

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*Our time here is magic! It's the only space you have to realise whatever it is that is beautiful, whatever is true, whatever is great, whatever is potential, whatever is rare, whatever is unique in. It's the only space.* - Ben Okri.

### 1.1 Introduction

The enduring allure of storytelling stands as a testament to its profound impact on human consciousness across epochs. From ancient oral traditions to contemporary written narratives, stories have functioned as portals to alternate realities, captivating audiences and transcending temporal and spatial boundaries.

At the core of storytelling's enchantment lies the narrative device known as the 'setting,' a foundational element that constructs the world in which a story unfolds. This setting encompasses both temporal and spatial dimensions, interweaving a fabric of context and atmosphere that immerses readers or listeners within the narrative's realm.

Temporal setting, often manifested through historical epochs or chronological sequences, provides a backdrop against which characters evolve and events unfold. It fosters a sense of continuity and progression, grounding the audience in a specific temporal moment. Whether depicting a distant past or a speculative future, the temporal setting not only shapes characters' experiences but also resonates with the audience's temporal context, creating parallels and contrasts that enhance the storytelling experience.

Conversely, spatial setting encompasses the physical landscapes, environments, and locales that serve as the stage for the narrative's unfolding events. From bustling urban landscapes to untamed wilderness, from grandiose palaces to humble abodes, the spatial setting imbues the story with sensory richness and vivid imagery. Through spatial settings, readers or listeners traverse diverse

terrains, encountering a plethora of sights, sounds, and sensations that forge a visceral connection to the story's world.

The mastery of setting lies in its seamless integration of temporal and spatial elements, culminating in a cohesive and immersive narrative experience. Skilled storytellers, whether in oral traditions or written forms, adeptly manipulate settings to evoke specific moods, convey thematic depth, and ignite the audience's imagination.

Moreover, setting transcends its role as a mere backdrop; it emerges as a dynamic force that shapes character development, influences plot dynamics, and reflects thematic motifs. A meticulously crafted setting possesses the power to evoke nostalgia, instil wonder, or elicit a spectrum of emotions that resonate deeply with the audience.

In essence, the enchantment of storytelling resides in the artful orchestration of setting, where time and space converge to transport audiences on a transformative odyssey through the realms of imagination and human experience. The interplay between temporal and spatial elements not only enriches the narrative tapestry but also elevates storytelling to a transcendent art form that transcends mere entertainment, leaving an indelible mark on the human psyche.

- 'There was once, in the country of Alifbay, a sad city, a city so sad...' (Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*)
- 'Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo'. (James Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*)

In exploring the artistry of storytelling through temporal and spatial manipulation, two notable authors, Salman Rushdie, and James Joyce, stand out for their adept use of narrative techniques that transport readers into fantastical realms while challenging traditional linear storytelling norms.

Rushdie's opening line from *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* "There was once, in the country of Alifbay, a sad city, a city so sad..." (2) immediately sets a tone

of melancholy and introduces a fictional land, Alifbay, without explicitly defining its temporal or spatial coordinates. This ambiguity creates a sense of timelessness and universality, allowing readers to transcend their immediate realities and delve into the imaginative world of the narrative.

Similarly, Joyce's iconic beginning in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, "Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby Tuckoo" (2) initiates a dreamlike atmosphere, blending whimsy with a hint of nostalgia. The mention of a "moocow" (Joyce 2) and the playful language evoke a sense of childlike wonder, inviting readers to suspend disbelief and embark on a journey of exploration.

Both Rushdie and Joyce employ these timeless phrases, "There was once" (Rushdie 2) and "Once upon a time," (Joyce 2) to signal a departure from the present moment, signalling to readers that the narrative unfolds in a realm removed from everyday reality. By imbuing their narratives with this sense of enchantment and escapism, these authors create spaces where readers can immerse themselves in the unfolding story without being bound by the constraints of time and place.

The deliberate vagueness regarding specific temporal and spatial details serves a dual purpose. On one hand, it allows the authors the freedom to construct intricate and imaginative worlds unbounded by geographical or historical limitations. On the other hand, it compels readers to engage actively with the narrative, filling in gaps with their own imaginations and interpretations.

Contrary to Aristotle's classical narrative structure of a clear beginning, middle, and end tied together in a causal chain, Rushdie, and Joyce, along with other modern writers like Joseph Conrad, Gabriel García Márquez, and Ben Okri, challenge this linear framework. They embrace a nonlinear approach, often starting "in media res" or during action, and then weaving in past events through flashbacks or nonlinear sequencing.

This nontraditional narrative structure adds layers of complexity to the storytelling process. Readers are invited to piece together fragmented narratives, deciphering connections between seemingly disparate events and

timelines. This technique not only keeps readers intellectually engaged but also mirrors the complexities of human memory and perception, where past experiences inform present understanding.

For instance, Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* unfolds across generations, blending past, present, and future in a cyclical narrative that defies conventional notions of linear time. Similarly, Okri's *The Famished Road* navigates between the spiritual realm and earthly existence, blurring boundaries between reality and myth.

By embracing nonlinear storytelling techniques, these authors challenge readers to question established narrative norms and explore alternative ways of experiencing and interpreting stories. The interplay between time and space becomes a dynamic tool for narrative innovation, inviting readers on a journey of discovery and imagination that transcends traditional storytelling boundaries.

Time and space are fundamental concepts that profoundly influence human perception and understanding. These concepts are intricately intertwined with individual existence, planetary dynamics, and universal phenomena, shaping the very fabric of human life. Time, often depicted metaphorically as a conqueror or a relentless force, holds sway over human experiences and the unfolding of events. As Bakhtin aptly observed, time resembles a river in constant flux, where “everything flows, nothing remains static, and the past continually gives way to the present and the future” (1).

The temporal realm is commonly categorised into past, present, and future, yet these temporal divisions are interconnected and reliant on one another. What is presently termed as the “present” was once the future and will inevitably transform into the past. This cyclical nature of time is intricately linked with memory, a pivotal element in human consciousness. Memory serves as the bridge that connects the immediate past with the present moment, thus influencing how individuals perceive and navigate time.

Space, on the other hand, encompasses not only physical landscapes depicted in geographical maps or artistic representations but also the spatial dimensions embedded within narratives. Every narrative, regardless of its form,

encapsulates a universe with spatial extension, albeit sometimes subtly concealed. The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy conceptualises space as an expansive “extension encompassing everything or specific entities, highlighting its abstract yet pervasive nature that transcends mere sensory perception” (3).

The significance of place within the spatial framework is paramount, as it plays a crucial role in shaping individual identity and experiences. Cultural and societal norms associated with a particular place contribute to the mental processes and perceptions of individuals within that space. One’s sense of identity is intricately intertwined with the cultural and social constructs prevalent in their environment, making a location a reflection of personal introspection and self-awareness.

In literature, the boundaries of time and space extend beyond individual experiences, becoming integral elements within narrative structures. The act of storytelling inherently involves temporal dynamics, where narratives unfold within a temporal framework. While narratives often follow a chronological sequence, the “fluidity of time allows for diverse interpretations and nonlinear narrative structures” (Cleugh 8). Fictional works frequently challenge conventional temporal arrangements, presenting events in unconventional ways that reflect the intricate interplay between space, time, and narrative progression.

The interpretation of events within a narrative is contingent upon the interaction between spatial contexts and temporal dynamics. The sequencing of events within a narrative may vary, offering nuanced insights into the chronology of events and their thematic implications. This variability in narrative temporality underscores the multifaceted nature of storytelling, where space and time converge to shape narrative meaning and resonance.

