The word 'structuralism' is equally applicable to work carried out in the social sciences, philosophy, and the humanities. Its birth is associated with a general movement in the history of ideas involving the attempt to give the status of science to humanistic areas of knowledge which were traditionally considered to lie outside the scope of science. Born in Russia and Switzerland and confirmed in Prague, it found fertile soil in France in marginal academic institutions outside the university, coming to fruition in the 1960s in the work of intellectuals such as the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, the philosophers Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, and the literary critics Roland Barthes, Algirdas J. Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, and Gérard Genette.

**Saussure and structuralism**

The structuralists drew an analogy between language systems and social systems. Following Ferdinand de Saussure's principle that language has a systematic (synchronic) as well as a historical (diachronic) form, they defined societies as complex systems ruled by a social contract, of which the participants are not always conscious, so that the contract is latent rather than manifest. Their aim was to gain a comprehensive view of the social and institutional relations existing between individuals and between individuals and institutions, with a view to establishing the overall structure of society at large. In this sense, structuralism is a 'unified field' theory, since its subject is not a given culture (a corpus of texts, a geographically or historically delimited area), but the study of how rites, values, meanings, and all such recurrent currencies structure society in all its manifestations. In the field of literature, the structuralists asked themselves questions such as: What is the status of words in society? Is literature to be compared to ritual, or does it work in a distinctively different way? As Geoffrey H. Hartman has pointed out, the attempts to answer these questions led them to make two important discoveries. The first is that myths and art, as models productive of social cohesion, have an exemplary role in society. The second, that all myths are homologous in structure as well as
analogous in function, enabled structuralism to become a science of all social-systematic behaviour. The activity of structuralist critics like Roland Barthes, Georges Bataille, Gérard Genette, and Tzvetan Todorov was closely linked to the literary review *Tel Quel*, founded in 1960, whose publishing team was headed by the novelist and theorist Philippe Sollers, later to become Julia Kristeva's husband. *Tel Quel* and the prestigious series of books published under its imprint had a profound impact on the literary and cultural scene of the 1960s and 1970s. Still, the so-called *Tel Quel* group did not form a particular school, but simply shared a method of investigation, a particular approach to literature and culture. Their work, distinguished by its variety and interdisciplinarity, spread as an exciting new intellectual fashion in Paris in the early and mid-1960s as a reaction against Marxism and existentialism, which had been the dominant philosophy since World War II, especially the atheistic variety represented by Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Tel Quel* liquidated itself in 1982, when it relinquished its links with the Éditions du Seuil, shortly before the dissolution of Marxist communism marked by the demolition of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Europe, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, only to re-emerge from the ashes as the new journal *L'Infini*, now published by Denoël.

**Ferdinand de Saussure**

The origins of structuralism go back to the 'linguistic turn' brought about by the publication of a series of lectures on general linguistics that had been delivered at the University of Geneva by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in three courses given between 1906 and 1911. The lectures were published after his death as *Course in General Linguistics* (1916).

Saussure's main aim was to give substance to what he called the new 'science' of linguistics. His path-breaking proposal was to abandon the analytical perspectives belonging to other disciplines, such as psychology, anthropology, normative grammar, philology, etc., and 'use language as the norm of all other manifestations of speech'. The centrality of language thus granted, Saussure then set about distinguishing 'language' (langue) from 'human speech' (langage) and 'speaking' (parole). He defines 'speaking' (or utterance) as a willful and intellectual individual act. 'Speech' is a natural phenomenon: human beings have 'the faculty to construct a language, i.e. a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas'. By contrast, 'language' is 'both the social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty'. That is, language is a particular sign system adopted by a given community for the purposes of oral communication, such as English or French.

In summary, Saussure underlined the systematic nature of language, and insisted on the importance of carrying out a synchronic, as distinct from a diachronic, study of
language. Rather than trying to establish the genesis, the earlier form, the sources, and the evolution of words, the linguist should focus primarily on the arrangement, the systematic organization of words in concrete speech acts—that is, on language’s current structural properties.

Philology had always worked with written texts, but Saussure explicitly rejected writing in favour of spoken language as the object of linguistics, observing that ‘A similar mistake would be in thinking that more can be learned about someone by looking at his photograph than by viewing him directly’. Consequently, in his approach to the analysis of the linguistic sign, phonology—that is, the study of the physiology of sounds as distinct from phonetics or the study of the evolution of sounds—occupies a central position. Although Saussure’s knowledge of phonology and phonetics was rather limited, he forcefully defends the need to ‘draw up for each language studied a phonological system, i.e. a description of the sounds with which it functions; for each language operates on a fixed number of well-differentiated phonemes’. Saussure emphasized the importance of paying more attention to the reciprocal relations of sounds than to the study of sounds in isolation. His contention that ‘The science of sounds becomes invaluable only when two or more elements are involved in a relationship based upon their inner dependence’ is the path-breaking insight that leads him to advocate the creation of a new linguistic science that uses binary combinations and sequences of phonemes as a point of departure.

The postulation of the combinatory and sequential nature of phonemes lies at the heart of the structuralist approach to language and provides the starting-point for Saussure’s definition of language’s elemental unit, the sign. When reduced to its elements, language was traditionally considered to be a naming process only—a list of words, each corresponding to the thing that it names. Rejecting this, Saussure substitutes ‘sign’ for ‘word’ as the elemental linguistic unit, and defines it as ‘a two-sided psychological entity’, uniting ‘not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image’. Saussure is at pains to differentiate between the material sound, the phoneme, which is ‘the realization of the inner image in discourse’, and the sound-image, which is ‘the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression it makes on our senses’. Aware of the terminological difficulty involved in drawing these distinctions, he proposes to retain the word ‘sign’ (signe) to designate the whole, and to replace concept and sound-image respectively by ‘signified’ (signifié) and ‘signifier’ (signifiant). A vital insight into Saussure’s definition of the sign is the arbitrariness of the bond between the signifier and the signified and, consequently, of the linguistic sign itself. Thus, as he explains, the ‘idea of “sister” (sœur) is not linked by any inner relationship to the succession of sounds s-o-r which serves as its signifier in French; that it could be represented equally by just any other sequence is proved by differences among languages and by the very existence of different languages’. However, although the bond is arbitrary from the point of view of representation, the meaning of any particular signifier is assured by the position it occupies within language as a whole. This is Saussure’s major structuralist insight:
language is a system of differences that generates meaning through its own internal mechanisms.

