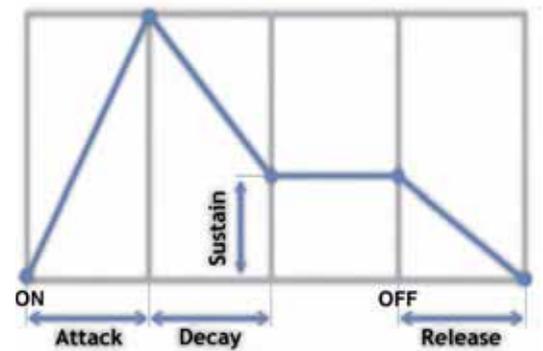
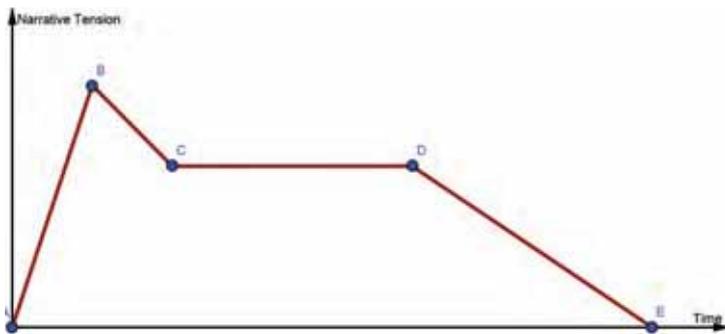






lacking a classical education. *Robinson Crusoe* is a **diary** and *Pamela* is an **exchange of letters**: they both have a starting point A, a development AB and a complication BC of the initial situation, a chronologically set course of events

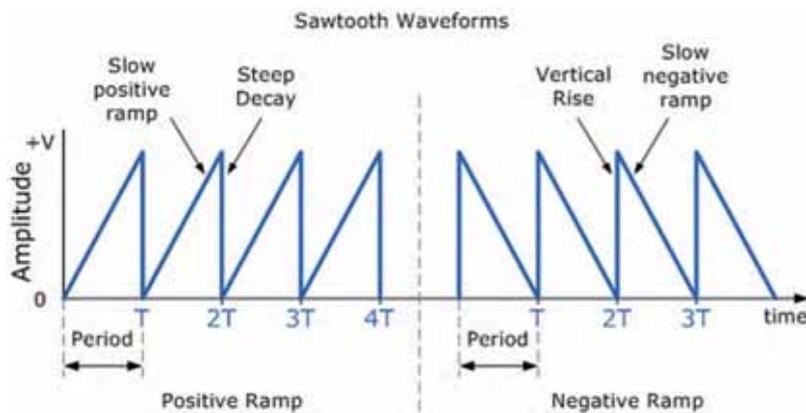
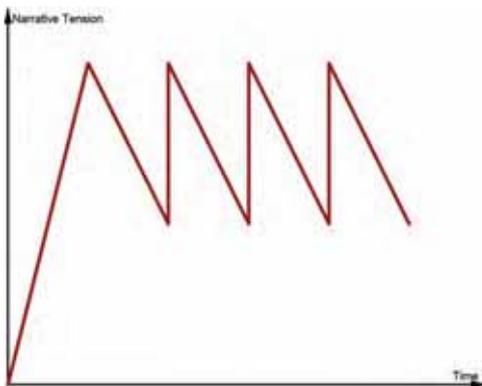
CD, a restored order at the end D of the story. The reader is likely to perceive the rhythm of narration like this:



The graph on the left, plotting the narrative pattern of a traditional novel, is similar to the graph of the **ADSR envelope** of a sound emission, represented on the right.