In recapitulation time and space serve as foundational pillars in human cognition, societal constructs, and artistic expression. Their interwoven nature permeates various facets of human existence, from individual identity formation to the structuring of narratives in literature and beyond. Understanding the

complexities of time and space enhances our comprehension of the intricate tapestry of human experiences and the narratives that define our collective

In the realm of literature, narrative serves as the vehicle through which events are depicted to weave a cohesive story. The sequencing of events within a narrative, often aligned with chronological order in linear narratives, structures the narrative's progression, leading to "a distinct beginning, middle, and end" (11), as Aristotle delineates. Linear narratives typically commence with an exposition that sets the stage, followed by rising action "culminating in a climax, and ultimately concluding with a resolution that ties up loose ends" (Aristotle 9).

However, the spatial context within which literary works are situated profoundly influences the narrative's spatial structures and its connection to the external world. Space plays a pivotal role in encapsulating the imagination and proclamation inherent in every narrative, contributing significantly to the creation of a fictional universe. Authors wield considerable control over how space and time are navigated within their works, determining the flow of events and the spatial dynamics that underpin the narrative's fabric. This authorial control is crucial, considering readers' comprehension and perception of events, guiding the narrative's pacing and spatial intricacies.

Nevertheless, within the realms of space and time, there exists a void, an absence of tangible existence. The historical backdrop of spatial occurrences within a literary work can sometimes diminish the significance of depicted events, relegating spatial structures to a secondary role. Readers may overlook the setting or spatial dimensions of the narrative, focusing instead on the narrative's thematic and character-driven elements. Additionally, the choice of objects or resources occupying literary space indirectly influences spatial dynamics, with authors deciding whether to populate the space with an abundance of objects or a limited selection, thereby shaping the narrative's temporal and spatial contours.

Examining the works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, both esteemed postcolonial writers within the tradition of magic realism, unveils how these authors deftly

manipulate time and space through narrative techniques. Temporal variations, spanning past, present, and future, introduce temporal intricacies, while the geographical location of events introduces spatial distinctions within their narratives. Grass and Okri employ a narrative style characterised by continuous shifts, incorporating flashbacks and forward leaps to navigate temporal complexities. The multiplicity of temporal layers and ambiguities in their works captivate readers, inviting them into a narrative realm where time is fluid and non-linear.

Similarly, the spatial dimension in Grass and Okri's works transcends conventional notions, moving beyond mere geographical settings to embody dynamic, evolving spaces. Space becomes a dynamic entity, undergoing constant evolution and transformation, mirroring the thematic and cultural shifts within the narratives. Language plays a pivotal role in shaping these spatial constructs, intertwining with cultural and traditional outlooks embedded within Grass and Okri's narratives.

In essence, the exploration of time and space in literature, exemplified through the works of Grass and Okri, highlights the intricate interplay between narrative structures, spatial dynamics, and temporal complexities. Through narrative manipulation, authors transcend traditional narrative boundaries, offering readers immersive experiences that transcend linear temporalities and static spatial confines. This research endeavour delves into the nuanced constructs of time and space within literary narratives, shedding light on how these elements contribute to narrative innovation and thematic depth in postcolonial literature.

## **1.2 Rationale of the Study**

In the course of examining the literary contributions of Grass and Okri, who are celebrated figures of the post-colonial period, the researcher has been captivated by the inventive approaches both authors apply to the concepts of time and space in their narratives. Notably, time is not depicted in a straightforward, linear manner but is rather portrayed as a complex, multidimensional element, similar to the narrative styles observed in the works of illustrious authors such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Julio Cortazar, James Joyce, and Salman Rushdie.

These writers challenge the traditional, unidirectional perception of time, as well as the conventional understanding of space as merely a physical location.

Space, within the context of their writings, transforms into a pliable and adaptable concept, with various portrayals tied to specific earthly locales. This innovative treatment of space and time is not merely artistic; it also serves to mirror the intricate identities and cultural narratives of the regions these authors represent. Their use of language is not arbitrary; it is a deliberate effort to infuse their texts with a distinct, indigenous essence that enhances the cultural resonance of their work.

Extensive scholarly attention has been directed towards figures such as Marquez, Joyce, and Rushdie, particularly regarding their manipulation of time and space in their storytelling. These studies highlight how these postcolonial authors weave their cultural identities and distinctive personal backgrounds into their narratives, often employing magical realism as a tool to accentuate the unique characteristics of their cultural heritage.

Turning to Grass and Okri, one observes that despite their differing geographical origins, both authors utilise elements of post-colonial structure and magical realism to articulate their individual identities and cultural narratives. Gunter Grass, hailing from Germany, draws on the complex layers of time and space to reflect the cultural identity that was significantly shaped by the events of World War II. Ben Okri, on the other hand, explores the intricate concepts of time and space “through the lens of the Abiku tradition from his Nigerian heritage” (Abdelkader 13). Both authors employ narrative techniques that are distinctly their own, opting for magical realism to express non-traditional interpretations of reality, which vividly capture their cultural, traditional, and indigenous modes of expression.

Significant academic research has explored the use of magical realism and postcolonial themes in the works of these writers. However, it appears that the specific, multimodal representations of time and space utilised by Grass and Okri have not been sufficiently investigated. This observation of a potential void or knowledge gap in existing literature motivated the researcher to select this area for further analysis. The aim is to delve deeper into the temporal and

spatial constructs employed by Grass and Okri in their narrative works, exploring how these elements contribute to a richer understanding of their cultural contexts and literary techniques.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical underpinnings of this doctoral research, which investigates the temporal and spatial constructs within the selected literary works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, are primarily based on postcolonial theory, alongside an intricate examination of the notions of space and time in literature. Postcolonial theory serves as a critical framework that dissects the interactions between colonisers and the colonised, exploring the manifestation of these relationships within cultural, societal, and political contexts. This theory delves into the historical continuities of colonial impact on societies and cultures globally.

Central to postcolonial discourse is the assertion that the colonial encounter profoundly shapes the conceptualization of space and time. Colonialism imposed Western constructs of time and space, often clashing with indigenous perceptions. The Western paradigm frequently disrupts traditional, linear progressions of time, advocating instead for a non-linear or multidirectional time. Space, correspondingly, is reimagined beyond mere geographical boundaries to encompass multiple dimensions and varieties. These redefinitions within literary narratives reflect the ongoing struggle to articulate time and space, reshaping the temporal and spatial dimensions and thereby influencing the cultural, social, and historical dynamics of both the characters within the narratives and their readers.

The literary works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri are exemplary in this context, as both authors intricately weave themes of identity, history, and memory into their narratives, correlating these themes intimately with spatial and temporal settings. Grass's notable works, including *The Tin Drum*, *Cat and Mouse*, and *Dog Years*, delve into the complexities of German identity and historical consciousness. Meanwhile, Okri's novels, such as *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment*, and *Astonishing the Gods*, explore facets of African identity and historical experience. Grass's narrative voice is shaped significantly by the backdrop of World War II, reflecting a postcolonial perspective that critiques

and dissects German societal structures. In contrast, Okri uses postcolonial narrative techniques to portray the rich tapestry of Abiku mythology, embedding these cultural myths deeply within the fabric of his storytelling.

In the works of Gunter Grass, the portrayal of time and space is often marked by fragmentation and dislocation, suggesting a narrative strategy that mirrors the profound disorientation resulting from historical trauma. His employment of non-linear narrative techniques and the integration of surreal, fantastical elements serve to underscore the challenges of forming a coherent identity in the aftermath of such trauma. This thematic exploration is vividly illustrated in *The Tin Drum*, where the protagonist's decision to cease growing physically is emblematically linked to a collective reluctance within German society to confront and reconcile with its tumultuous past.

