

Narratology in Selection of Short Stories of Edgar Allen Poe Based on Gérard Genette's View

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Abstract: Narratology is a theory of narrative which examines the similarities and differences within different texts. This field has to do with the narrative-specific system of rules governing narrative production and processing is common and universal among people since it exemplifies the structuralist tendency to consider texts as rule-governed ways in which human beings rebuild their universe and it also exemplifies the structuralist ambition to isolate the necessary and optional components of textual types and to characterize the modes of their articulation. Gérard Genette presents a model to describe and analyze structures and patterns that create literary texts. According to him, each literary text reveals the narration that its analysis would help to understand its order. This method that goes beyond analysis makes other studies such as sociology, social science, literary history, anthropology and psychoanalysis to be done by stronger and more valid reasons. Edgar Allen Poe (1849-1909) as created some works in genre of mystery and detective stories which death is an important theme of these stories. Allen Poe could create short stories that their narrative style has had a better and stronger influence on readers. The way of its narrative that affects more powerfully depends on elements such as point of view, mode, voice, and succession of incidents, order and other reasons. Also the narrative of story indicates the mental state of characters and point of view of author. In all of the Poe's stories, these concepts developed by Gerard can shed light on the main framework of these works for the reader. Therefore such a reading is important since it can disclose the mysteries of the stories and their difficulties can be understood and the reader can get a clear picture of the story and his following of these rules would be tangible.

Keywords: Narratology, Order, Frequency, Voice, Mode, Duration.

INTRODUCTION

Narratology is a theory of narrative which examines the similarities and differences within different texts. The most significant aims of this field are to "understand, analyses, and evaluate narratives" [1]. This field has to do with the narrative-specific system of rules governing narrative production and processing and it have a deep relation with Formalism and structuralism. It can be said that narratology is common and universal among people since it exemplifies the structuralism tendency to consider texts as rule-governed ways in which human beings rebuild their universe and it also exemplifies the structuralist ambition to isolate the necessary and optional components of textual types and to characterize the modes of their articulation. It is also related to semiotic which is about the study of meaning-making, the philosophical theory of signs and symbols. This field is very significant in human's life since:

Narrative is all around us, not just in the novel or in historical writing. Narrative is associated above all with the act of narration and is to be found wherever someone tells us about something... We are all narrators in our daily lives, in our conversations with

others, and sometimes we are even professional narrators [2].

Accordingly one important starting point in the development of narratology was the observation that narratives are found in different discourses and stories can be told in a variety of media such as oral and written language, sign languages, fixed or moving pictures, gestures and music. Such narrations can take both simple and complex structures as there are "simple narratives [like] folk tales, myths, romans poliders. But modern narrative fiction entails additional complexities of structure" [3] as well. The scope for narratological analysis has expanded and now includes not only literary narrative, but also film, journalism, painting, music, theories of identity in both personal and group identity in terms of gender, nations, race, regions, history, economics, and others. It is therefore difficult to think of narratology as a thing of the past that does not have a use. By these explanations according to vast scope of narration "there is no doubt that narratology has an excellent knowledge base when it comes to narrative" [4] which must be taken as a scientific subject. It is a theory of narrative based on some rules provided by structuralism, especially the work of the

French structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) on myth. According to him, all myths are versions of basic themes, and the narrative structures of individual myths relate to a universal structure which forms all of them. In this proposition, a 'my theme' is an element of the universal structure which can appear in different mythic narratives. He believes that such myths are related to one another so that they can "uncover the relations which structure their narrative" [5]. He then concludes that there lies a collective existence of certain elements in a form of collective consciousness.

To many the term 'narrative' will immediately suggest the kind of stories found in novels, but while the aim of the narratology of early structuralist theorists such as the Russian formalists was to identify what might be called „literariness“, and it is not confined to the novel since "literary critics and thinkers of various historical periods have placed emphasis on the formal aspects of art and literature" (*ibid.*).

Narrative Theory as Critical Theory

Narrative theory plays an important part in a great many areas of contemporary cultural and critical theory. Narrative forms a central part of the way in which we live our lives so it is to be expected that narrative theory finds application in many areas of critical theory. Therefore, it is said:

Contemporary narrative theory is, in many respects, a quite sophisticated area of study: it is international and interdisciplinary in its origins, scope, and pursuits and, in many of its achievements, both subtle and rigorous. It also appears to be afflicted, however, with a number of dualistic concepts and models, the continuous generation of which betrays a lingering strain of naive Platonism and the continued appeal to which is both logically dubious and methodologically distracting [6].

