

Exploring ‘Temporality’ in the Short Story ‘Turquoise’ by Aamer Hussein: An Application on the Genette’s Model of Narratology

* Dr. Fouzia Janjua, Associate Professor

** Afshan Abbas, PhD Scholar



Abstract

The present study is mainly focused on applying Genette's model of narratology for the in-depth analysis of Aamer Hussein's short story "Turquoise." The purpose of this research is to investigate the narratological temporal elements in Aamer Hussain's fiction 'Turquoise'. The research is concerned with a close textual analysis of the text to sort out structural and temporal elements in terms of Genette's narratology which includes five major narrative categories. The temporal narratological analysis helps the researcher to bring out the complexities of the structural and temporal patterns of the short story. The short story "Turquoise," narrated from the temporal perspective, demonstrates Aamer Hussein's mastery of narrative temporality.

Keywords: Genette’s Schemata of Narratology, Turquoise, Time Shift Processes

Introduction

The most crucial factor in the development of a narrative is time-shift processes. Gérard Genette has given a notion of temporal narratology which is based on structuralism. Narrative, according to Genette, is the consequence of the interactions between many parts. The chronological temporal order, extent, and reach related to the time relations, repeated occurrences of narrative events, the perspective of a narrative, and the point of view in narration are considered the main components of Narratological analysis. Gérard Genette, a French narratologist, has coined complicated domains of literary criticism in his books and articles by giving a clear and logical framework as well as consistent and accurate terminology. The contributions of Genette to narratology were initially published in 1972 and 1983. Genette has provided a general idea of how narrative tells its story. As a result, he employs a wide range of narrative works as examples, ranging from ancient to modern literature. Genette's narratology is considered a starting point for the narratological temporal analysis for understanding the structural patterns of the narrative.

The table of Genette’s narratology is given below:

Table 1. Genette’s Temporality

Analytical Categories	Elements Analyzed	Components				
		Narrative Mood	Distance	Reported speech	Transposed speech, indirect style	
Functions of the Narrator	Narrative function		Directing function	Communication function	Testimonial function	Ideological function
Narrative Instance	Narrative Voice	Homodiegetic narrator		Heterodiegetic narrator		Autodiegetic narrator
	Time of Narration	Subsequent narration	Prior narration		Simultaneous narration	Interpolated narration

* International Islamic University Islamabad

** International Islamic University Islamabad

	Narrative Perspective	Zero focalization	Internal focalization		External focalization
Narrative Levels	Embedded Narratives	Extra-diegetic	Intra-diegetic	Meta-diegetic	Meta-meta-diegetic, etc.
	Metalepsis	Breaching of narrative levels			
Narrative Time	Order	Analepsis	Prolepsis	Reach	Extent
	Narrative Speed	Pause	Scene	Summary	Ellipsis
	Frequency of Events	Singulative		Repeating	Iterative

The objectives of the research:

- To analyze the structural and temporal elements in the short story “Turquoise” to Interpret the narratological progression of events in the story.

Research Question:

- How do Gerard Genette's structural and temporal elements of the narrative apply to the short story 'Turquoise' by Aamer Hussein?

Methodology and theoretical framework:

The present study is qualitative and quantitative as well. It is based on the textual analysis of the short story ‘Turquoise’ in terms of Genette’s theory of narratology. The research question aims at analyzing the structural and temporal elements of the narrative suggested by Genette. The analysis focused on the ideological representation of two main characters i.e. Nusra and Danny as delineated by the Pakistani author Aamer Hussein. The framework developed to address the main questions is based on Genette’s model of narratology.

Problem Statement:

Timeshift processes are the main ingredients of narration to depict its meaning. The paper investigates time shift processes from the lens of Genette's model of narratology, skillfully employed by the narrator to analyze the structural and temporal elements in the short story 'Turquoise' by Aamer Hussein.

Introduction of the Author:

Aamer Hussein is a translator, critic, and fiction writer in Pakistan. He belongs to Karachi and grew up there. Hussein has been living in England since 1970. Best known for his fiction, he has also written for the Times Literary Supplement and the Review. One of the leading critics of Urdu/Pakistani literature in the West, he has contributed the title story to Fires in an Autumn Garden, a volume to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of Pakistan, and in 1996 lectured in Pakistan's three major cities as a guest of the Pakistan Academy of Literature. He worked as an Urdu teacher in London. Hussein is the editor of Kahani: Pakistani Women's Short Stories. Hussein's stories shed light on cross-cultural encounters, migration, and relationships. He combines a wide range of cross-cultural experiences in the form of depicting issues in his writings e.g. Exile, isolation, and identity.