This Ph.D. research aims to expand the dialogue around these constructs by analysing how Grass and Okri manipulate time and space to address themes of identity, history, and memory within their texts. By exploring the intersection of postcolonial theory with literary analysis, the study seeks to uncover deeper insights into how these authors use their narrative frameworks to challenge and redefine traditional concepts of time and space. This approach not only enriches an understanding of their literary contributions but also offers broader reflections on the cultural and historical impacts of colonial legacies as they are articulated through the unique lenses of these two prolific writers.

In the literary universe of Ben Okri, the delineation of time and space frequently oscillates between the tangible world and the realm of the supernatural. The application of magical realism within his narratives serves to articulate a belief in the intrinsic interconnectedness of all entities, underscoring the profound influence of ancestral heritage in shaping individual and collective identities. This thematic exploration is prominently showcased in *The Famished Road*, where the protagonist's ventures into the spirit world not only enrich the narrative but also symbolise a broader journey of self-discovery and the affirmation of cultural identity.

The current research endeavour seeks to elucidate the temporal and spatial constructs embedded in literary texts and to assess their impact on the narrative

structures of selected works. To achieve this, the theoretical framework employed draws extensively on the insights of several eminent theorists, philosophers, and scholars who have probed the intricate relationship between time, space, and literary expression.

Among the foundational texts influencing this study is the 2021 article by Panasenko titled ‘Inter-relations between Literary Time and Space in Prose Text’. This work provides a pivotal theoretical backdrop for examining literary time and its interplay with spatial constructs within texts. It delves into the ways these dimensions influence the structure of the textual space and the perception of real-time within the narrative framework.

Furthermore, the work of J. Hillis Miller, particularly his 2003 paper ‘Time in Literature,’ is integral to understanding the role of time as a literary trope and its usage to explore catachresis—an expression of the inexpressible. Miller’s analysis extends to the spatialization of time, presenting it as a “metaphor for entities that elude definitive understanding” (12). He exemplifies this through Shakespeare’s treatment of time in *Macbeth*, where time unfolds linearly as a sequence of days, and Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, which investigates the spatial attributes of time progression.

Yuri Lotman’s contributions, especially highlighted in his 2001 piece ‘Semiotic Models of the Semiosphere,’ offer significant insights into the ‘spatial turn’ in literary and cultural studies. Lotman discusses the existence of ‘semiotic spaces’ within both culture and literature, suggesting that these spaces serve as “metaphors aiding the comprehension of cultural dynamics” (14). His transition from structuralist to post-structuralist perspectives is evidenced in his evolving notion of the Semiosphere, reflecting a shift towards a more fluid and dynamic interpretation of literary and cultural spaces.

This Ph.D. research is poised to interlace these theoretical perspectives with an in-depth analysis of the works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, aiming to uncover how these authors sculpt temporal and spatial dimensions to enrich their narratives. By integrating the theoretical constructs of Panasenko, Miller, Lotman, Bakhtin, and Lefebvre, the study endeavours to provide a nuanced

understanding of how temporal and spatial constructs are not merely backdrops but active elements shaping the narrative and thematic essence of literary works.

Parallel to Lefebvre's spatial theories, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the 'Chronotope,' introduced in 1981, provides a pivotal framework for analysing the interrelation of time and space in narrative structures. Bakhtin posits that in literature and art, temporal and spatial dimensions are intrinsically linked and must be considered together, as they coalesce to form the fabric of narratives. He emphasises that time and space in narrative are not just settings but are actively engaged with the language of the text, shaping and being shaped by the narrative itself. Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope illustrates the inseparability of time and space, where the "chronotope" literally means "time-space," underscoring their mutual entanglement in literary contexts.

Bakhtin further discusses that while abstract thought may treat time and space as distinct and separate entities, devoid of emotional or value-laden attachments, in literature and art, these dimensions are deeply intertwined with the narrative and thematic essence of the work. The chronotope thus becomes a methodological tool for understanding how narratives manipulate time and space to fulfil the creative and thematic intentions of the author.

The exploration of space-time is not limited to literary theory but extends into the fields of geography and philosophy, where the dynamics of space-time have been a significant focus. Influential geographers like David Harvey have contributed to this discourse by emphasising the "importance of understanding different conceptualizations of space—absolute, relative, and relational" (22) to fully grasp the narratives constructed about particular locations or events. These discussions highlight how spatial and temporal dimensions are not merely backgrounds for action but are integral to the shaping of narrative meaning and structure.

In contemporary discussions across science and philosophy, the narrative structures of temporality and spatiality are gaining prominence, acknowledging the complex interplay between time and space in human cognition and cultural representation. This aligns with the ontological perspectives of many Anglophones critical geographers who consider the unfolding of space-time,

sometimes prioritising one dimension over the other, based on the occurrence of events or the specific needs of narrative construction. This scholarly engagement with temporal and spatial patterns reflects a broader recognition of their pivotal role in shaping human understanding and the interpretative frameworks used in a variety of academic and artistic disciplines.

According to Immanuel Kant in his seminal work of 1781, time is primarily concerned with how representations relate to our inner state rather than with external concepts such as shape or position. This philosophical stance underscores the internal experience of time as a subjective reality, distinguishing it from the “more tangible, measurable aspects often associated with spatial understanding” (Kant 31).

In the realm of visual arts, spatiality is inherently significant because it involves the fixed space within a frame. The progression of frames in visual narratives, such as in film or sequential art, engages the viewer’s continuous flow of vision, creating a temporal experience through spatial media. The axioms of painting, for instance, suggest that the act of painting in the natural world is not just a spatial but a time-intensive activity, highlighting the interplay between the two dimensions. This notion is supported by the idea that both the clock and the line, traditional symbols of time and linear progression, are fundamentally spatial representations. W.J.T. Mitchell elaborates on this concept, indicating that the historic tension between spatial and linear forms “diminishes once we acknowledge their inherent spatial characteristics” (22).

The current research adopts a robust understanding of the nature of time and space, integrating a ‘Chronotopic’ perspective that views these dimensions as inseparably linked within literary works. This approach is informed by recent theoretical contributions from thinkers like Henri Lefebvre (1974) and others who have expanded our understanding of how these constructs operate within texts. The researcher has selected three texts by Gunter Grass and three by Ben Okri to explore their distinct treatments of time and space, examining the literary devices and narrative strategies they employ to manipulate these elements.

The chosen works of Grass and Okri are analysed through the lens of various theoretical constructs, including the ‘Chronotope’ and spatial theory, to provide a detailed understanding of how time and space are woven into the fabric of their narratives. This analysis is particularly focused on how these writers use narrative techniques to represent and reshape time and space, reflecting broader cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts.

Overall, the theoretical framework of this research offers a comprehensive exploration of time and space in literature, emphasising their pivotal roles in shaping narrative structures. By employing a range of theories and methodologies, this study provides a nuanced analysis of the selected literary works, underscoring the critical importance of temporal and spatial constructs in understanding and interpreting texts. This scholarly investigation not only deepens the academic discourse on time and space but also enhances our appreciation of how these fundamental elements are crafted and employed by writers to convey complex narratives and themes.

In exploring the temporal and spatial constructs in the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, the researcher employs a multifaceted theoretical framework that integrates insights from Gerard Genette’s narratology, M.M. Bakhtin’s concept of the ‘Chronotope’, Henri Lefebvre’s spatial theory, and additional contemporary perspectives. This synthesis of theoretical approaches provides the researcher with a robust foundation for examining how these constructs influence narrative structure and thematic development within the literary works of these two authors.

Gerard Genette’s ‘Narratology’ offers the researcher a foundational approach to understanding narrative structure. Genette articulates that every text “reveals traces of narration, which can be dissected to understand the organisation of the narrative” (Genette 14). Central to this analysis is the distinction between ‘story time’, the fictional time taken up by actions or episodes within the story and ‘narrative time’, the “time it takes an average reader to read a passage or the entire text” (Stevenson 12). This distinction allows the researcher to delve into the temporal mechanics of Grass and Okri’s narratives, exploring how time is manipulated to structure the narrative and influence the reader’s experience.