Saussure's distinction between signifier and signified and his emphasis on the form and function of the linguistic sign transformed linguistics into the science of structures, a metalanguage whose object of study is the very theoretical selections made by the linguist. Further, his definition of language as a self-regulating and arbitrary sign system opens up the possibility of developing a new science of signs in general, or 'semiology', of which linguistics would be its most important branch.

Although the *Course in General Linguistics* stands at the origin of structuralism and semiology (or semiotics), critics such as Terence Hawkes have pointed out how the work of the Swiss linguist culminates a long tradition of philosophical thinking about language that goes back to St Augustine, Locke, Condillac, Humboldt, Taine, and all those who rejected the approach to language as a name system for classifying things. Saussure's innovative outlook on language had enormous effects in Europe, producing two main waves of influence: the first, upon linguistics itself, was immediate; the second, upon the wider area of cultural studies in general and literary theory in particular, took several decades to develop. It is this second wave of influence that is now known as structuralism.

**After Saussure**

The fundamental Saussurean conception of language as a system of differential oppositions was developed in somewhat different ways by all the major schools of twentieth-century linguistics, and its subsequent use as a model in literary studies derives in part from some of these Saussurean developments. The linguist who took to its furthest extreme the idea of the language system's abstractness was Louis Hjelmslev, the leading member of the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen, where 'glossematic' linguistics was developed in the 1930s. Although linguistics followed its own different path in the USA, the pioneering work of Edward Sapir on the language of North American Indians has some affinities with Saussure's abstract approach to language. However, the branch of linguistics that became known as 'structuralism' in North America, best represented by Leonard Bloomfield, followed a rigorously inductive method based on mechanistic and behaviourist assumptions, which was strongly opposed to Saussure's deductive approach. This trend was forcefully challenged by Noam Chomsky's theory of generative grammar after 1957. In *Current Issues* (1964) Chomsky reformulated the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole* as a distinction between competence and performance, significantly leaving out the social dimension of language. He also systematized Saussure's rather imprecise notion of a language system as a set of 'relations' into the theory (later much modified) of 'generative' processes.
After Saussure, the other major influence in the development of structuralism was Russian formalism. Formalism emerged as a distinct literary school in Russia in the 1920s and has two focus points. One, the Moscow Linguistic Circle, founded in 1915 by Roman Jakobson, was composed primarily of linguists, such as Petr Bogatyrev and Grigorii Vinokur, who were developing new approaches to the study of language and regarded poetics as part of linguistics. The other, the Petrograd OPOJAZ (acronym for the Formalists' Society for the Study of Poetic Language, formed in 1916 by Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, and others), was composed mainly of literary historians, who viewed literature as a unique form of verbal art that had to be studied on its own, without relying too heavily on linguistics.

Although Saussure stands at the origin of structuralist linguistics, it is the phonological orientation provided by Roman Jakobson—and other linguists like Trubetzkoy and Martinet—that was to become most influential for its development. Jakobson is a key figure, since he was a linguist, a literary scholar, and a semiotician, as well as an enthusiastic supporter of the Russian futurist poets and of Modernist experimentation. In 1926 he became (with Nikolai Trubetzkoy) one of the founders of the Prague Linguistic Circle, later to be known as the Prague (or 'functional') School, which was the source of important foundation work in structuralist linguistics and poetics. It is at this time that Jakobson became familiar with Saussurean linguistics, which provided him with the model he needed for the systematic investigation of language.

Jakobson contributed two main ideas to modern literary theory. One resulted from his attempt to define in linguistic terms what makes a verbal message a work of art, that is, its 'literariness' ('literaturnost'). The other was the identification of the two main rhetorical figures, metaphor and metonymy, as models for two fundamental ways of organizing discourse: selection and combination. According to Saussure, metaphor is generally 'associative' in character, and exploits language's 'vertical' relations, while metonymy is generally 'syntagmatic' in character, and exploits 'horizontal' relations. Drawing on this, Jakobson contends in 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances' (1956) that linguistic messages are constructed by the combination of a 'horizontal' movement, which combines words, and a 'vertical' movement, which selects the particular words from the 'inner storehouse' of the language. He then goes on to explain the linguistic problems of subjects suffering from aphasia as the result of two main types of disorder that are strikingly related to the two basic rhetorical figures of equivalence: a vertical or 'similarity disorder' and a horizontal or 'contiguity disorder'.

Jakobson wrote this article in the United States, to which he emigrated in 1941 following the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia. In the 1950s he developed a comprehensive structural description of the ultimate constituents of phonemes and phonological systems, based on the Saussurean notion of binary oppositions, and in the field of literary criticism brought together the mathematical theory of communication and the semiotics of C. S. Peirce with his own work on poetics and communication. In a paper entitled 'Linguistics and Poetics', originally delivered as the closing statement to a scholarly conference in 1958, he formulated his theory of the poetic function,
summarized in the famous dictum: 'The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.' His main argument was that poetry is essentially metaphorically, while prose is essentially metonymic. Still, the 'poeticalness' of language forms part of all types of language, even if not as their dominant function. It is in this 'closing statement' that Jakobson proposes the construction of a poetics of both poetry and prose, based on the differential, oppositional functioning of metaphor and metonymy, a suggestion that was soon to be taken up and developed by the French structuralists.

Jakobson's phonological model is basic not only to the transformational grammar of Noam Chomsky, but also to the critical work of members of the Tel Quel group, such as Roland Barthes, A.-J. Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, and Julia Kristeva, who used the transformational model of 'deep' and 'surface' structure as a basis for their own models. Jakobson's assessment of metaphor and metonymy informs Lacanian criticism, and the notion of binary oppositions as the elements of structure are essential to the development of dialogical criticism by Mikhail Bakhtin as well as to the 'structural anthropology' of Claude Lévi-Strauss, considered by critics such as Paul Ricoeur or Terence Hawkes as the real founder of structuralism.