Psychoanalytic criticism is one area in which aspects of narrative theory are readily apparent. Psychoanalysis, the „talking cure“, concerns itself with the telling and interpretation of stories. The possible application of aspects of narrative theory should be evident. The writing of history is another such instance. Distinguishing between the poet and the historian, Aristotle writes that "Where the historian really differs from the poet is in his describing what has happened, while the other describes the kind of thing that might happen" [7]. It is not, according to Aristotle, a question of the form this description takes, but of its object which has to do with narrative.

Attempts to bring narratology into inherently political and ideological theories, such as feminism, gender and race, have met with mixed success since "three crucial issues about which feminism and

narratology might differ: the role of gender in the construction of narrative theory, the status of narrative as mimesis or semiosis, and the importance of context for determining meaning in narrative" [8]. Therefore, this theory has political association in which different forms of oppression can be found within this theory and since "Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture" [9], this field is related to postcolonial theory which seeks to answer some questions regarding the identity of speaker of a discourse. They were some of the most important applications of this theory and to wrap it up, it is noteworthy to say that "narrative theory plays a significant role in critical theory. Narrative theory has found useful application in the examples of psychoanalysis, historiography and postcolonial theory in various theoretical areas including, among others, postmodernism, Marxism, deconstruction, feminism, gender, phenomenology and film theory" [10].

Overview of Gérard Genette's Concepts

Gérard Genette is theorist who attempts to develop a science of narratology from the basic structuralist premise. For Genette, narrative is the result of the relations between various elements. He utilizes five basic areas in which these elements interact: the narrative's ordering of time; the varying lengths of time accorded to plot events by the narrative; the frequency with which an event is narrated as well as the frequency with which it actually occurred; the narrative techniques used and the viewpoint of the narrative persona; and the act of narration. The French Narratologist Gérard Genette has repeatedly and successfully opened up complex fields of literary criticism by providing a clear and logical structure and a coherent and precise terminology in his books and articles. Genette's contributions to narratology appeared first in 1972 and 1983. Genette wants to provide a general theory of the ways in which narrative presents its story. Accordingly, he uses a great many narrative texts, from classical up to modern literature, as examples. Genette's narratological system is arguably the most important one today because even narratologists who do not simply accept and follow it often take it as the starting point of their own approaches. The most important elements that he argues are as follows:

Order

The element of time is very important and significant while narrating a text and it forms a great deal of story. Regarding this matter the order of events comes to existence that should be noted while reading a story. According to Genette studying the temporal order of a narrative is to compare the order "in which events or temporal sections are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events or temporal segments have in the story, to the extent that story order is explicitly indicated by the narrative itself or inferable from one or another

indirect clue" [11]. What he means is that the real order of events in real situation is sometimes different from what is narrated in the story. Therefore in this situation the reader loses the track of the story and since he is "continuing to go back explicitly from cause to cause" [11], the story is robbed from its pure simplicity and the level of its complication heightens. Genette explains as follows: "Order" determines the connections between the "succession of events in the story" and "the way in which they are arranged in the narrative (i.e. the pseudo-temporal arrangement)" (ibid). A story usually consists of significant events that follow one another successively. When the succession of events in the story corresponds to the order in which they are recounted in the narrative, it is simply a matter of chronological time. In some cases the chronological succession of events is interrupted in some way or another. "Anachrony" is the term Genette uses to indicate "the various types of discordance between the story and the narrative" [11]. The most common way for interrupting a narrative is by means of inserting events that happened a long time ago, or by means of creating anticipation for what is to come.

Duration

It can be said that each story has a specific duration including days, weeks, months or years, and so forth. These are showed in the text in pages. However, the text needs to be read and due to the different circumstances and capabilities of different readers, duration expressed in terms of these relationships is very difficult. Duration examines the connections between the variable duration of the story sections and the length of the text in which they are reflected or the 'pseudo-duration'. Also duration pertains to connections of speed. The rhythm of a narrative is determined by the accordance or discordance between the duration of the story sections and the pseudo-duration. Genette states that "it is hard to imagine the existence of a narrative that would admit no variation in speed - and even this banal observation is somewhat important: a narrative can do without anachronisms, but not without anisotropies or, if one prefers (as one probably does), effects of rhythm" [11].