M.M. Bakhtin's 'Chronotope' concept, enhances the researcher's analysis by emphasising the intrinsic interconnectedness of time and space in literature. Bakhtin argues that the standard arrangements of space and time in a fictional work influence the "novel's meanings and help define the protagonists' agency and identity development" (Bakhtin 120). By applying Bakhtin's theory, the researcher examines the specific 'chronotopes' employed by Grass and Okri, exploring how these authors use the integration of temporal and spatial settings to create unique narrative universes and deepen the thematic complexity of their works.

Henri Lefebvre's 'The Production of Space' offers the researcher a dynamic model to explore how space is socially produced and interacts with the narrative and thematic elements of the text. Lefebvre argues that space is neither a "mere assortment of objects nor a static backdrop but is actively produced through social practices" (Lefebvre 27). This perspective enables the researcher to investigate how Grass and Okri construct narrative spaces that reflect and challenge the social and historical conditions of their settings, thereby influencing the reader's perception of reality within the novels.

Natalie Panasenکو's (2021) work on the interrelations between literary time and space provides the researcher with tools to dissect how time and space are intertwined in the narrative structure, "impacting the textual space and the pacing of the narrative" (7). Panasenکو's insights into literary time as a construct that differs from real-time, often manipulated through techniques like flashbacks and foreshadowing, are crucial for understanding the temporal strategies used by Grass and Okri.

Through the application of these diverse but complementary theoretical perspectives, the researcher is equipped to conduct a detailed analysis of how time and space function within the selected works of Grass and Okri. This approach not only reveals the narrative techniques and thematic explorations of the authors but also contributes to a broader understanding of how temporal and spatial constructs shape literary narratives and resonate with cultural and historical contexts.

Aristotle and Plato's concepts of time provide classical philosophical underpinnings that enrich the researcher's theoretical framework. Aristotle's examination of "now" as a point that bifurcates the past and future offers a way to consider the flow of narrative time and its moment-to-moment transformations in literature (Aristotle 10). Plato's treatment of time as connected to regular physical events like celestial motions offers a model for understanding the "cyclical and eternal representations of time that can appear in literary contexts" (21).

Through the application of these diverse but complementary theoretical perspectives, the researcher is equipped to conduct a detailed analysis of how time and space function within the selected works of Grass and Okri. This approach not only reveals the narrative techniques and thematic explorations of the authors but also contributes to a broader understanding of how temporal and spatial constructs shape literary narratives and resonate with cultural and historical contexts.

Continuing the investigation into the temporal and spatial constructs within the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, the researcher integrates and extends the theoretical models previously outlined. This deeper exploration seeks to highlight how these authors manipulate narrative time and space to reflect broader cultural narratives and individual psychological states, emphasising the interconnectedness of these constructs within their literary frameworks.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The research objectives of this study revolve around the exploration of temporal and spatial constructs in the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. The nature and interpretations of time, whether unilateral or multilateral and unidirectional or multidirectional, will be thoroughly examined to unravel the diverse facets of temporal experiences. Additionally, the focus will expand beyond the fixed geographical connotation of space, delving into the numerous interpretations and conceptualizations associated with spatial representation. The narrative structures will be analysed to uncover how they challenge

conventional views of time, offering alternative perspectives that disrupt traditional frameworks. The interrelationship between time and space within these narratives will also be explored to determine whether they are independent or interdependent. Moreover, the research will scrutinise Grass's treatment of time and space, Okri's exploration of temporal and spatial dimensions, and the linguistic strategies employed by both authors to manipulate and represent the complexities of time and space in their works. Through these research objectives, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of temporal and spatial constructs in literature, specifically within the captivating narratives penned by Gunter Grass and Ben Okri.

In this context, the research endeavours to achieve the following main objectives:

1. To analyse and understand the nature and interpretations of time as unilateral or multilateral and unidirectional or multidirectional.
2. To explore the diverse interpretations of space beyond its fixed geographical connotation.
3. To examine how narrative challenges conventional views of time and offers alternative perspectives.
4. To investigate how narrative breaks away from traditional notions of space and introduces new conceptualizations.
5. To explore the interrelationship between time and space in narrative structures, whether they are independent or interdependent.
6. To analyse Gunter Grass's treatment of time in his selected works.
7. To examine Grass's portrayal and interpretation of space in his literary creations.
8. To investigate the linguistic strategies employed by Grass to manipulate and represent the complexities of time and space.
9. To explore Ben Okri's treatment of time in his selected works.

10. To examine Okri's portrayal and interpretation of space in his literary works.
11. To analyse the linguistic techniques used by Okri to manipulate and represent the intricacies of time and space.
12. To identify and compare the similarities in the treatment of time by Gunter Grass and Ben Okri.
13. To identify and compare the differences in the treatment of time by Gunter Grass and Ben Okri.
14. To analyse how the perception of time and space influences the narrative structures in Grass and Okri's works.
15. To examine how Grass and Okri challenge or subvert traditional notions of time and space in their works.
16. To analyse how Grass and Okri utilise temporal and spatial constructs to explore themes of identity, history, and memory.
17. To evaluate the impact of temporal and spatial elements on the overall meaning and reception of Grass and Okri's narratives.
18. To analyse the literary devices employed by Grass and Okri to evoke and represent the experiences of time and space in their works.

This study aims to delve into the intricate exploration of temporal and spatial constructs within the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. It seeks to dissect and understand the various manifestations of time and space, as articulated through the narrative structures of these two renowned authors. This detailed examination is not only expected to illuminate the unique narrative techniques employed by each author but also to provide deeper insights into how these elements serve as fundamental components in shaping the thematic essence of their literary works.

## **1.5 Research Hypothesis**

In the present research study, a set of research hypotheses has been developed to address the research objectives in relation to the exploration of temporal and spatial constructs in the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. These research hypotheses provide a framework for investigating and analysing the nature of time and space, the treatment of these concepts in the literary works, and their interplay within the narrative structures. By formulating these hypotheses, the research aims to shed light on the complexities and interpretations of time and space, as well as the unique approaches taken by Grass and Okri in their respective works.

1. The nature of time is not unilaterally determined but involves multiple interpretations, encompassing both unidirectional and multidirectional aspects.
2. The interpretations of space extend beyond its fixed geographical connotation, embracing diverse conceptualizations and representations.
3. Narrative challenges conventional views of time by presenting alternative perspectives that disrupt linear and unidirectional understandings.
4. The narrative breaks away from traditional notions of space by introducing new conceptualizations that go beyond fixed geographic locales.
5. Time and space in narrative structures are interdependent rather than independent, influencing and shaping each other's representation.
6. Gunter Grass's treatment of time in his selected works demonstrates its multidimensional and non-linear nature, deviating from linear chronological frameworks.
7. Grass's portrayal and interpretation of space in his literary creations extend beyond geographical constraints, incorporating symbolic and metaphorical dimensions.

8. Grass employs linguistic strategies to manipulate and represent the complexities of time and space, employing metaphor, imagery, and temporal shifts.
9. Ben Okri's treatment of time in his selected works reflects its multidimensional and non-linear nature, challenging conventional notions of linearity.
10. Okri's portrayal and interpretation of space in his literary works transcend geographical boundaries, encompassing metaphysical and spiritual dimensions.
11. Okri employs linguistic techniques such as symbolism, imagery, and non-linear narratives to manipulate and represent the intricacies of time and space.
12. There are similarities in the treatment of time by Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, as both authors explore the non-linear and multidimensional aspects of temporal experiences.
13. There are differences in the treatment of time by Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, as each author offers unique perspectives and approaches in their exploration of temporal constructs.
14. The perception of time and space significantly influences the narrative structures in Grass and Okri's works, shaping the plot, characterization, and thematic development.
15. Grass and Okri challenge and subvert traditional notions of time and space through their innovative narrative techniques, destabilising established frameworks.
16. Grass and Okri utilise temporal and spatial constructs to explore themes of identity, history, and memory, demonstrating the interplay between personal and collective experiences.

