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Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,
Lingüística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

Año 34, 2018, Especial N°

14

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
ISSN 1012-1587/ ISSNe: 2477-9385
Depósito Legal pp 198402ZU45



Universidad del Zulia
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Maracaibo - Venezuela

Analysis of resistance stories of "Mystery of Masih" by Ebrahim Hasanbeigi

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Abstract

Structural look at literary works of art provides a better understanding about literary nature and develops literal works of art. The study tries to find the elements within the text and their juxtaposition in the story of "mystery of Masih" with a library methodology, taking notes and analytical method. As a conclusion, this is a narrative story of which process is to move from the initial peace toward the climax and then returning to the peace at the end. Furthermore, we can say that the narrative structure of "mystery of Masih" is adjusted and corresponds with Bremon theory.

Keywords: narrative structure, literary theory, mystery of Masih story.

Análisis de las historias de resistencia del "Misterio de Masih" por Ebrahim Hasanbeigi

Resumen

La mirada estructural a las obras de arte literarias proporciona una mejor comprensión sobre la naturaleza literaria y desarrolla obras de arte literales. El estudio trata de encontrar los elementos dentro del texto y su yuxtaposición en la historia del "misterio de Masih" con una metodología de biblioteca, tomando notas y el método analítico. Como conclusión, esta es una historia narrativa de qué proceso es pasar de la paz inicial al clímax y luego regresar a la paz al final. Además, podemos decir que la estructura narrativa del "misterio de Masih" se ajusta y se corresponde con la teoría de Bremon.

Palabras clave: estructura narrativa, teoría literaria, misterio de la historia de Masih.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are many articles published on structuralism theories, including Maghamat-e-Hamidi narrative science based on Teodorov theory, structural investigation of Kelidar based on Bremon theory, structural analysis of Varaghe & Golshah Eivazi, structural analysis of the story of Keykavos trip to Mazandaran. But no analytical study has

been performed on the short story of Mystery of Masih like the one we are trying to do. This analysis is going to answer the following questions: what is narrative and how is it developed in this story? What are the elements within the text and how do they help understanding the story? Is it possible to adjust Bremon theory on this story or not?

Ebrahim Hassan Beigi was born on 1957 in a village of Gorgan province. He lived in Gorgan and Bandar Torkaman until the end of his high school education. He performed his military service on 1977 and after one year, he escaped from the military based on Imam Khomeini order. He was employed at education office at 1980 and became director of programs of the Gorgan education office. His trip to Kurdistan in 1985 was a turning point in his career as a writer because he was inspired in this trip to write stories. He graduated in 1988 and started working at story department of "Madrese" publication. Some of his works of art include: deep roots, signs of morning, violet years, Red siren, Ashkane, uncle Abbas, look at us, Ghonche Barkhali, Go away, Be blind, cry of six people, Mohammad, aphids, and blossoms in which "mystery of Masih" is the first story in this book with 11 other stories. It is the story of Shahid Masih karpian that is narrated by a couple of narrators in different situations. Masih is the only child of a Christian old man and woman that goes to the front without their satisfaction until once that he is captured by Iraqi forces. Part of the story is the explanation of his captivity by the narrators. Masih is kept in Moosel camp and then is transferred into Romadiieh camp. Writer narrates the story from point of view of Ayyoob who is another captive

in Masih's camp. He changes what he had heard about him. He is doubtful about him. He talks about Masih's Quran memorizing, his helping other captives learn the Quran, his love for Imam Khomeini, his being tortured by Iraqi forces, his own freedom, seeing Masih's parents accidentally and his not being sure about Masih's martyrdom that everyone had guessed. Walas Martin, who is an outstanding theorist in the US, writes in his book "narrative theories" that "now it's time to ask what the narrative is?"