In 1942 Lévi-Strauss attended a course taught by Jakobson at the New School for Social Research in New York. The French anthropologist's interest in this course stemmed from his desire to improve his understanding of linguistics for his work on the languages of central Brazil. Jakobson's exposition, and modifications of Saussure's theory of langue as an oppositional system triggered Lévi-Strauss's decision to draw an analogy between kinship systems and language, both of which he subsumed under the category of 'communication'. This path-breaking and controversial decision marked the birth of structural anthropology.

In Structural Anthropology (1958), Lévi-Strauss praised structural linguistics as the most highly developed of the social sciences and asked himself whether it was possible to spread the Saussurean principles beyond linguistics to the realm of anthropology and the social sciences, using a method analogous in form (if not in content) to the method used in structural linguistics. His answer was to try and apply to this non-linguistic material the principles of what he himself termed the 'phonological revolution' brought about by Jakobson's concept of the phoneme: he postulated the segmentation of myths into basic units of signification, which he called 'mythemes' (on the analogy with 'phoneme'), and he proposed the rearrangement of these units in a matrix meant to bring together the deep meaning of the myth and the diachronic unfolding of the plot. Once identified, these essential and minimal elements were seen to combine to form a kind of language, a set of processes, permitting the establishment of a certain type of communication between individuals and groups.

The analytical value of mythemes has often been questioned by critics, and Lévi-Strauss himself seemed to find little practical use for them in his later work. However, his adaptation of Saussure's and Jakobson's linguistic models to the analysis of non-linguistic material is path-breaking. His attempt to establish the universal structures
existing in the unconscious that are theoretically capable of generating, through transformation, all possible sign systems constitutes the first overall effort to establish the 'grammar' of the single gigantic sign system of human culture, or, in Saussure's terms, the first attempt to work out the all-encompassing science of semiology.

Barthes and structural poetics

The origins of French structuralism are closely linked both to the 'linguistic turn' brought about by Saussure's Course in General Linguistics and to the work of the Russian formalists and offshoots such as the Prague School and Polish structuralism. The work of the Russian formalist school, which flourished between 1915 and 1930, reached the Western world through Victor Erlich's Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine (1955). This movement of literary criticism rejected the traditional definition of literature as a reflection of the life of its author or as by-product of its historical or cultural milieu, and forcefully postulated its autonomous nature. Consequently, the guiding principle determining the orientation of this critical approach to both poetry and prose was the rejection of the explanatory value of any data external to the text, such as its socio-cultural background or the writer's biography, and a strictly empirical analysis of the text's form and composition at different analytical levels. Their insistence on the autonomy of art led members of the school to concentrate their study on the way in which certain aesthetically motivated devices such as 'defamiliarization' (ostranenie) determine the 'literariness' or artificiality of a text, with total disregard for questions such as the connection between literature and reality or the question of creative personality. The techniques devised by the Russian formalists were incorporated into various fields, such as linguistics, phonology, and anthropology. However, it was the structural analysis of narrative which was to become the most influential branch of structuralism within the field of literary theory.

The structural analysis of narrative took two main directions, following the distinction between fabula and sácthet, in the terminology of Boris Tomashovskii. Fabula ('story') was employed to designate the raw material of narrative fiction, its 'underlying structure'; by sácthet ('plot' or 'discourse') was meant the aesthetic rearrangement of that material, its 'surface structure'. Practitioners of the 'story' approach to narrative sought to isolate the necessary and the optional components of all textual genres and to describe the modes of their articulation. That is, they sought to establish the langue or general 'master code' underlying every individual manifestation of the genre, while the 'discourse' approach focused on the concrete manifestations of the system—that is, on narrative parole. Todorov calls the 'story' approach 'poetics' (Poetics, 1968). 'Narratology', the word Todorov coined in The Grammar of Decameron (1969) to mean 'the structural analysis of narrative', was later employed by Genette to designate the 'discourse' approach.
The most influential contribution to the 'story' approach to narrative is Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), a path-breaking analysis of the underlying structure of the Russian folktale, which remains a major formalist contribution towards the formulation of a poetics of narrative. Propp's starting hypothesis was that, like myths, all folktales are structurally identical if approached from the point of view of their composition. Consequently, instead of analysing the characters from a psychological or moral perspective, he set about classifying the various types of actions the characters perform, or might have performed in every tale, from the standpoint of their significations for the development of the plot (that is, their 'function'). In all, Propp identified thirty-one constant functions in the Russian folktale—that is, functions that exist potentially in all folktales, whether they are actualized or not in an individual tale.

The earliest contributions of French structuralism to the theorizing of 'story' take Propp as an example. Lévi-Strauss wrote a very positive review of the *Morphology* as early as 1960. In 1964, Claude Brémond began a thorough recasting of Propp's scheme in several works, culminating in his *Logic of Narrative* (1973). Todorov published his anthology of the most significant texts of the Russian formalists (*Theory of Literature*) in 1965, his *Poetics* in 1968, and his *Grammar of Decameron* in 1969. Although the title of this book makes reference to a particular text, in fact it constitutes Todorov's most sustained effort to delineate the 'structure of narrative in general' by a systematic application of linguistic terms to social behaviour. His very controversial starting hypothesis is that language is the 'master code' for all signifying systems, and that the human mind and the universe share a common structure, which is that of language itself. His attempt to establish the 'grammar' of Boccaccio's *Decameron* is justified by the need to test his all-encompassing, mentalist theory against concrete texts. His analysis is carried out according to a rigorous and literal use of linguistic categories, distributed along a threefold aspectual axis: *semantic* (study of content), *verbal* (narrative mode), and *syntactic* (the relation between the events, Todorov's main concern).

Another substantial work in the same direction is A.-J. Greimas's monumental *Structural Semantics*, also partly devoted to refining Propp's views on narrative. This book was published in 1966, the year of publication of the eighth issue of the journal *Communications*. This issue, wholly devoted to the structural analysis of narrative, is considered to be the manifesto of the emerging French structuralist group launched by Roland Barthes. Besides Barthes's seminal introduction, it contained seven essays, by A.-J. Greimas, Claude Brémond, Tzvetan Todorov, and Gérard Genette, among others. The shared aim of these writers was to devise models for the analysis of the signifying elements in literary texts with a view to constructing a comprehensive typology of literary genres based on their predominant rhetorical figures and 'action schemes'. Their ultimate goal was the establishment of the universal 'grammar' of narrative, the identification of the general rules regulating narrative discourse at large—that is, the *langue* or master code of narrative.