17. The inclusion of temporal and spatial elements significantly impacts the overall meaning and reception of Grass and Okri's narratives, contributing to their thematic richness and reader engagement.
18. Grass and Okri employ various literary devices, including symbolism, metaphor, magical realism, and intertextuality, to evoke and represent the experiences of time and space in their works, enhancing their artistic and aesthetic qualities.

In this research study, a series of hypotheses has been constructed to guide the investigation into the temporal and spatial constructs found within the works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. These hypotheses form the basis for a detailed examination and analysis of how time and space are depicted, manipulated, and interrelated within the narratives of these authors. Through these hypotheses, the study aims to elucidate the complex nature and interpretations of time and space, as well as the distinctive narrative strategies employed by Grass and Okri.

These hypotheses provide a structured framework for analyzing the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, aiming to offer comprehensive insights into their literary craftsmanship and the critical role of temporal and spatial constructs in modern narrative forms.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

In order to delve into the intricate exploration of temporal and spatial constructs in the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, a series of research questions have been formulated. These questions aim to uncover the diverse interpretations of time and space, investigate the ways in which narrative challenges conventional views, and analyse the treatment of these constructs by Grass and Okri. The research questions also delve into the similarities and differences between the authors' approaches, examine the thematic and symbolic significance of time and space, and assess the impact of these constructs on the overall meaning and reception of their narratives.

Furthermore, the questions explore the narrative techniques and literary devices employed by Grass and Okri to represent the complexities of time and space, contributing to the artistic and aesthetic qualities of their works. By addressing these research questions, this study aims to shed light on the profound connections between temporal and spatial dimensions within the captivating narratives of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri.

To further enhance the exploration of temporal and spatial constructs within the literary works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, a series of research questions have been meticulously formulated. These questions are designed to probe the multifaceted interpretations of time and space, examine how narratives challenge, and transcend conventional views, and dissect the specific approaches of Grass and Okri to these constructs. Additionally, the questions aim to delineate the similarities and differences in the authors' approaches, scrutinise the thematic and symbolic roles of time and space, and evaluate their impact on the narrative's meaning and reception. The inquiries also aim to uncover the narrative techniques and literary devices utilised by Grass and Okri to portray the complexities of time and space, thereby contributing to the artistic and aesthetic richness of their works. By addressing these research questions, the study intends to illuminate the profound interconnections between temporal and spatial dimensions in the captivating narratives of both authors.

In this context, the research aims to explore the following research questions to gain deeper insights into temporal and spatial constructs:

1. How do individuals interpret and perceive the nature of time, considering its possible unilateral or multilateral aspects, as well as its potential for being unidirectional or multidirectional?
2. What are the diverse interpretations and conceptualizations of space that go beyond its traditional fixed geographical connotation?
3. In what ways does narrative challenge and question conventional views of time, offering alternative perspectives and disrupting established frameworks?

4. How does narrative transcend and break away from traditional notions of space, introducing new conceptualizations and expanding the boundaries of spatial representation?
5. How do time and space interact and influence each other within the intricate structures of narratives, and to what extent are they independent or interdependent phenomena?
6. How does Gunter Grass approach and portray time in his selected works, highlighting its multidimensional and non-linear nature and exploring its various dimensions?
7. In Grass's literary creations, how is space depicted and interpreted, moving beyond fixed geographic locales to encompass symbolic, metaphorical, and metaphysical dimensions?
8. What linguistic strategies and techniques does Grass employ in his works to manipulate and represent the complexities of time and space, providing a rich and nuanced narrative experience?
9. How does Ben Okri explore and represent the multidimensional and non-linear aspects of time in his selected works, offering unique perspectives on temporal constructs?
10. In Okri's literary works, how is space portrayed and conceptualised, transcending geographical boundaries, and embracing metaphysical, spiritual, and imaginative dimensions?
11. What linguistic techniques and narrative devices does Okri utilise to manipulate and represent the intricacies of time and space, creating a rich tapestry of meaning in his narratives?
12. What are the similarities in the treatment of time between Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, and how do these similarities contribute to our understanding of temporal constructs?
13. What are the differences in the treatment of time between Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, and how do these differences shape the narrative development and thematic exploration in their works?

14. How does the perception of time and space influence the narrative structures in the works of Grass and Okri, and what are the effects of this influence on the overall reading experience?
15. In what ways do Grass and Okri challenge or subvert traditional notions of time and space in their works, and what are the implications and insights generated by these challenges?
16. How do Grass and Okri utilise temporal and spatial constructs to explore themes of identity, history, and memory, and what new perspectives and dimensions do these explorations offer?
17. How does the inclusion of temporal and spatial elements impact the overall meaning and reception of the narratives by Grass and Okri, and what are the implications of this impact on the readers' engagement and interpretation?
18. What literary devices, such as symbolism, metaphor, intertextuality, and narrative structure, do Grass and Okri use to evoke and represent the experiences of time and space in their works, enriching the artistic and aesthetic qualities of the narratives?

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

This study is conceptualised as a qualitative, exploratory, and comparative research project, focusing specifically on the temporal and spatial constructs within the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. This methodology is fundamentally rooted in textual analysis, employing an interdisciplinary and evaluative approach to delve into the complex interplay between time, space, and narrative within these literary texts. The aim is to provide an exhaustive understanding of how these authors manipulate time and space, and the unique narrative techniques they employ.

The qualitative nature of the research is crucial for addressing the intricacies inherent in literary analysis. Qualitative research is particularly adept at exploring complex phenomena that require an in-depth understanding of

contextual, thematic, and symbolic elements. By focusing on the textual analysis of Grass's and Okri's works, this approach allows for a detailed examination of the various ways time and space are conceptualised and portrayed. This method facilitates a nuanced exploration of the narratives, revealing how these constructs shape the storytelling and contribute to the thematic depth of the texts.

The research methodology is inherently exploratory, designed to investigate the less understood or underexplored aspects of the selected literary works. This exploratory angle is particularly suited to studying the multifaceted nature of temporal and spatial dimensions within literature, enabling the researcher to uncover new insights and interpretations that may not be immediately evident. This approach supports a flexible research process, adapting to new themes and patterns as they emerge during the detailed analysis of the texts.

Additionally, the study incorporates a comparative dimension, which is instrumental in articulating a comprehensive analysis of how Grass and Okri each handle the concepts of time and space. This comparative analysis is pivotal, as it highlights both the similarities and differences in their approaches, enhancing the overall understanding of these constructs within their respective narratives. By comparing the treatment of time and space across different texts and authors, the study aims to identify broader narrative strategies and thematic concerns that resonate within the genre of literary fiction.

In practical terms, the research will involve close readings of key texts by Grass and Okri, supported by theoretical frameworks relevant to the study of time and space in literature. These frameworks will draw from existing literary theory as well as interdisciplinary insights that may include philosophical, historical, and cultural perspectives. The selection of texts for analysis will be based on their relevance to the research questions and their ability to illuminate the study's thematic focus on temporal and spatial constructs.

Furthermore, the research methodology is designed to ensure rigour and depth. Data collection will involve detailed annotations and thematic coding of texts, looking specifically for patterns, motifs, and instances where time and space are pivotal to narrative development. Analysis will follow an iterative process,

where findings are continuously compared with existing literature and theoretical constructs, ensuring that interpretations are grounded in the text while engaging with broader academic discourse.

