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Time Narrative Discourse in the Novel: The Blind Owl (Bofe Kor)

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Abstract

Narratology is relatively a new science that took on the scientific aspects by the structuralist studies. There are different, similar and even contradictory, ideas rose in this regard. Gérard Genette's view of time is considered as one of the most significant elements of the narrative discourse in the review on the narrative in literature. The modern novel-in failing to comply with chronological time-is dramatically receptive to this type of criticism. This analytical research paper examines the novel *The Blind Owl (Bofe Kor)* by Sadeq Hedayat with the aim of helping to read and understand the novel approach according to narrative discourse. The results show that the time in this novel does not follow the chronographic rules; in other words, the time fluctuates under the influence of the retrospective and prospective time disorder and thus, the time disorders and other factors such as repetition, redundancy and etc. cause the slow acceleration in narrative that led to more prolong the narrative text than the story.

Keywords: Narratology, Gerard Genette, Time, the Blind Owl, Sadeq Hedayat.

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1. Introduction

Narratology or the study of narrative is a structuralist field that deals with the study of narrative theory. In his book titled "Narrative Discourse", Gérard Genette has a great impact on the understanding of the narrative. He determined three levels of "stories", "text" and "narration" for narrative; and these three levels relate to each other characterized by "time: order, duration and frequency", "Means: distance and focal oriented" and "tone or sound".

Genette's narrative system is as the consequence of discussion of the Russian formalists, Todorov and others; but his theory, is more comprehensive among narrative theories, "he divided narration into three different levels more polished distinction between story and plot made by the Russian formalists" (Selden & Widdowson, 2005: 146). He, in his book titled "Narrative Discourse", defines three levels of narrative:

The main argument of time element, which is based on Gérard Genette opinions, is that communicates between the story chronographic time and non-certain chronographic time of the text. Story time is a chronographic relationship between story events as they originally occurred and the text time as to replace such incidents in the text (Horri, 2009: 97). Genette introduces three types of time relationship between the story surface time and the text surface time according to this formula including: (Order), (Duration) and (Frequency).

1.1. Order and Arrangement

Order is the linear arrangement of text; in this category, the relationship between the chronology of events in the story and their temporal sequence, in the text is checked and criteria are the possibility of matching between the story and the narrative text. The true meaning of the narration time is the linear arrangement of text that can be placed in the category of order; and arrangement is the sequential relationship between the chronology of events in the story or that the story in the fictional world events, and the sequence of events in the narrative, the order in which those events are presented in narrative (Tyson, 2008: 371).

1.2. Duration

Duration is the "the relationship between the length of time that certain events happen during in the story and the number of pages of narrative that describes the event "(Tyson, 2008: 372). Duration specifies that how narrative can eliminate or expand the part, summarize, make a short break and so on (Eagleton, 2009: 146).

1.3. Frequency

Frequency is the relationship between the number of times that an event occurs and the time that the event is told or narrated; in fact, the frequency relates to the narrator measures of the recurring or pressed on narratives, however, it should be noted that no event will be replicated in all its aspects and strains and no chains of text is also the same as before; because new position of event and spoken narrative is somewhat different context than in the past; however, the frequency relationship between story time and speech time is based on three possibility that no one has mentioned before Genette (Afzali, 2012: 26).

2. The narrative novel in the novel The Blind Owl

2.1. Synopsis

Here begins the story of the narrator that one day he sees from the pierced the back room of his home a landscape that has always painted, and is charmed by ethereal girl look and his life changes terribly, so that in the evening finds the girl sitting next to his house door. A few later, the girl mysteriously dies in the narrator bed. The narrator succeeds in painting her eyes and making it immortal, at least for himself. Then, he cuts the ethereal girl to pieces, and places them inside a suitcase and takes the suitcase to the cemetery.