This approach to narrative neglects the analysis of single texts because they are considered simply as actual manifestations, among many possible ones, of the abstract
and general master code. By contrast, the ‘discourse’ or ‘surface structure’ approach to narrative is specifically concerned with analysis of the manner in which particular narratives are treated in the narrating—that is, the way in which the events and characters’ actions in concrete narrative texts are told (or transmitted by an extra-narrative medium in the case of film, comic strips, etc.). The most important representative of this branch of French structuralism is Gérard Genette.

Although the distinction between these two branches of structuralism might be useful for practical purposes, it should be borne in mind that neither Genette nor Barthes, the most salient representatives of each branch, is exclusively concerned with one type or other of structuralist practice—especially Roland Barthes, whose remarkable inborn curiosity and acute capacity for self-criticism always prevented him from limiting himself to a single critical perspective. Indeed, an important characteristic of Roland Barthes’s work as a whole is his constant tendency to probe and undermine his own arguments, so that he is both the most accomplished representative of French structuralism and the first post-structuralist critic, often foreshadowing Jacques Derrida’s arguments in his attack on the main tenets of structuralism.

Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes was an extraordinarily fertile and versatile literary critic and semiotician. He had a thorough knowledge of classical literature, which he studied at the Sorbonne, as well as of Marxism and existentialism, especially the Sartrean variety, which was to have a strong influence on his early writings. After World War II, Barthes taught for a while at universities in Bucharest and Alexandria, where A.-J. Greimas introduced him to modern linguistics, and, on his return to France, he did research in lexicology and sociology at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, between 1952 and 1959. His second, more decidedly structuralist period, in the 1960s, was heralded by his move to L’École des Hautes Études in 1960 and the subsequent foundation of the Centre d’Études des Communications en masse (CECMAS) and the journal *Communications*.

By 1950 the canonical text of French left-wing criticism was Sartre’s *What is Literature?* (1947). In this book, Sartre defends committed literature (*littérature engagée*), and contends that the only kind of literature capable of addressing the ideological controversies of the historical present is the realist novel. In *Writing Degree Zero* (1953), Barthes endorses Sartre’s contention that writing is never innocent: that, whether consciously or unconsciously, writing is an ideological act. He then goes on to argue that literature, like all forms of communication, is a sign system, and, drawing a parallel with the Saussurean distinction between ‘language’, ‘speech’, and ‘speaking’, he differentiates between ‘language’, ‘style’, and ‘writing’. Barthes defines language as a ‘natural order’ of meanings unified by tradition—that is, as a social norm imposed on the individual—while style is the mark of individuality. Style, however, is not the product of the
individual writer's free will, since it stems from the unconscious and is the result of the writer's biological conditioning. Thus, neither language nor style allow the writer any choice. By contrast, writing (écriture), defined as language endowed with a 'social finality' and thus linked to the great crises of history, is wholly the product of human intention. It is in writing, then, that the individual writer can achieve freedom and moral purpose, even if the writer's freedom lasts only for 'a mere moment', since it is constantly threatened by the pressures of history and tradition as well as by the fact that language is never transparent. Barthes's claim is that it is part of a writer's moral responsibility to be aware that even realist writing is far from being neutral, and that perfect stylistic innocence—a 'degree zero' of writing—is an unreachable ideal.  

In his next book, a collection of fifty-odd essays entitled Mythologies (1957), Barthes expands the idea that literature is a highly ideological system to include all those bourgeois 'myths of French daily life'—such as wrestling, soap-powder and detergents, toys, steak and chips, striptease, the great family man, etc.—which, he says, are usually displayed by the mass media as if they were natural occurrences, when they are in fact ideologically and historically determined. Barthes's analysis is meant to unravel what he describes as the ideological abuse underlying the decorative display by the media of 'what-goes-without-saying', those current 'opinions' (or doxa) petrified by repetition into conventional wisdom, that have a deadly, castrating effect on the individual. Barthes's aim is to isolate the 'significant features' of every bourgeois myth under consideration. However, it is only in the last chapter, 'Myth Today', that he sets about devising a comprehensive semiological system capable of accounting for both the structural and the ideological dimensions of myth. In this essay, Barthes defines myth as 'a type of speech chosen by history', and mythology as the study of 'ideas-in-form'—that is, as a science forming part 'both of semiology inasmuch as it is a formal science, and of ideology inasmuch as it is a historical science'.

The attempt to combine Saussure and Sartre, semiology and ideological critique, lies at the core of Barthes's writings of the 1960s. Thus, in 'The Structural Activity' Barthes defines structuralism as essentially an activity based on the specific kind of imagination, or rather imaginary, of 'structuralist man'. Breaking new ground, he rejects the traditional division of the roles of artists and critics, on the grounds that the only difference between the creative and the critical activities is that, whereas the artist 'imitates' nature in order to give an 'impression' of the world, the structuralist critic's 'imitation' is aimed at 'making it intelligible'. This makes both activities equally creative, since 'it is not the nature of the copied object that defines an art ... it is what man adds to it in reconstructing it: it is the technique that constitutes the very being of all creation'. Here, in inchoate form, lies the first formulation of what was to become Barthes's most far-reaching contribution to contemporary criticism, his theory of reading. Barthes then goes on to define structuralist activity as basically consisting of two main operations: 'quartering', or 'pulling to pieces' (découpage), and 'harmonization', or 'blending together' (agencement). Quartering is meant to isolate the 'mobile fragments' in an object, whose differential situation produces a certain meaning (such as the phoneme in Saus-
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sure's linguistics, or the mytheme in Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology). Once isolated, these differential units are regrouped in the second operation, harmonization, according to rules of association comparable to the rules of combination that regulate syntax in structuralist linguistics. The 'simulacrum' thus constructed does not reveal the world beyond it. What it does reveal is a new category of the object, which is neither real nor rational, but rather functional.

Barthes's equation of the creative and the critical activities prefigures the deconstruction challenge of the fundamental distinction between literature and criticism in favour of the sole category of writing, just as 'quartering' and 'harmonization' prefigure deconstruction's analytical method. Finally, the fact that he calls the reconstructed object of criticism a 'simulacrum' foreshadows Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and simulation.