In summary, the methodology selected for this Ph.D. thesis on “An Exploration of Temporal and Spatial Constructs in the Selected Works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri” is meticulously designed to explore the depth and complexity of literary texts. It combines qualitative, exploratory, and comparative research approaches to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of how narrative time and space are crafted. Through this rigorous analytical process, the study aims to contribute significant new insights to the field of literary analysis, enhancing the academic understanding of narrative techniques and thematic development in contemporary literature.

## **1.8 Chapterization of the Study**

This doctoral thesis is meticulously structured into five distinct chapters, each designed to explore and address different aspects of the investigation into temporal and spatial constructs within the literary works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. This organisation ensures a logical progression and thorough analysis of the study’s aims and objectives, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the themes and issues at hand. The name of the five chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Temporal and Spatial Constructs in the Narrative: A Review of Related Literature

Chapter 3 Treatment of Time and Space in the Selected Works of Gunter Grass

Chapter 4 Treatment of the Constructs of Time and Space in the Selected Works of Ben Okri

Chapter 5 Conclusion

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

This introductory chapter lays the foundational groundwork for the entire study, presenting an overview of the research background, its primary aims, and the specific objectives. It focuses on the exploration of temporal and spatial constructs within the literary works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of how these constructs influence narrative structures, themes, and character development. This chapter is pivotal as it not only delineates the scope of the study but also contextualises it within the broader field of literary analysis.

Literature has long served as a reflective medium for the exploration of time and space, both of which are fundamental elements that influence narrative techniques and reader perception. The way authors manipulate time and space often defines their narrative style and profoundly affects the thematic essence of their works. Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, two illustrious writers known for their distinctive narrative styles, have extensively explored these dimensions, making their works ideal subjects for this study. Grass, a German novelist and Nobel laureate, often intertwines his narratives with complex temporal layers and deep spatial imagery that reflect his historical contexts and philosophical insights. Similarly, Ben Okri, a Nigerian poet and novelist, incorporates rich, imaginative constructs of time and space that bridge the real with the supernatural, offering a tapestry of narratives that are both culturally specific and universally resonant.

This research is significant as it addresses a gap in existing literary studies where the detailed comparison of temporal and spatial constructs between these two authors has not been extensively explored. The study's findings are expected to offer significant contributions to the understanding of how time and space can be articulated in narrative forms to achieve varied thematic outcomes. Furthermore, by dissecting the intricate ways these elements are woven into the fabric of narratives by Grass and Okri, the study will enhance the appreciation of their works and provide a richer understanding of the broader literary and cultural contexts in which they write.

The methodology employed in this study is qualitative and comparative, utilising textual analysis as the main research technique. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the selected texts, focusing on close readings that highlight how temporal and spatial constructs are developed and employed by the authors. Comparative analysis will enable the identification of thematic parallels and divergences in the treatment of these constructs, providing a comprehensive overview of their narrative significance.

The expected contributions of this study are multifaceted. Academically, it aims to enrich the field of narrative theory by providing a detailed examination of how temporal and spatial constructs are used by two prominent authors from different cultural backgrounds. It will also offer insights into the potential for these constructs to serve as tools for deeper thematic exploration in literature. Practically, the findings could inform the approaches of writers and educators in understanding and teaching narrative structure and thematic development. The study will also foster a greater appreciation of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri's works, potentially influencing future literary criticism and scholarly research.

In conclusion, this introductory chapter sets the academic and intellectual framework for the study, outlining the key areas of investigation and the methodologies to be employed. It positions the research within the existing body of literary studies and forecasts the potential implications and contributions of the findings to the field of literary analysis.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Temporal and Spatial Constructs in the Narrative: A Review of Related Literature**

This second chapter, titled 'Temporal and Spatial Constructs in A Narrative: A Review of Related Literature,' provides a comprehensive overview of the existing scholarly discourse surrounding the concepts of time and space within literary studies, particularly focusing on the works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. This review serves as the foundation for identifying the unique contributions of this study while highlighting the research gaps that it aims to address.

## **Survey of Existing Literature**

The review began with a thorough search of various databases and libraries including the British Council, Smt. Hansa Mehta Library, Library of Forum on Contemporary Theory, as well as online databases like Indcat, ShodhGanga, and JSTOR. This extensive survey revealed a wealth of scholarly material on broader themes such as Space-time, Postmodern Aspects, and Absurdism in literature, with specific references to the works of Grass and Okri. Despite the extensive literature, it became apparent that there is a distinct lack of focused research on the temporal and spatial constructs specifically within the narratives of Grass and Okri. This observation underscores a significant gap in literary studies that this research intends to fill.

## **Scientific and Philosophical Interpretations**

The chapter discusses various scientific and philosophical interpretations of time and space, providing a framework for understanding these constructs beyond mere narrative tools. It explores how these concepts have been historically perceived and theorised in different disciplines, offering a multidimensional perspective that enriches literary analysis. This section also touches on how contemporary theories of time and space have influenced narrative structures and themes in modern literature.

## **Socio-cultural and Historical Interpretations**

Moving from theoretical to more contextual interpretations, the chapter examines the socio-cultural and historical perspectives of time and space. It discusses how these interpretations influence narrative storytelling and character development within different cultural contexts. This part of the review highlights the importance of considering the socio-historical background of authors like Grass and Okri when analysing their works, as these elements profoundly shape their narrative styles and thematic concerns.

## **Narrative Interpretations of Time and Space**

A significant portion of the chapter is dedicated to exploring how time and space are specifically manipulated and represented in narrative forms. This section delves into the narrative techniques that authors use to construct their fictional

worlds, discussing how these techniques affect the reader's perception and the overall narrative impact. The treatment of time and space in narrative structures is dissected to reveal how these elements serve not only as settings or backdrops but as dynamic components that drive the plot and elucidate themes.

### **Development of Temporal and Spatial Constructs in Literary Criticism**

The chapter also charts the evolution of temporal and spatial constructs through the works of various writers and critics across the globe. It traces the historical development of these concepts in literature, from classical to modern times, illustrating how different literary movements and theories have contributed to their evolution.

### **Review of Primary and Secondary Sources**

Finally, the chapter presents a detailed review of both primary and secondary sources related to the treatment of time and space in narrative. This includes analyses of primary texts by Grass and Okri, as well as secondary critiques that focus on their literary techniques and thematic explorations. The synthesis of this literature review not only frames the current study within the existing academic discourse but also sets the stage for a deeper investigation into how these two authors uniquely manipulate temporal and spatial constructs in their storytelling.

In summary, this chapter establishes a solid theoretical and contextual backdrop against which the study's primary research into the temporal and spatial constructs in the works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri will be conducted. It highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the study, drawing from fields across the humanities to build a comprehensive understanding of time and space in literature.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Treatment of Time and Space in the Selected Works of Gunter Grass**

This third chapter, titled 'Treatment of Time and Space in the Selected Works of Gunter Grass,' delves into an in-depth analysis of how Gunter Grass intricately explores temporal and spatial constructs within his narratives. The

chapter provides a detailed examination of Grass's unique narrative techniques, illustrating how he manipulates time and space to enrich his storytelling and deepen thematic expression.

### **Overview of Gunter Grass's Selected Works**

The chapter begins by presenting an overview of Grass's selected works, focusing on their central themes, plots, and storylines. This section sets the context for the subsequent analysis by outlining the narrative frameworks within which Grass develops his exploration of temporal and spatial constructs. The overview discusses key works such as *The Tin Drum*, *Cat and Mouse*, and *Dog Years*, each chosen for their rich portrayal of time and space and their critical acclaim in the literary world.