[INSTALMENTS AND SOAP OPERAS]

In 19th century, editors realized their public was mainly formed by middle class women, concerned with the improvement of their living standards. Here came the shrewd guess of writers: they built up stories which could meet the taste of middle class readers as for themes, language, characters and setting. Above all, these stories had to be published on newspapers, in **instalments**. Thus, the Great Piper had to change the rhythm of narration, and give his art a new quality: the magic of suspension, surprise, tension, had to be created at the end of each instalment. What is technically called a **"climax"**, recurred at the end of each little part of the story, in order to persuade the reader to buy the following newspaper and to read the following chapter. If we read a novel by Charles Dickens, we perceive this kind of rhythm of narration:

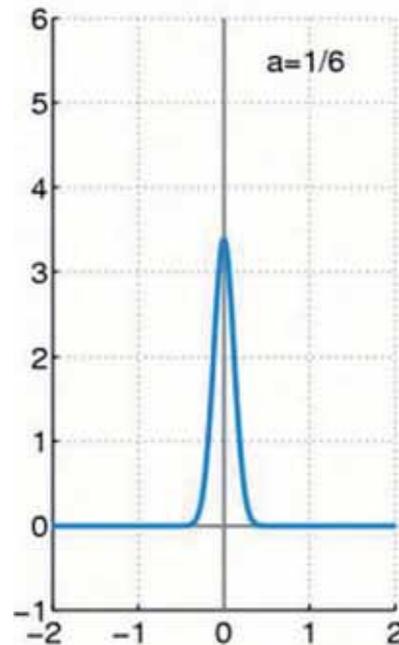
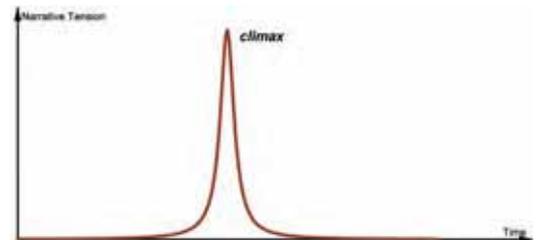


This time, the graph of the narrative pattern is similar to a reverse *sawtooth wave*, a periodic signal that ramps downward and then sharply rises.

Significantly enough, the same alternating rhythm is to be found in any of the **soap operas** which are broadcasted on TV every day. During each episode, nothing seems to happen. When the end is approaching, the events are reversed and a point of climax is created, in order to arouse the interest of the audience. In the following episode, the effect of the expected turning point is deflated and the story goes on up to a new final, temporary point of climax.

[THE SHORT STORY]

But a striking effect, similar to a fist, to the single echo of a kettledrum, is built in a particular narrative pattern: the **short story**. While the traditional novel has a development which is based on events set on a chronological line in a definite place, the short story is an emotional pattern, investigating the insight of characters. The short story suggests a starting point and creates an emotional effect of expectation. The story has no necessary development, but a rising tone towards the end of the story, which comes at the highest point of tension, usually in terms of revelation. The effect is similar to an emotional thunder:



The graph reproducing the narrative rhythm of a short story bears resemblance to the graph of an impulse (force over time in Physics) or a Dirac delta function.

[MODERN NOVELS]

Dealing with the rhythm of narration of **modern novels** is much more complex. Like in twelve-tone music or in modern painting, the lines of time, place, memory and language are mixed, confused, altered by the power of subjectivity. In the mind of the narrator, the reading public disappears and the reader is left to guess, to interpret the evocative music of the modern piper. The multiplicity of points of view and the various levels of narration imply a rebounding rhythm, a multilayer sound, perhaps a multidimensional plotting for a multidimensional graph (see below).

[GLOSSARY]

1. **ADSR envelope**: Attack, Decay, Sustain and Release are parameters of a sound at any point in its duration
2. **Instalment**: single parts of novels published on newspapers
3. **Climax**: highest point of tension

[THE FINAL PUN]

At the end, do you think it is more difficult to draw a literal plot or to plot a mathematical draw?

[WEB REFERENCES]

Spiazzi-Tavella, "Genres, Authors and Readers", Zanichelli  
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