In 1963 Barthes also published On Racine, a book considered to be his first sustained structuralist analysis. In it, Barthes analyses the plays of Jean Racine, one of the pillars of French realism, as the basis for a 'Racinian anthropology', bringing to the fore the hidden patterns in Racine's plays and isolating the main recurrent figures and functions that constitute their 'deep structure'. Barthes's structuralist approach made mayhem of Raymond Picard's monumental thesis on Racine (1956), which was a traditional author-centred study, mainly concerned with establishing the playwright's 'Life and Works'. The Sorbonne professor responded to Barthes in a heated essay, first published in Le Monde (1954) and subsequently in a pamphlet entitled New Critique or New Imposture (1965), to which Barthes replied in his Criticism and Truth (1966). In it, Barthes thoroughly deconstructs the type of author-centred criticism represented by Picard, which, he says, is founded on tautological formulas of the type 'literature is literature'. It was this so-called nouvelle critique controversy that brought structuralism to the notice of the general public.

During the 1960s, Barthes was in close contact with other structuralists, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michel Foucault, and he felt more and more excited by the possibility of developing a comprehensive science of cultural signs. Elements of Semiology (1964) is his most sustained effort along this line. Its general aim was to develop a science capable of unifying the research currently being carried out separately in anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, and stylistics, by granting centrality to language. Barthes reverses Saussure's outlook on linguistics as forming part of the general science of the signs, asserting that, in fact, 'it is semiology which is part of linguistics'.7 Echoing Mikhail Bakhtin, he postulates the absorption of semiology into a trans-linguistics, the materials of which may be myth, narrative, journalism, or any objects of our civilization, in so far as they are spoken (through press, prospectus, interview, conversation, etc.). The language with which the semologist has to deal is a metalanguage, a second-order language, with its unities no longer monemes or phonemes, but larger fragments of discourse referring to objects or episodes whose meaning underlies language but can never exist independently of it. Like Saussurean linguistics, Barthes's analytical model is limited by the principle of 'relevance'—defined as the need to describe the facts which have been
gathered from the point of view of the signification of the objects analysed—and by the characteristics of the corpus, which must be homogeneous both in substance and time and broad enough to give reasonable hope that its elements will saturate a complete system of resemblances and differences.

The other most important text of the 1960s by Roland Barthes is ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’ (1966), first published as the introductory essay of the eighth issue of *Communications*. In this essay, Barthes narrows down the focus of his research in order to devise a deductive model for the structural analysis of narrative at discourse level, closely following the example of generative linguistics. Echoing Todorov, Barthes defends the need to construct a ‘functional syntax’ theoretically capable of accounting for every conceivable type of narrative. His model combines Émile Benveniste’s theory of linguistic levels (‘story’ and ‘discourse’) and Levi-Strauss’s work on ‘mythemes’ with Propp’s concept of ‘function’ as the structural unit governing the ‘logic of narrative possibilities’—that is, the unfolding of the actions performed, or that might be performed, by the characters and the relations among them. In his contribution to the same issue of *Communications*, ‘The Categories of Literary Narrative’, Todorov, drawing on the distinction made by the Russian formalists between *fabula* and *sadhset*, proposes working on two major levels of description, themselves subdivided: ‘story’ (the argument), comprising a logic of actions and a ‘syntax’ of characters, and ‘discourse’ (the way in which the story is told by a narrator to a reader), comprising the tenses, aspects, and modes of the narrative. Barthes improves both the Russian formalist model and that of Todorov, in that he incorporates the notion of a ‘vertical’ (or paradigmatic) as well as a ‘horizontal’ (or syntagmatic) level of description. His contention is that to understand a narrative is not merely to follow the unfolding of the story from beginning to middle and end; it is also to recognize its construction in vertical ‘storeys’. Thus, he distinguishes three main levels in the narrative work: the level of ‘functions’, the level of ‘actions’, and the level of ‘narration’.

In agreement with Todorov, Greimas, and Brémond, Barthes proposes to void the notion of ‘character’ of its humanistic connotations in favour of the functional notion of ‘agent’ or ‘actant’. He defines narrative communication as an exchange between narrator and listener (or reader). Although Walter Gibson, taking up the New Critical distinction between ‘author’ and ‘dramatic speaker’, had already coined the term ‘mock reader’ as early as 1950 to designate the narrator’s addressee, Barthes’s distinction between narrator and listener anticipates the importance given by reader-response criticism to the narratee. Drawing on Henry James’s and Sartre’s critique of the omniscient author-narrator, he further differentiates between narrator (who speaks in the narrative), implied author (who writes), and real author (who is). This distinction and his theory of narrative levels also prefigure the work of narratologists such as Gérard Genette and Mieke Bal. Compared to theirs, Barthes’s division into levels is avowedly sketchy and confused. However, his article remains an impressive early attempt to present a comprehensive model for the analysis of narrative.
In the 1970s, Barthes veered progressively towards a post-structuralist concern with the critique of cultural stereotypes—The Empire of Signs (1970)—desire and the pleasure afforded by the text—The Pleasure of the Text (1973)—and a looser, more contextualized and particularized approach to concrete aspects of culture. The turning-point in this direction was S/Z (1970). In it, Barthes may be said to have moved both towards a narratological position when, giving up his attempt to devise an overall 'functional syntax' of narrative, he decided to base his analysis on a single short story, Sarrasine, by Honoré de Balzac; and towards a post-structuralist position when, instead of concentrating on the structure of the short story, he focused his analysis on the reader's active role in the production of meaning.

In S/Z Barthes distinguishes two main types of literature roughly corresponding to nineteenth-century realism (such as Balzac, Dickens, and Tolstoy) and twentieth-century experimentalism (such as Russian futurism, Anglo-Saxon Modernism, and the French nouveau roman). Traditionally, the realist text, called by Barthes the 'readerly text', was thought to be 'transparent': that is, it was thought to have a seemingly unitary meaning, immediately accessible to the reader, consisting of the unique expression of the writer's individual genius. Thus considered, the reader's role vis-à-vis a realist text can only be that of an impotent and inert consumer of the author's product. By contrast, the experimental text—what Barthes calls 'writerly text'—requires the active participation of the reader in the establishment of the text's meaning.