### **Narrative's Role in Shaping Constructs**

The chapter proceeds to analyse how Grass's narrative techniques play a crucial role in shaping and moulding the characters, incidents, and events within his stories. It explores how the narrative structure itself becomes a tool for the sophisticated manipulation of temporal and spatial elements, influencing how the story unfolds and how characters interact with their environments.

### **Multidimensional Treatment of Time**

A significant portion of the chapter is devoted to examining how Grass treats time as a multidirectional and multidimensional construct, rather than as a linear, unilateral progression. This analysis includes detailed discussions of how time in Grass's narratives a backdrop is not merely but a dynamic character that interacts with and impacts other narrative elements. For instance, in *The Tin Drum*, the protagonist Oskar's relationship with his drum is used metaphorically to reflect his manipulation of time, speeding it up or slowing it down according to his emotional state.

### **Exploration of Spatial Constructs**

Similarly, the chapter explores Grass's treatment of space as more than just a fixed locale. It delves into how Grass's settings are deeply integrated with the geography, culture, and history of the area, thereby contributing significantly

to the narrative's thematic depth. For example, in *Cat and Mouse*, the fluctuating spaces between Pilenz's present and past illustrate how memory and space can "converge and diverge, influencing character development and narrative progression" (Damien 8).

### **Detailed Textual Examples**

The chapter provides in-depth textual analyses of key moments in Grass's works that exemplify his innovative use of time and space. In *Dog Years*, the narrative's temporal shifts and the geographical journey around the Weichsel River serve as core elements that structure the narrative, allowing the past, present, and future to coalesce in ways that challenge the reader's perception of linearity.

The chapter also engages with the comparative analysis of all the three texts of Grass studied in this research and brings out similarities and dissimilarities amongst them. This section compares the treatment of time and space by Grass in his selected works. At the same time, this section interweaves all the three texts of Grass together by distinguishing them based on narrative, temporal and spatial constructs.

In conclusion, this chapter not only illuminates the sophisticated narrative strategies employed by Gunter Grass but also situates his work within broader literary and theoretical discussions about time and space. By offering a comprehensive analysis of temporal and spatial constructs in Grass's selected works, this chapter enhances our understanding of his contributions to literature and the innovative ways he engages with complex narrative dimensions.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Treatment of the Constructs of Time and Space in the Selected Works of Ben Okri**

This fourth chapter, entitled 'Treatment of the Constructs of Time and Space in the Selected Works of Ben Okri', dives into an analytical exploration of how Ben Okri manipulates temporal and spatial constructs within his narratives. It begins by providing an overview of Okri's selected works, illuminating their

central themes, plots, and storylines, which sets the stage for a deeper investigation into the unique ways Okri engages with these literary constructs.

The chapter introduces Ben Okri's significant works, such as *The Famished Road*, *Astonishing the Gods*, and *The Songs of Enchantment*. These works are renowned for their rich narrative structures and the ethereal quality with which Okri interweaves reality and mysticism. The overview discusses how Okri's narratives blend the physical with the metaphysical, setting the groundwork for examining his treatment of time and space.

The chapter also examines how Okri's narrative strategies shape and mould the characters, incidents, and events within his stories. Special attention is given to how narrative time and spatial settings influence character development and the unfolding of events, highlighting Okri's skill in crafting complex, multidimensional characters who navigate equally complex worlds.

Significantly, the chapter analyses Okri's treatment of time as multidirectional and multidimensional, challenging conventional linear narratives. Okri's time constructs are dissected to show how they encompass a range of temporal experiences—from the cyclical to the linear, from the static to the fluid. This section looks at how time in Okri's works includes moments, hours, and days that appear snatched from a temporal process, creating a narrative rhythm that mimics the unpredictability and fluidity of life.

Similarly, the treatment of space in Okri's works is explored, revealing how his spatial constructs go beyond fixed geographical locations. The chapter delves into how space in Okri's narratives is not merely a backdrop but a dynamic element that interacts with the characters and influences the narrative's progression. This analysis shows how Okri uses space to reflect the inner realities of his characters and the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions of their journeys.

Furthermore, this chapter critically assesses how Okri's handling of time and space compares with and diverges from traditional treatments by other authors. Through the use of literary devices such as symbolism, metaphor, and intertextuality, Okri is shown to offer new perspectives on understanding these

constructs, thereby enriching the literary tradition with his innovative approaches.

Detailed textual analysis of works like *The Famished Road* reveals how Okri uses the concept of 'revolving' to suggest the completion of a circular movement in time and space, symbolising life's cyclical nature and spiritual continuity. In *Astonishing the Gods* and *The Songs of Enchantment* the narrative techniques employed by Okri transport readers through dream-like sequences that discuss life's philosophies, revealing secrets of visibility and invisibility, and intertwining the real and the spirit worlds.

The chapter also considers the cultural and philosophical contexts that influence Okri's narrative strategies, particularly how they relate to traditional African beliefs about time, space, and existence. These contexts provide a deeper understanding of the thematic substance of Okri's work and how it resonates with both African and global audiences.

The chapter also compares the selected works of Okri that were the subject of this investigation in order to highlight their commonalities and differences. This section discusses and compares how Okri handles time and space in his selected works. In addition, this section unifies the three texts of Okri by differentiating them according to narrative, temporal, and spatial elements.

In conclusion, Chapter 4 provides a thorough exploration of Ben Okri's narrative mastery over time and space, highlighting how his innovative use of these elements challenges conventional narrative forms and invites readers into richly woven tapestries of meaning that transcend the ordinary perceptions of reality.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

The concluding chapter of this thesis synthesises the findings from the in-depth analysis conducted on the temporal and spatial constructs in the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. This final chapter provides a comprehensive summary, affirming the research questions, substantiating the hypotheses, and evaluating the extent to which the study has achieved its objectives. It also

offers a concise recapitulation of the key findings and reflects on the broader implications of the study.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

The research utilised a qualitative approach and textual analysis to explore how Gunter Grass and Ben Okri represent, interpret, and conceptualise time and space within their literary narratives. One of the primary findings of this study is that both authors employ complex narrative techniques to articulate the multidimensional and non-linear nature of time. Grass's narratives, characterised by fragmentation and dislocation, reflect the disorienting impacts of historical trauma and the challenges of constructing a coherent identity amidst such upheavals. This portrayal underscores the fractured nature of time and its impact on personal and collective memory.

Conversely, Ben Okri utilises magical realism to blend the real with the supernatural, highlighting the interconnectedness of all entities and the significance of ancestral heritage. This approach not only enriches the narrative's texture but also emphasises a time concept that is cyclical and spiritually enriched, reflecting traditional African perceptions of time.

In terms of spatial constructs, both authors demonstrate a transcendence of fixed geographical locales, incorporating layers of symbolism, metaphor, and spirituality into their settings. Grass's depiction of space often mirrors the complex layers of German history and identity, extending beyond mere physical settings to reflect deeper social and psychological landscapes. Okri's narrative spaces, meanwhile, explore broader metaphysical realms, portraying space as a "dynamic and transformative element within his stories" (Bucchol 9).

### **Implications and Contributions to Literary Discourse**

The findings from this study contribute significantly to the broader discourse on the relationship between narrative, time, and space. They highlight the essential role these constructs play in shaping narratives that reflect complex cultural identities and historical consciousness. The analysis underscores the interdependence of time and space within literary works and their collective impact on the thematic and narrative structure of texts.

This research enriches our understanding of how contemporary literature can be used to explore and express multifaceted temporal and spatial experiences, offering readers new lenses through which to view the world. The insights gained extend beyond the specific works of Grass and Okri, providing valuable perspectives applicable to other literary analyses that seek to understand the intricate dynamics between narrative form and content.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

While the research on the exploration of temporal and spatial constructs in the selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri yields significant insights, it is crucial to recognize the inherent limitations of this study. Acknowledging these limitations not only underscores the challenges faced during the research but also helps delineate the boundaries within which the findings should be interpreted.