Frequency

Frequency means the relationships between the events that occur repetitively in the story, and the many times that they are repeated in the narrative. Repetition is a common form of frequency, which has emerged as the central technique in new modes of novels. This means that an event in the story may happen once, twice, or many more times. This event may be narrated in the narrative once, twice, or many more times. In this way a relationship is established between the repetition of story-events and the narrative statements pertaining to these events. He categorizes the narrative as such: "Narrating n times what happened n times".

This is a singulative narrative because narrative statements correspond to narrated events: "Narrating n times what happened once" [11].

It is called this a repeating narrative, and in this regard he remarks: This form might seem purely hypothetical, an ill-framed offspring of the combinative mind, irrelevant to literature. "Narrating one time (or rather at one time) what happened n times"

Mood

A narrative may choose to give detailed information to its readers, or choose to withhold some information deliberately; this information may be given in a direct or an indirect way, thereby keeping the reader at a closer or further distance. And in the final instance, characters in the narrative give information according to a particular perspective or point of view.

Voice

Narrator is usually the term that is used for the one who tells, but Genette perceives the matter of telling in broader sense and uses the term voice to refer to the narrating instance, "the mode of action...of the verb considered for its relations to the subject". The subject may be the person who does the narrating, but it may also be the one who does the reporting, in fact, subject is related to everyone who participates in the narrating activity, even passively. Of course one needs to keep in mind that there is a relationship between the act of narrating (telling) and the instance of narrating (narrator) who is performing the action. Consequently critics often mistakenly identify "the narrating instance with the instance of writing, the narrator with the author and the receiver of the narrative with the reader of the work".

Edgar Allen Poe's Life and Style

Edgar Allen Poe was an American author, poet, editor and literary critic, considered part of the American Romantic Movement. Best known for his tales of mystery, Poe was one of the earliest American practitioners of the short story and is considered the inventor of the detective fiction genre. He is further credited with contributing to the emerging genre of science fiction. He was the first well-known American writer to try to earn a living through writing alone, resulting in a financially difficult life and career.

Although Edgar Allan Poe did not invent the Gothic Romance he did, however, make significant contributions to the genre, thereby enhancing its development. He believed that a good narrative needs a "dénouement – a point where the story climaxes and some form of conclusion is reached through a revelation of a crucial component of the tale". In his fiction, the boundaries between the dream and the real are blurred. That is to say, there is an uncertainty in every event as to whether or not it is actually happening. According to

Davidson, “we can see the split in Poe’s imaginative world: there [are] elements of reality, and there [are] faculties of the mind or imagination. Between them there ought to be a union or a point of coherence”.

The development within Poe’s fiction surrounds the characters’ troubled minds and their motivations. Hence, the action within Poe’s tales transpires more on the psychological level than on the physical level.

The Analysis of “The Black Cat”

Order

The story of *The Black Cat* is filled with “Anachrony” that shows “various types of discordance between the story and the narrative” (BC 36). Poe’s unnamed narrator begins his story with a statement that refers to the past and future both, as he asserts “for the wildest yet homely narrative I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief,” (BC 3) which frames his story as a confession. He states that his purpose is to relate the events of his crime, characterizing it as “a series of mere household events” (ibid). The use of analepsis and prolepsis here is completely clear. He matter-of-factly relates that the story he is about to tell might one day be viewed by others as “nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects” (ibid) refers to what happened earlier as analepsis and when the narrator tells readers, “Tomorrow I die,” (ibid) it creates the sense of expectation for his execution which is prolepsis. This reveals that he is in jail and has been sentenced to death because of an action in the past of which the reader is not aware yet. Here we have total mix up of all the tenses and times in both story and narrative.

The concepts of extent and reach also are applicable in this short story. This anachrony reaches into the past and into the future both as it was said above to show what has happened in the past when he “had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat” (BC 4). From the beginning it reaches to the future though unknown, it is near and inevitable as he says, “But tomorrow I die and to-day I would unburden my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world” (BC 3). Here the point of future, present and at the moment converge and meet each other which create the idea of Anachrony. From the moment that the narrator starts speaking an analepsis is triggered and is sustained throughout the “homely narrative” (ibid) until it catches up with its own past; the present of the narrator. Thus, one ends up exactly where one started.