Barthes's way of demonstrating the wrongness of these assumptions was to submit Sarrasine, a prototypical readerly text, to a shattering analysis, bringing to the fore the text's totally signifying nature. His method, already broached in 'The Structuralist Activity', was to deconstruct the text by 'quartering' the story into 561 lexias (reading units of varying length) and then to analyse these textual signifiers in terms of five codes: the hermeneutic code; the code of 'semes' (Greimas's term) or signifiers, the symbolic code; the prosaicetic code (or code of 'actions'), and the cultural (or reference) code. The application of these codes to Sarrasine has the effect of isolating the text from its background, its context, and the burden of earlier scholarly criticism, demonstrating that it is not a transparent window on to an external 'reality', but a heavily contrived artefact imposing its own version of reality on the reader. In S/Z, Barthes thus reinforces his earlier contention that there is no 'degree zero' of writing, that a text does not have a unitary meaning injected into it by a unitary author, thus calling into question the very ideas of originality and individualism on which bourgeois ideology is based. S/Z also demonstrates that the world we perceive is one not of 'facts', but rather of 'signs about facts', which we encode and decode ceaselessly from one system to the next system.
This system of reading totally ignores the play of language and treats the text as transparent. The other is the ‘vertical’ system demanded by the writerly text. This system of reading skips nothing, sticks to the text, reads with application and transport, and is not captivated by the winnowing out of truths, but by the layering of significance. The first type gives the reader intermittent pleasure (plaisir), while the reader of ‘writerly’ texts experiences jouissance, a state of bliss or ecstasy, brought about by the very difficulty in unravelling the text, which Barthes compares to the orgasmic delight produced by the gradual unveiling of the desired body, the excitation produced by the hope of seeing the object of our desire. The creative response to the writerly text is what transforms the reader from passive consumer into blissful ‘scribe’ or ‘scriptor’ (écrivain). 8

Barthes’s theory of reading comes full circle in ‘The Death of the Author’ (1977), where he takes to its ultimate conclusion the attack on the unitary and all-controlling god-like author of realist fiction initiated in Sur Racine and continued in S/Z, passing the creative role from writer to reader. In contrast to the traditional author, ‘who is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child’, Barthes postulates the figure of the modern ‘scriptor’, someone born simultaneously with the text, whose existence does not precede or exceed the writing. Barthes’s essay is devoted to undermining the idea that a text is a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God), and to demonstrating that the literary text is ‘a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash’. Echoing Kristeva’s notion of ‘intertext’, Barthes defines the text as ‘a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture’. Confronted with this polyphonic and all-encompassing text, the writer can only imitate a gesture that is ... never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. The centrality granted to the text deprives the reader of any individuality prior to it: ‘the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted.’ Needless to say, from Barthes’s perspective, the critic’s claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile, since the text has no limit, no final signified which the critic can aspire to ‘explain’. 9

Barthes’s fully-fledged attack on the author in favour of the reader and his definition of the text as the site of a resistance to stable signification constitute his most original contributions to a discussion that has its roots in the work of Saussure, the Russian formalists, and Roman Jakobson. The shift in perspective from author to text that Barthes takes from Russian formalism is also central to narratologists such as Gérard Genette, and to Julia Kristeva’s post-structuralist theory of intertextuality, and runs parallel to Jacques Derrida’s postulation of the abandonment of the ‘transcendental signified’ and his definition of writing as the free play of signifiers, which lies at the heart of the theory of deconstruction.
Genette and narratology

Human beings are story-telling animals. The need to create narrative texts—whether linguistic, theatrical, pictorial, filmic, or by means of any other sign system, from Morse codes and nautical flags to the whistling language of La Gomera (Canary Islands)—is intrinsic to human existence. Therefore, although narratology in the strict sense of the word is usually associated with structuralism, the attempts to define, classify, and analyse narratives go back to the very origins of Western civilization. In *The Republic*, Plato distinguished between *logos* (what is said) and *lexis* (the way of saying it), and then divided *lexis* into three types: *diēgēsis*, or ‘simple narrating’ (when the poet speaks in his own voice, as, for example, in lyric poetry); *mimēsis*, or ‘imitation’ (when the poet speaks through the voice of a character, as happens in drama); and ‘the combination of both’ (as happens in epic and in several other styles of poetry), when the poet alternates his narration with the direct speech of a given character. That is, Plato classified the literary genres according to their form of enunciation. He defended simple narrating, but condemned imitation. Although Aristotle reversed this value-judgement and used a different terminology in *Poetics*, the starting-point for his classification was also the distinction between the dramatic and the narrative modes. Aristotle contended that the most important aspect of genres based on incident and event (narrative proper and drama) is the *mythos* (‘plot’ or ‘arrangement of the incidents’), and that the poet is not a maker of events or incidents, but the organizer of these events and incidents into the artistic structure we call plot. Consequently, for Aristotle, tragedy is not a ‘representation of men’, but a representation of ‘a piece of action’ (praxis), involving ‘reversals’ and ‘discoveries’, so that the soul of tragedy is the plot, not the characters. In *Poetics*, then, there is already a distinction between two possible analytical levels: the level of actions and that of their arrangement or disposition.

As Aristotle makes clear, all narratives (regardless of the sign system they employ) develop longitudinally from beginning to middle and end through the causal selection and temporal combination of events. This means that narratives can be analysed ‘horizontally’, at what Barthes calls the *syntagmatic* level. But narratives are also complex ‘representations’ of events, whose meaning requires interpretation. This complexity of meaning begs for a ‘vertical’ (or *paradigmatic*), hermeneutic analysis. It is this vertical axis of narrative that the Russian formalists had in mind when they differentiated between *fabula* and *situata* (Todorov’s ‘story’ and ‘discourse’) as the two main analytical levels.

