temporal dimension such as chronologically ordered meteorological maps for the same region, or representations of clocks or vehicles that suggest motion and thus temporality). Of course, assessing the narrativity of individual cases depends very much on one's concept of narrativity in the first place. In view of the many media that can participate in narrativity the best conception is arguably one that permits degrees of narrativity. This not only allows the critic to differentiate between media (e.g., verbal literature and *film as media with high narrative potentials as opposed to music with a low potential) but also between different genres inside individual (macro-)media: within verbal literature, the *novel has a greater potential for narrativity than lyric poetry and in this resembles the picture series, whose potential is clearly greater than that of single pictures. Yet, whatever conceptualisation is chosen, the potential narrativity of pictures remains undisputed.

SEE ALSO: mimesis; photographs; reference; semiotics

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PLOT

Despite its apparent simplicity of reference, *plot* is one of the most elusive terms in narrative theory. Narrative theorists have used the term to refer to a variety of different phenomena. Many key definitions of *narrative hinge on the aspect of temporal sequentiality, and the repeated attempts to redefine the parameters of plot reflect both the centrality and the complexity of the temporal dimension of narrative (*see* TIME IN NARRATIVE).

Many basic definitions and interpretations of plot from the first half of the twentieth century (including those from structuralism) either define it in relation to the concept of story, or even treat it synonymously with story (*see* STORY-DISCOURSE DISTINCTION; STRUCTURALIST NARRATOLOGY). The term has also been used as a convenient English translation for the *Russian Formalist concept sjuzhet. In the *poststructuralist period, narrative theory substantially expanded the frontiers of the concept: plot has been explored as an act of gender construction, as a sense-making operation or mental configuration, as a force which affects the reader as a narrative unfolds, and as the interplay of virtual and actual narrative worlds.

Plot in relation to story

Many theories of plot have one thing in common: they see plot as different from story, the basic chronology of *events, out of which something more complex, plot, is constructed. The constructedness of plot in comparison to story is already evident in the fact that one can speak of 'telling a story', but not of 'telling a plot'. The developmental history of plot models reflects the