According to Aristotle, a story is narrated by the narrator or by one of the characters of the story. If it is narrated by the narrator, then it is a narrative text. But if it is narrated by one of the characters, then it is a drama story. Although we have drama elements in the narrative form of story, elements such as dialogue or monologue. Forster (2012), English writer of the 3rd decade of the 20th century, ranked narrative semantics with different characters of simple, static; and comprehensive and complex plus dynamic ones, and also added plot to the narration. Vladimirap in Russia also considered "motif" as a narrative element (Zarinkoob, 1978). Motif is an imaginary archetype, a concept or an event that is repeated frequently in the story and helps it become more attractive and obtain artistic value. Victor Sheklovski also added "Defamiliarization" or "alienation" to the narrative. He believed that this literary device is common from one hand, in tools application and on the other hand, it is a general method of narration (Balayi and Christof, 1999). For instance, a character who hurts other people in the story to humiliate them, and enjoy, is one of this kind of

character. Or Tersidam Shandy's narration by Laurence Stern in a type of first level Defamiliarization. At second level, prevention from using cliché words is important. During the 6th decade of the 20th century, a certain type of ranking narrative was performed: pre-structuralism period (1960), period of structuralism (1960-1980), post-structuralism, that narrative science is mainly a structured phenomenon. During structuralism period, Ferdinand de Saussure's beliefs were influential in forming a new theory of narrative. Claude Levi-Strauss was influenced by him and considered myth as a similar structure to language structure. His theory became the subject of repeating some elements of myth. These repeating elements which are the smallest units of myth entered narrative science. Then, Teodorov studied the same subject and concluded that all stories own "grammar units". Gerard Janet discussed about "time" subject in narrative science. According to him, Time is important in three viewpoints: chronology of events (order of events), duration of the events (it may be the same as the time of the story or different from it), and finally, expressing of recurring events (or recurred expression of one event that happened once) (Biniaz, 2009). Claude Bremon, French narrative, and linguist, wrote two papers entitled "message of the story" and "logic of possibilities in the story" and also he has a book called "story logic". He is a researcher of structuralism and partly found an international logic for the story, fixed and comprehensive patterns (Okhovat, 1992). He extracted strategies of Prop's (1989) fairy tales (31 special role and 7 operational areas for the story's roles) some of which are logically and semantically related. He also tried to find the nature of these

relationships between the primary elements of the story. Bremon removed mediator functions that disturb the structural order of the main axis and achieved a Statements correlation function by which schematic display he could find a relationship between logical subsets in the whole narrative. As a result, according to Bremon, he could release the text from one of its worst problems of formalism (lack of typology and distinguishing between forms) (Scols, 2004). Bremon recommended that it is better to consider a logical sequence of multiple functions as the main unit of the story, instead of Prop's (1989) smallest unit of narrative. He called this as "sequence" and defined it as a movement from balanced conditions into the unbalanced situation and returning to the balanced state again (Ibid). According to Bremon, every sequence is based on three bases:

- 1- A status that has the possibility of being changed
- 2- An event that changes a status
- 3- A new status that is possible to change or not

There are sequences or sub-narrative stories in the plot of every story. Each sequence is a small story and each story is the total or main sequence (Ahmadi, 2001; Okhovat, 1992). Based on the above theory, each story or sequence begins with a fixed and balanced status that has the possibility to change. Then suddenly an event changes everything. After passing this event, a new status is formed as the result of that

sudden event, and then gradually, a new fixed and balanced status is formed in the story. This status change corresponds with the definitions of Teodorov. Bremon believes that sequence has three types:

1- Chain sequence

2- Concrete sequence

3- Hybrid sequence

1- Chain sequence is covenant or test sequence in which the agonist or hero of the story performs acts and reacts until his final success or failure (Okhovat, 1992).

2- Concrete or environmental sequence: if achieving a sequence needs other sequences, then it is a concrete sequence (Ibid). Agonist needs helping forces to perform his mission in different levels of the story.

3- Hybrid sequence: if we add an antagonist to the concrete sequence, then we have a hybrid sequence. This type of sequence investigates the hero or agonist against antagonist. Agonist tries to make situation better, but the antagonist tries to make it worse (Ibid).

Bremont divides story characters into two categories:

- 1- Agent (doer of the action)
- 2- Patient (the one "action" is done on him)

The story of "Mystery of Masih" is narrated from an Omniscient point of view that tells the story by a description of the events. This kind of story has three sequences:

First sequence

Basis 1: Masih's status, Masih's introduction, his location, his getting to know Masih Karpian.

