowledge, however, paralogy is. Lyotard confirms, “The grand narrative has lost its credibility regardless of what mode of unification it was, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 47). Regardless to the type of discourse that grand narratives utilise, it is deemed incredulous; no matter whether it were scientific, philosophic or historical. Similarly, Lyotard rejects performativity because he repulses any kind of science in the service of performativity. For him, it is more troubling and oppressive than satisfactory. In consistence, Lyotard proceeds:

The performativity of an utterance be it denotative or prescriptive, increases proportionally to the amount of information about its referent one has at one's disposal. Thus the growth of power, and its self-legitimation, [sic] are now taking the route of data storage and accessibility, and the operativity of information. (1984, p. 64)

The principle of performativity is no longer effective because it does not express the trends of the new age; a just system of legitimation should accentuate diversity and innovative search for new answers to old questions. It should also imaginatively seek out 'instabilities' and anomalies in current theories. Through paralogy, it is possible to give voice to new views addressing language games in modern life creating a system of power. For him, paralogy here does not have the dictionary meaning of ‘false reasoning’, yet, marks the elements of the individualistic search for new meaning in old language games. This search matches the current trends in society. Lyotard says:

We should be happy that the tendency toward the temporary contract is ambiguous: it is not totally subordinated to the goal of the system, yet the system tolerates it. This bears witness to the existence of another goal within the system: knowledge of language games as such and the decision to assume responsibility for their rules and effects. Their most significant effect is precisely what violates the adoption of rules - the quest for paralogy. (1984, p. 67)

Current trends in society, according to Lyotard, are moving toward paralogy. He considers the trend toward temporary contracts rather than permanent institution is paralogy. Lyotard advocates that paralogy is not an innovation but resistance to totalising metanarratives. Paralogy gives way to and legitimates local or little narratives. Metanarratives are not as credible as a novel that is believed as truth, yet, turning reality into a paralogous narrative gives it the chance to be credible.

In brief, the chronotope and the little narratives are two principles that intersect in their attempt to unveil hidden contexts by admitting the heterogeneity of human existence. A chronotope describes the historical geography of a text in terms of temporal and spatial conditions, similarly, little or localised narratives crystallise little details which reflect diversity and difference in human nature. Moreover, a chronotope represents a little part in a novel; likewise, little narratives are also little parts in the course of history that is accounted as a metanarrative. The intersecting Bakhtinian-Lyotardian approach that describes a narrative, whether this narrative belongs to fiction or history, becomes a means to connect the world outside, i. e. the *real world*, with the world inside the narrative, namely, the *fictional realm*. This approach also pinpoints that the holistic function of the chronotope that works upon spacio-temporal scale form a small narrative diagnosing the devaluation of all values in the consumer culture. Bakhtin’s chronotope and Lyotard’s small narratives are concerned with ethical

matters. Therefore, they mainly legitimate devices that render a story believable so as to pass as truth, knowing that Lyotard thinks of 'truth' as a *mere narrative*.

4. Conclusion

Interested as he is in interpreting the real world, Bakhtin attempts to materialise the fictional into reality through the chronotopic lens that pokes vividness into the abstract elements of the novel so as to tackle its reforming responsibility. Likewise, Lyotard's little narratives are rendered in flesh and blood as they are capable of creating details of man's life. Perceivably, the chronotope and little narratives are against totality. They are interested in generating a legitimate inter/trans discourse with the reality in homogenous and interactive manner that principally stems out of the homogeneity of both concepts and their capability to effectuate an inter/trans discourse with each other.

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