In the Middle Ages, Aristotle’s and Horace’s insights into the literary genres remained largely undeveloped until the rise of the novel as a new genre in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when novelists started asking themselves questions about their new craft and tried to establish the differences between the novel and other narrative
genres, such as the romance. The theory of genres, and more generally the theory of discourse initiated by the classics under the names of poetics and rhetoric, continued to centre the interest of critics until the nineteenth century, when the advent of Romanticism brought about a refocusing of attention from genres and forms to the ‘individual creator’. A new type of criticism then developed, aimed at establishing the ‘psychology’ of author and work. This ‘psychological turn’ informs the historicist outlook on literature that runs parallel to the development of realism in the nineteenth century. Progressively incorporating the psychoanalytical ideas of Freud, Jung, and Bachelard, as well as those of the new science of sociology, it eventually expanded in various directions: the analysis of the author’s personality, that of the reader (or rather, the critic), or the question of the work’s ‘immanence’—that is, the question of the individual work’s wholeness and internal coherence as the finished product of the artist’s unique personality. It was this notion of ‘bounded text’ that Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Gérard Genette, and other French structuralists had as their target, since, as Genette notes in *Figures III*, in all of these approaches, the essential function of the critical activity is the establishment of a dialogue between a single text and the conscious or unconscious, individual or collective psyche of creator and/or reader.¹⁰

It is only at the turn of the nineteenth century that we find the first significant attempts to displace this type of criticism in favour of a systematic analysis of narrative, especially of such topics as the unity of effect, narrative distance, and point of view. These include the work of Jean Pouillon and Claude-Edmonde Magny in France, and of Edgar Allan Poe, Henry James, Joseph Warren Beach, Percy Lubbock, Norman Friedman, Wayne C. Booth, and E. M. Forster in the English-speaking world. In Eastern Europe this tendency culminated in the seminal work on the investigation of a poetics of fiction carried out by Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, Boris Tomashovsky, Vladimir Propp, and other Russian formalists in the 1920s and 1930s. However, their work was not known to the Western world until the mid-1950s, when it became the most influential critical trend for the development of French structuralism. It is against this general background that Gérard Genette’s work on narrative discourse may be said to have emerged.

**Gérard Genette**

Drawing on Saussurean linguistics, the French structuralists defined literature as a kind of *langue* of which each specific work is an instance of *parole*. Roland Barthes, Claude Brémond, A.-J. Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov chose to develop an ‘underlying structure’ approach to literature. Consequently, the main aim of their structural activity was to identify the general codes that structure literary language as a whole. In this abstract type of approach, the individual work is relevant only as the concrete materialization, among many possible virtual ones, of these general codes. By contrast, the ‘discourse’, or ‘surface
structure’, approach to narrative pays attention primarily to the analysis of the functioning of individual works as a ‘text’ in their own right. This approach—reminiscent of the New Critical analysis of works as ‘organic wholes’—is dominated by the painstaking taxonomic work of Gérard Genette, the literary theoretician and structuralist critic, associated with, l’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, who may rightly lay claim to collective paternity of narratology.

Both approaches have a common origin and practice. Studies such as Barthes’s ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’ and Todorov’s Poetics partake of both, and it is only in the 1980s that the two separated clearly, thanks principally to Genette’s efforts. When Todorov coined the term ‘narratology’ in The Grammar of Discourse, he gave it the all-inclusive meaning of ‘the science of narratives’. Some critics, such as Richard Harland and Gerald Prince, still use it in this sense. However, the term ‘narratology’ is now commonly used to refer exclusively to the ‘discourse’ branch of structuralism, since, as Genette himself notes, ‘analyses of narrative contents, grammars, logics and semiotics have hardly, so far, laid claim to the term narratology, which thus remains ( provisionally? ) the property solely of the analysts of narrative mode’. 11

Genette’s most systematic attempt to devise an all-encompassing theory of narrative discourse is Figures III, partly translated into English as Narrative Discourse. 12 Drawing on Todorov’s distinction between ‘story’ and ‘discourse’, Genette goes on to distinguish three aspects of narrative reality: ‘story’ (histoire), meaning the signified or narrative content; ‘narrative’ (récit), meaning the signer, discourse, or narrative text; and ‘narrating’ (narration), meaning the narrative act itself. Although he is fully aware that the only level which is directly available to analysis is that of the text, Genette draws a theoretical distinction between discourse and its telling. This distinction is crucial, for it allows Genette to organize the analysis of narrative in wholly relational terms. Practitioners of the ‘story’ approach to narrative such as Todorov and Greimas were mainly concerned with only one aspect of narratives, the events. Barthes distinguishes three analytical levels, but he presumes that they are hierarchically arranged and so discusses them separately. By contrast, Genette envisions the study of narrative as ‘essentially, a study of the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and (to the extent that they are inscribed in the narrative discourse) between story and narrating’.

Again drawing on Todorov, Genette subsequently proposes a division of the analysis of narrative discourse into the verbal categories of ‘tense’, ‘mood’, and ‘voice’. Under the category of tense he deals with all temporal relations between narrative and story: questions of temporal order, such as the difference between story time and narrative time; disruptions of linear chronology; duration of representation; and frequency of representation. Within the category of mood he studies the mode of representation: questions of distance and perspective. All in all, Genette coins a wholly new terminology for old concepts—such as ‘analepsis’ (flashback) and ‘prolepsis’ (flash-forward), or ‘diesis’ (teuing) and ‘mimesis’ (scene)—and systematizes aspects of narrative that had been dealt with separately by earlier critics.
His most innovative contribution in this section is the distinction between mode and voice, that is, the theoretical separation between the question who sees? (the focalizer) and who tells? (the narrative instance). This distinction improves earlier theories of narrative point of view, such as those of Norman Friedman and Wayne Booth, providing one of the most useful tools for the analysis of narrative. Genette's starting-point is Jean Pouillon and Tzvetan Todorov's typology of narrators according to their degree of knowledge with respect to the characters. He improves their typology, with a threefold classification: 'non-focalized narrative' (or narrative with 'zero focalization', corresponding to the omniscient narrator of realist fiction); narrative with 'internal focalization', whether 'fixed' (as in The Ambassadors), 'variable' (as in Madame Bovary), or 'multiple' (as in epistolary fiction); and narratives with 'external' focalization (as in the novels of Dashiel Hammet or the novellas of Hemingway).

Under voice, Genette further nuances the differences between 'narration' and 'focalization'. He analyses the 'narrative instance' from two main perspectives: Who speaks? and How does the narrator relate to the narrated events? He also includes in this section the notion of 'narrated' (the communicative partner of the narrator) as distinct from the flesh-and-blood reader. This differentiation, like his substitution of 'narrative instance' for 'narrator', is meant to deprive the functional notion of any human connotations. Yet another important classification offered under this heading is the formulation of a typology of narrative instances according to their narrative level and their relation to the story.