The second part of the story is narrated in a new world. Here, the narrator is a young, but sick person and his wife that he did not call by name, but the bitch is not willing to stay with her husband and sleep with him, and is unfaithful. The narrator is eventually decided to kill bitch. In a figure like an old shaggy man enters the bitch room and kills her with a bone knife in her eye, down when comes out of the room and sees her image in the mirror, he sees that his hair was white and looked just like the old man.

2.2. Order and arrangement

Due to the subjectivity of the novel, traces the retrospective views especially out of the story retrospective is more highlighted. The author, justify this kind of time disorder:

“Perhaps from where all my relationships with the living world clippings, mementos of the past come to my mind” (ibid: 50).

In general, because of the subjectivity of the novel, forward-looking role as a retrospective cross-story is obvious. However, in the second half of the novel, such forward-looking footprint is more due to psychological crisis of the novel hero:

“All lost memorials and forgotten fears have come again, fearing that the pillow feathers geared to knife blades, my coat buttons become immeasurable, as big as millstone, fearing that piece of bread that falls on the ground breaks like glass... fear that the worm in our house pool transforms to an Indian Snake, fearing that my bed transforms to monuments” (ibid: 96).

2.3. Duration

Characterization of the novel is one of the most beautiful descriptions presented in the novel, like the narrator descriptive information of ethereal girl:

“High cheekbones, a high forehead, narrow connected eyebrows, half-open plump lips that it was like emerging from a long hot kiss, black unkempt hair had covered her moonlike face and a string that was stuck on her head. Her delicate limbs and ignored ethereal elegance, her movements told him of frailty and impermanence” (Hedayat, 2004: 16).

Narrative allocates six lines of text describing the ethereal girl's eyes; the author described the eyes repeatedly the different types of deals because of the influence of the eyes:

“That was where I saw the charming eyes, as if blame bitterly, anxious, astonished, threatening and promising eyes and my life sparks were mingling and in the end was absorbed on these sparking eyes. This attractive mirror attracted all my life as far as the human mind is unable to discern. Turkmen diagonal eyes with a blaze beyond the natural and seductive, and alluring at the same time, as if with his eyes, saw the supernatural and horror sights and everyone could not see that” (Hedayat, 2004: 13).

Sometimes the author to accelerate the narration eliminates trivial or insignificant events; in this case, elimination is as the jump of a period of time, as in the following example, the writer, narrates two months and four days in two lines:

“Finally, it was a long time I slept on the floor across the room. Who will believe, two months, no, two months and four days, away from her, I slept on the floor and I did not dare go close” (Hedayat, 2004: 63).

Dialogue or negotiation, according to Genette, are the purest example of the synchrony of the story time with the narrative time. In the novel “The Blind Owl”, a very small percentage of the novel is devoted to dialogues, like the narrator and his wife dialogue:

“She asked teasing “how are you?” I gave the answer: Are you not free? Do whatever you want to do? Why do you grieve? (Hedayat, 2004: 105).

2.4. Frequency

The following event happened in the story once and once narrated:

“While I was holding my wine, fearfully jumped down on the stool, put wine on the floor and put my head between my hands” (ibid: 17).

In the followings, the narrator once narrates what is done for ethereal girl in the text:

“I do not know why I raised my trembling hand, because I could not control, then dipped my fingers in her hair. It was cold and wet hair. I took my mirror in front of his nose, but there was not the slightest effect of life on her” (ibid: 25- 26).

3. Conclusion

The Blind Owl is a mental novel; however, events in the surface structure follow a relative order but time interference is notable in the deep structure of the novel, and a significant part of the novel encompasses time disorder. Author or narrator, for reasons such as taking refuge in childhood and or escape from a world of pain and sorrow and recounting memories deal or to escape from the present to dream and hope of the future; as a result, the retrospective and prospective, time disorder go on as the novel goes on and slow down the pace of narrative dramatically. Moreover, a significant part of the narrative is spent on description and interpretation; but overall, the negative has a very strong presence in the novel and this is not unexpected, according to the surrealistic nature of the novel.

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