First and foremost, this study relies extensively on the interpretation of the researcher, which inherently carries the risk of subjective biases. Although rigorous methodologies are employed to ensure as much objectivity as possible, interpretation of literary texts is inherently subjective. Different readers might bring different perspectives to the same texts, potentially leading to varied interpretations. This subjective nature of literary analysis means that the conclusions drawn can be influenced by the personal insights and the theoretical orientation of the researcher.

Secondly, the scope of this research is confined to specifically selected works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. While these works provide a rich field for the exploration of temporal and spatial constructs, they do not represent the entirety of these authors' literary outputs. Consequently, the study's findings are limited to the analyzed texts and may not necessarily be extrapolated to other works by the same authors. This selective focus restricts the generalizability of the study's conclusions across all of Grass's and Okri's literary contributions.

Additionally, the research concentrates primarily on the exploration of time and space within the narratives, potentially neglecting other critical aspects of literary analysis. Important elements such as character development, plot structure, and linguistic style are not the focus of this study. While this targeted

approach allows for a deeper understanding of temporal and spatial constructs, it may overlook how these constructs interact with other narrative elements.

Another limitation relates to the availability and accessibility of secondary sources and literary criticism. The depth and breadth of the analysis could be impacted by the availability of resources at the time of research. Limited access to comprehensive scholarly works or critical analyses due to constraints in library access, publication availability, or research timelines could restrict the theoretical grounding and contextual richness of the study.

The study predominantly utilises a qualitative research approach, which, while providing in-depth insights and rich narrative understandings, limits the ability to generalise findings to a broader population. The absence of quantitative data means that the research does not support statistical generalisation or the establishment of causality between variables. Qualitative findings are context-specific and may not readily transfer to different contexts or populations.

Lastly, the research is conducted within a specific cultural and historical context, focusing on German and African literature. The findings, therefore, are interpreted through the lens of these literary traditions and may not necessarily apply to other literary cultures or traditions. This limitation affects the generalizability of the conclusions beyond the specific contexts of Grass's and Okri's works.

In summary, while this study provides valuable perspectives on the temporal and spatial constructs in the works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri, these limitations highlight the need for cautious interpretation of the findings and suggest areas for further research to build on the knowledge base established by this research.

### **1.10 Scope of the Study**

This research is centred on the interpretation and representation of two fundamental aspects critical to the setting of any narrative work: time and space. It aims to trace the conceptual evolution of these dimensions as expressed by philosophers, critics, and scientists, starting from Aristotle to Stephen Hawking

for time, and exploring the theories of space posited by thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre, Natalie Panasenko, and Yuri Lotman.

The scope of this study is specifically defined by its focus on the works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. For Grass, the research delves into three of his seminal works: *The Tin Drum*, *Cat and Mouse*, and *Dog Years*. These texts are pivotal in understanding how Grass manipulates temporal and spatial constructs within his narratives. Similarly, for Ben Okri, the study examines *The Famished Road*, *Astonishing the Gods*, and *Songs of Enchantment*, which are significant in their portrayal of the Abiku traditions and their exploration of time and space.

The research holds substantial cultural relevance by delving into how time and space are represented in literature. These elements are not just narrative tools but are fundamental dimensions of human experience that deeply influence our understanding of the world and our place within it. They are closely tied to cultural identities, societal norms, and historical contexts. By analysing how Grass and Okri depict and manipulate these constructs, the study sheds light on the cultural significance and implications embedded within their narratives.

This exploration allows for a deeper understanding of how different temporal and spatial representations reflect and challenge cultural values, beliefs, and societal transformations. The analysis of Grass's depiction of German historical and societal changes through his fragmented and nonlinear narrative styles, alongside Okri's magical realism that blends physical reality with spiritual and metaphysical dimensions, offers insights into their respective cultural landscapes.

Moreover, the research is socially relevant as it delves into broader themes of identity, history, and memory, which are intimately connected to the constructs of time and space. These themes play crucial roles in how individuals and societies perceive and construct their identities and understand their past. The study examines how Grass and Okri treat time and space in relation to these themes, contributing to discussions on collective memory, cultural heritage, and the construction of individual and communal identities.

This aspect of the research highlights how the authors' portrayals of time and space reflect the complexities of human experiences, historical events, and the

intricate interplay between personal and shared memories. Such insights extend beyond the realm of literature, providing valuable perspectives on societal dynamics, historical consciousness, and the ways in which communities navigate their past and present.

Overall, the scope of this research is defined by its cultural and social significance. It not only investigates the representation of time and space in the literary works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri but also examines how these constructs intersect with broader themes of identity, history, and memory. By unravelling the intricate connections between these elements, the study enhances our understanding of cultural dynamics, societal narratives, and the complexities of human existence. It encourages readers and scholars to engage with these works not merely as artistic creations but as reflections of the cultural and social contexts in which they were produced, thereby enriching the discourse in literary studies and beyond.

### **1.11 Relevance**

The relevance of this research lies deeply embedded in its cultural and social contexts, as it examines the intricate representation of time and space within the literary works of Gunter Grass and Ben Okri. These fundamental dimensions are more than mere backdrops in narrative structure; they are pivotal elements that shape our comprehension of the world and our interaction within it, intricately linked with cultural identities, societal norms, and historical contexts.

#### **Cultural Relevance**

By delving into how Grass and Okri manipulate time and space in their narratives, this study reveals the profound cultural implications embedded within their texts. Time and space in literature are not static or unchanging; they are dynamic, continuously shaped by and shaping the cultural landscapes from which they emerge. This research explores how these authors use temporal and spatial constructs to reflect and challenge cultural values, beliefs, and societal changes.

For instance, Gunter Grass uses fragmented and nonlinear time to mirror the complexities and traumas of German history, particularly in the post-war context. Ben Okri, meanwhile, incorporates elements of magical realism, merging the real with the supernatural to reflect the spiritual and cultural heritage of Nigeria. These narrative strategies allow the authors to explore and critique cultural identities and historical narratives, providing readers and scholars with a deeper understanding of the literary and cultural significance of their works.

### **Social Relevance**

The research also holds considerable social relevance as it investigates broader themes of identity, history, and memory, which are intrinsically linked to how time and space are conceptualised and represented. The ways in which individuals and societies construct their identities and comprehend their histories are profoundly influenced by these dimensions. This study examines how Grass and Okri's treatment of time and space relates to these themes, contributing significantly to discussions on collective memory, cultural heritage, and the construction of personal and communal identities.

For example, the narratives of Okri often depict time as a cyclical force, echoing traditional African understandings of existence and heritage, which play crucial roles in shaping individual and collective identities. Grass's narratives, by presenting a disrupted sense of time and fragmented spaces, challenge readers to reconsider conventional historical narratives and the memory processes associated with them.

### **Broader Implications**

Beyond the realm of literature, the findings from this research provide valuable insights into societal dynamics, historical consciousness, and the ways in which communities navigate their past and present. By analyzing how time and space are portrayed in Grass and Okri's works, this study illuminates the complexities of human experiences and the intricate interplay between personal and shared memories.

Overall, the research's examination of time and space within the literary domain extends into a broader interrogation of cultural dynamics and societal narratives, deepening our understanding of the complexities of human existence. It invites readers and scholars to engage with these works not only as artistic creations but also as reflections of the cultural and social contexts in which they were produced, thereby enriching our interpretations and appreciation of literature as a mirror and shaper of cultural and social realities. This relevance underscores the importance of literary studies in providing profound insights into the human condition, mediated through the nuanced use of narrative time and space.

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