Analysis of the Temporal relationships in the short story “Turquoise”

The present paper is concerned with applying Genette’s theory of narratology to understand a narrative to the study of ‘Turquoise’. According to Genette, diegesis(telling) is the main component of narrative as compared to Mimesis (showing) in narrative sequence. Diegesis is employed frequently in the selected short story which is in the form of dialogues between characters. Genette develops four analytical categories as shown in table-1 with its subcategories. The present study is an attempt to analyze the 'Turquoise' of Aamer Hussein in terms of Genette's narratological categories. There is no systematic examination of the structural and temporal elements of the selected short story. In this way, the present analysis sheds light on narrative patterns in a new dimension. In the first category, Mood refers to the distance and functions of the narrator. Mood embodies various strategies of speech and thought presentation The narrator can also choose from various narrative functions Aamer Hussein has employed the strategies of free direct and narrated

speech to allow the characters to narrate their experiences (see Appendix). Short conversations are introduced at a high frequency for the sake of variety in the short story. The compact, concise style of Aamer Hussain is evident in the selected short story. Aamer Hussain has engaged his implied reader with a direct address which serves his communicative and narrative function. The direct address bridges the gap between characters and readers and creates a sort of assimilation between them. It is also significant in terms of the ideological representation of the characters in the short story. The imperative questions provide the testimonial for the emotional bonding between the two characters Nusra and Danny. Talking about what Nusra has written in the form of a symbolic story confirms her as a mature lady with an intellectual bent of mind. Therefore, the story depicts the elements of Genette's theory of narratology which are Distance and Function to highlight the structural patterns of the story. The third section of Genette's next category, "Instance," is divided into three parts. In terms of who is speaking, the first is referred to as "the narrative voice." Though the writer's view is ultimately responsible in all narratives, and he strives to influence the reader, he does not refer to himself in the story. In a way, he's not there. It's a heterodiegetic situation. It is homodiegetic if he appears as a character, and it is autodiegetic if he is the protagonist. The Authorial heterodiegetic narrator is used in Aamer Hussein's short story "Turquoise." The story is told from the perspectives of the two main characters, Nusra and Danny, the aspect of diegesis is also significant in terms of characterization. Diegesis is significant in the context of manner, According to Genette, it can be simultaneous or subsequent. Sometimes, according to the context writers prefer prior or interpolated narration. In Aamer Hussein's story, the major events have taken place in a form of subsequent narration indicating the chronological order of the short story. The story and the narrative subsequently represent the progression of events in the short story. The next element is Focalization which refers to the focal zone of the readers as they assimilate themselves with the characters. Zero Focalization is having an omniscient narrator who is more knowledgeable than the characters. Internal focalization, on the other hand, is focusing on the lives of the characters from an internal perspective. In external focalization, the narrator can only show what he sees from the outside world. Aamer Hussein uses zero focalization in his short story "Turquoise." We can perceive that the narrator is more knowledgeable than the story's two main characters, Nusra and Danny. Genette's category of the narrative level consists of extra, intra, and meta-diegesis. Meta-diegetic refers to the story within a story in this way narrative may provide various perspectives and have different kinds of reading responses. In Aamer Hussein's short story 'Turquoise' the author employed meta-diegetic with a new narrative perspective based on the imagination of Nusra. The fluctuating thoughts of Nusra and Danny help the reader perceive their ideological shifts. Nusra being rebellious and fatalistic and Danny skeptical and confused. Other characters in meta-diegesis like wild child also contribute to the story. Genette's temporal final category is narrative time. It aids in the analysis of the time relationship between the narration and the story. Writers have a variety of options when it comes to achieving specific outcomes. The story's events can be arranged in any order to achieve the desired impact. The events can be presented with the help of time shift processes by the writers, or he can present them out of order and flashback (Analepsis) or forward (Prolepsis) to either recollect past occurrences at a specific point in time or to predict future events. The events in the short story Turquoise are chronologically developed by the narrator from April to December. The pattern is that of union and separation of the main characters in the short story Nusra and Danny. Moreover, events can be presented in form of the scene(dialogues), Pauses (descriptions). Summaries and Ellipsis. In the short story, 'Turquoise' Aamer Hussein has employed various strategies to transpose the speech of the characters. Time is an important parameter for the narration as it provides a comprehensible framework for the structural and temporal patterning of the narrative. Aamer Hussein does not use a traditional sequential strategy to reveal the psychology of his characters in "Turquoise." Instead, he breaks up, changes, and employed time-shift processes, stretching out the plot over months. Through a succession of analepsis, the readers learn about Nusra's life (flashbacks). The story starts with a description of Nusra's family before moving into the past. The separation of the major characters is also an analepsis, as we witness towards the end of the short story. This brief narrative has a complex blend of analepsis in form of major and minor analepsis. Therefore, a layer of analepsis is generated. Within that analepsis, however, some prolepsis (flashback) occurs. Because it incorporates additional (minor) analepsis, the story begins with a "major" analepsis: for instance, the very opening of the story talks about Nusra's character.