Genette's fully-fledged terminology for the analysis of narrative discourse soon became the lingua franca of the field. The publication of Figures III triggered numerous responses by other narratologists who used Genette's model as a point of departure for their own. One of the earliest was Mieke Bal's Narratology (1977). A simplified version of it, Narratology13 soon became one of the most popular manuals for university students on both sides of the Atlantic. Her threefold division of the 'vertical' or hermeneutic levels of analysis of narrative discourse into 'fabula', 'story', and 'text' are nowadays the most currently used, partly because they are free from the terminological ambiguity of Genette's terms récit (narrative) and narration (narrating) in their English translation. The main difference when compared with Genette's typology is in the concept of 'fabula', which, unlike 'story', is conceived of as being a bare scheme of narrative actions without taking into account any specific traits that individualize agents or actions into characters and concrete events, or any temporal or perspectival distortions.

Genette further discussed and developed some of the categories coined in Figures III in Narrative Discourse Revisited (1983), where he responds to the comments on his earlier book by Mieke Bal and other narratologists such as Dorrit Cohn, Gerard Prince, Jaap Lintvelt, and Shlomith Rinmon-Kenan.

In The Archtext: An Introduction (1979), Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree (1982), and Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (1987), Genette moves from the analysis of narrative discourse to the formulation of a comprehensive typology of the various types of relationships existing between two or more texts. Of these, Palimpsests remains
the most comprehensive. Under the umbrella term of ‘transtextuality’, loosely defined as ‘everything that sets it into secret or overt relation to other texts’, Genette differentiates five major types of relationship between texts: intertextuality, paratextuality, architectuality, hypertextuality, and metatextuality. Architectuality is the implicit determination of the generic status of a given text; Intertextuality, the perception by a reader of the relationships existing between a given text and another preceding or following it by means of quotations, plagiarism, or allusions; Paratextuality, the relationship of a text to its paratext (title, epigraph, preface, epilogue, footnotes, dust jacket commentaries, photographs, etc.); Hypertextuality, the relationship established between a text B (hypertext) and a pre-existing text A (hypotext) through transformation or imitation (parody, pastiche, transvestism, etc.); and Metatextuality, the relationship of critical ‘commentary’ existing between a text and another that speaks about it without explicitly quoting from it.\(^\text{14}\)

Although this typology is theoretically neat, it is in fact somewhat problematic, since, as Genette himself acknowledges, it is often difficult in practice to separate some categories from others. For instance, the difference between plagiarism (a form of intertextuality) and imitation (a form of hypertextuality) or between citation (a form of intertextuality) and pastiche (a form of hypertextuality) often depends exclusively on the intentionality that the reader attributes to the author. Another serious shortcoming is the terminological conflict with Genette’s notion of intertextuality and the more complex notion associated with Kristeva’s and Barthes’s use of the term.

More recently, Genette, who has also written widely on aesthetics and philosophy of literature, has himself further opened up the scope of his narratological approach in *Fiction and Diction* (1991), in which he focuses on the criteria of literariness, the pragmatic status of fiction, and the forms of factual versus fictive narration. Still, the tradition of close scrutiny of individual narrative texts which he initiated continues to flourish today. The repertory of Genette’s analytical concepts has undergone further refinements at the hands of critics such as Meir Sternberg, Mieke Bal, Brian McHale, Susan S. Lanser, and Lubomír Doležel, among others.

**Conclusion**

Russian formalism and structuralist linguistics caused a shift in the main concern of literary criticism: from content to form, from meaning to organization. Consequently, the meaning of individual cultural signs, such as a literary text, is seen to emerge only in opposition to other cultural signs, and is said to reside in the form and the relative position of the sign within the signifying system. The structuralist critic’s main concern is to highlight the underlying ‘grammar’, the master code common to all individual texts, by focusing on the ‘function’ of their elemental compositional units, with a view to devising a fully-fledged typology of literary genres. The need to isolate the ‘deep
structure' of narrative caused the critic's attention to shift away from all surface appearances—the concrete, the particular, the historical. Instead of seeking to tell a basic truth about the individual cultural text under analysis, the structuralist critic defines its meaning simply as the effect of the play of structures in a game of communication. Thus, the creative reader, or 'scriptor', replaces the author from his or her position in discourse as the figure who confers and authorizes meaning.

The implicit question thus raised by the French structuralists is whether the linguistic (or anthropological, or narrative) structures revealed by the critic's activity are arbitrary or, as Greimas and Todorov claimed, innately programmed in the human mind, operating both as a constraint upon language and as a means of shared understanding. Barthes's definition of writing as the product of human intention, the site where the individual writer can achieve freedom and moral purpose, may be said to offer a way out of what Fredric Jameson called 'the prison-house of language'. Jacques Derrida's most powerful attacks on structuralism are devoted precisely to dismantling this idea of structure as in any sense given or objectively immanent in a text, which he considers to be the ultimate expression of a logoscentrism produced by Western philosophy. His refusal to accept the immanent idea of structure, and his questioning of the assumptions that the structures of meaning correspond to some deep-laid mental pattern which determines the limits of intelligibility, signal the transition from structuralism to poststructuralism.

FURTHER READING


Onega, Susana, and Garcia, Landa, *José Ángel Narraology: An Introduction* (Harlow, and New York: Addison Wesley Longman Group Ltd., 1996). A reader containing a comprehensive introduction to the central concepts of narratology and its historical development from classical poetics to the present, and a selection of key essays representative of the various contemporary narratological trends, including 'narratology and film' and 'post-structuralist narratology'.


Seldon, Raman (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, viii: From Formalism to Poststructuralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). An authoritative historical survey of
Russian formalism, French structuralism, and reader-oriented theories of interpretation, in a series of comprehensive, self-contained essays.


Todorov, Tzvetan (ed.), French Literary Theory: A Reader (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). A collection of eleven seminal essays by French structuralists, which are not always easy to find in English, such as the first section of the missing part of Gérard Genette's Figures III, 'Criticism and Poetics' (pp. 8–10).


NOTES