Basis 2: narrator's description of the camp, Masih's martyrdom, telling the reason why Masih is so favorable, description of Masih's friends in the camp and their doubt about Masih's martyrdom while they somehow believe his martyrdom that is kind of suspense in the story.

Basis 3: the ending of the story and start of the second crisis, which is finished in a short paragraph and mistaking of Masih Karpian with another martyr that leaves the reader in a suspense and insecure state which is a kind of open ending for the story.

Second sequence

Basis 1: the whole camp is always sad and distressed which seems to be a balanced and fixed situation in the camp.

Basis 2: showing Masih as a captive, his being tortured and lashed, description of his innocent face and comparing it with the beginning moments of his being captivated, his learning to read the Quran and memorizing the Quran and writing the Quran verses on different papers and handing them to other captives. His being exposed by the Baath forces, being tortured and beaten, his bones breaking, transferring Masih into Ramadieh camp.

Basis 3: Ayooob release from the camp, time passing and ignorance from Masih, meeting Masih's parents accidentally, reminding war memories and captives and Masih's reading Quran.

Third Sequence

Basis 1: the status is balanced. Captives are released.

Basis 2: Ayooob description of the camp, reporters and a fake Sheikh is going to the camp to insult Imam Khomeini, fake sheikh being beaten by the captives, Iraqi officer's memories of

Masih being tortured for his not insulting Imam. Masih's sentence that said, "I don't insult Imam even if you kill me".

Basis 3: colonel's narration of Masih and his admiration for Masih's loyalty to Imam Khomeini. His narration of when Masih or another Christian captive Albert Minasian was tortured and died. Description of when he prayed in the mosque with one leg and cane.

The investigated story includes three sequences. First, the balanced status, description of the story by the narrator (somebody called Ayoob) that believes in martyrdom and at the same time doesn't believe in it. This status has the possibility to change. And it changes when three captives come back from Ramadieh and Masih is not with them. The martyrdom of Masih report is expressed by one of the returned captives (Ayoob) and the huge changes of the story begin. Status of the story becomes balanced again by being tortured of the captives, then captives are released and Ayoob returns Tehran and goes to the Armenian Church of Tehran. He tells stories of Masih's reading Quran, his being tortured in Moosel and Ramadieh camps, which disturb the balance of the story, then the narrator tells the story of a day in which reporters and the fake Sheikh went to the camp, and insulting Imam by the fake sheikh, and being beaten by Masih, that ends in Masih's being tortured and his bones of leg and back broken. This is another balanced status in the story

that ends with the release of another captive called Minasian, and the story finishes here. The story is narrated from an omniscient point of view that is out of the story location and tells the events for the reader (Mirsadeghi, 2000). Iraqi Baathi forces are the antagonists in this story.

Sequences of the story

Chain sequence: Masih (agonist) acts against Iraqi forces (antagonists). Iraqi forces torture Masih that ends in his martyrdom.
Concrete sequence: the helping or inspiring power is the love of God, love of Quran and love of Imam Khomeini
Hybrid sequence: all actions of Iraqi forces and officers in order to hurt and injure Iranian captives and especially Masih. Masih achieves his objective at the end.

Characters

Agent: Ayoob, narrator, Iraqi forces, Seyed, colonel, Albert Minasian

Patient: Masih

The characters are simple, absolute, and relative (Hasanbeigi, 2007).

2. CONCLUSION

This story is structured based on a chronological time. All events are happened based on cause and effect relationships and a linear time is used in the story. Analysis of the narrative structure elements reveals that this is a narrative story of which process is to move from the initial peace toward the climax and then returning to the peace at the end. So the status of this story is as follows: Initial balance (introduction): disturbing the balance and forming an imbalanced status (mediator), secondary balance or further balance (end of the imbalanced status and forming a new status as a result of the previous events) Characters and their fate is certain. Characters had undergone spiritual changes due to the secondary balance of the story because they experienced feelings and events that had favorable and unfavorable consequences for them. At the end, we can say that the narrative structure of "mystery of Masih" is adjusted and corresponds with Bremon theory.

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Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

Año 34, Especial N° 14, 2018

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.
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