This is a shift in the order of the story, i.e. the normal sequence of events is scrambled by the very opening, and readers are taken to some past years of Nusra's life. In this analepsis, an instance of the summary is evident in the first paragraph of the short story. In the second passage, the events in the story are interrupted by the static setting, scene advances the story with the meeting of Nusra with Danny to indicate the type of time duration/ speed in it. The dialogue between Nusra and Danny in the second paragraph is an instance of a "scene", in which the events of the story are speeded up. There are also pauses in the third paragraph in the form of descriptions. All the events, as it was said earlier, are within the domain of the major analepsis. The twelfth paragraph consists of dialogues between Nusra and Danny which is about embedded narrative in the short story. Scenes are represented in form of dialogues. There are also instances of ellipsis in the short story in which details are omitted for highlighting implicit meanings of the text. Significantly details about the nature of Nusra and Danny's relationship are portrayed implicitly to serve the sake of creating suspense. Major events in Aamer Hussein's short story are iterative from a frequency point of view which depicts a critical perspective of the narrative (see frequency in Appendix)

Findings and Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, given below is the summary of the findings:

- According to Genette's temporality, the element of diegesis(telling) is found in a high frequency as compared to the Mimesis (showing) in the short story 'Turquoise'.
- Aamer Hussein has employed the strategies of free direct and narrated speech to allow the characters to narrate their experiences.
- Short conversations are introduced at a high frequency for the sake of variety in the short story.
- The Authorial heterodiegetic narrator is used in Aamer Hussein's short story "Turquoise." The story is told from the perspectives of the two main characters, Nusra and Danny.
- In Aamer Hussein's story, the major events have taken place in a form of subsequent narration indicating the chronological order of the short story. The story and the narrative are subsequent, with a good mixture of the anticipation of the events to follow.
- Aamer Hussein uses zero focalization in his short story "Turquoise." It can be perceived that the narrator is more knowledgeable than the story's two main characters.
- In Aamer Hussein's short story 'Turquoise' the author employed meta-diegetic with a new narrative perspective based on the imagination of Nusra.
- The narrative has a complex blend of major and minor analepsis.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, Genette's theory of narratology provides a comprehensive framework to understand the structural and temporal elements of the short story 'Turquoise' by Aamer Hussein, which provide a better interpretation to the readers. This study of "Temporal relations" in Aamer Hussein's short story "Turquoise" can be concluded in various dimensions: understanding the temporal relations can lead to a better understanding of the narrative. The temporal framework is also significant in terms of understanding the hidden or implicit meaning of the text. Diegesis and mimesis can lead to a better understanding of the plot while analepsis and prolepsis shed light on the lives of the characters in the text concerning the present, past, and future. The application of Genette's theory helps understand the narrative which can lead to a better understanding of the narration.

References

- Bal, M. (1991) Narration and Focalization. In Bal, M. (Ed.). (2004). Narrative theory, Vol. 1. (pp. 263-296). London: Routledge.
- Barthes, R. (1977) Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives. In Mcquillan, M. (Ed.). (2000). (pp. 109-114). The Narrative Reader. London: Routledge.
- .Bruner, J. (1991) 'The Narrative Construction of Reality, in Critical Inquiry, 18(1), p.6.
- Chatman, S. (1978). Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film. Ithaca:
- Fludernik, M. (2006). An Introduction to Narratology. New York: Routledge.
- Genette, G. (1980). Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Trans. Jane Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell.
- Herman, D. (2009). Basic Elements of Narrative. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Jahn, M. (2005). Narratology: A guide to the theory of narrative. English department: University of Cologne. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from: www.uni-koeln.de/ame02.pppn.htm.

Exploring ‘Temporality’ in the Short Story ‘Turquoise’ by Aamer HusseinJanjua & Abbas

Prince, G. (1982). *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative*. Walter de Gruyter & Co.: Berlin.

Toolan, M. (2001). *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*. London: Routledge.