Duration

To begin with, the story has a specific duration: so many days, weeks, months or years, and so forth. These are recounted in the text. Although the narrator points out his childhood, the story starts from the time that “Pluto—this was the cat’s name—was

[his] favorite pet and playmate” (BC 4) until the “The corpse, already greatly decayed and clotted with gore, stood erect before the eyes of the spectators” (BC 14) and tomorrow “when he is going to die (3). Therefore it could be understood that a large amount of the story has been left out.

According to technique of Anisochrony, there is a varying rhythm in which the story forward or slows down. This has been done through different methods. The author uses summary to skip “months or years of existence” (96) when the narrator says, “I married early, and was happy to find in my wife a disposition not uncongenial with my own” (BC 4). The happy marriage passed quickly and its quality and the quality of his wife have been summarized in just one paragraph.

There are some events that Poe skillfully attempts to show the reader so that it can be felt upon the reader through scenes which are moments of dramatic actions described in an equal dramatic way. The way the narrator remembers killing the cat proves it:

I seized him; when, in his fright at my violence, he inflicted a slight wound upon my hand with his teeth...I took from my waistcoat-pocket a penknife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket! I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity” (BC 5)

There also some definite ellipses which can tell the passing time: “The second and the third day passed, and still my tormentor came not...Upon the fourth day of the assassination, a party of the police came, very unexpectedly” (BC 13). Maybe the author has eliminated these parts to show that passing time means nothing to the narrator and it just gives him “the device of his self-torture” (Thompson, 1984:7).

Technique of frequency has been applied in this short story in different forms. Killing the first cat and killing the wife which happened each once are narrated each time: “I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot without a groan” (BC 11). Also here exists iterative narrative in which something that happened may time, is narrated just once. When the narrator admits to suffering from serious alcoholism, which seems to be the chief cause of his growing viciousness, as he admits that once he started drinking his attitude toward his wife and his formerly loved pets changed. This feeling has always been happening and the narrator recalls “I grew, day by day, more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feelings of others. I suffered myself to use intemperate language to my wife. At length, I even offered her personal violence” (BC 4). However the author uses the adverb day by day to refer to this repetition.

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Mood

A narrative may choose to give detailed information to its readers, or choose to withhold some information deliberately; this information may be given in a direct or an indirect way, thereby keeping the reader at a closer or further distance. Regarding this, the concept of distance plays an important role. In this short, the author prefers mimesis to just a mere description. Having read this short story, different feelings can be touched since it is through showing that everything is observed. The narrator talks about how he touches the animal and the way that it responds: "I continued my caresses, and, when I prepared to go home, the animal evinced a disposition to accompany me. I permitted it to do so; occasionally stooping and patting it as I proceeded" (BC 8). Regarding the concept of mood, there are not any other devices used in this story since just the narrator is speaking and the reader is not aware of other characters' thoughts and speeches. However the concept of focalization is applicable now. The narrator is the first person who is using the pronoun "I" to tell the story: "—I am about to pen, I..." (BC 3).

The narrator perceives his own behavior no other characters therefore it is 'his own psyche' of which he talks: "I had so much of my old heart left, as to be at first grieved by this evident dislike on the part of a creature which had once so loved me. But this feeling soon gave place to irritation" (BC 5). The story uses narrative with internal focalization since it is just from eyes of one of the characters and the reader is shown the thoughts of the narrator as he talks about his own fear which is "absolute dread of the beast" (BC 9)

Voice

Voice deals with the way in which the narrating is connected to the narrative. Voice thus has

bearing on the interrelationships between both narrating/narrative and narrating/story. However, voice pertains not only to the narrator or to the narrating instance, but also to the addressees, real or implied. It should be noted that the technique of the narrating instance has been used which has nothing to do with a real person which means it is not the personal story of Allen Poe but it is a story of a fictive character.

Regarding the time of narrating, Poe uses Subsequent narrating which means the events are narrated after they took place. In fact he uses the verbs such as "married, had, and was" (BC 4) and so many verbs in the past to show this technique. In narrative levels, the narrator in this story is involved in the story, reports on an intradiegetic level. In fact, the narrator is the protagonist of the story about who the story is: "these events have terrified—have tortured—have destroyed me" (BC 3).

On Metadiegetic narrative, the narrator uses direct causality to talk about "what events have led to the present Situation" (Genette, 1980:232). The narrator believes, "I am above the weakness of seeking to establish a sequence of cause and effect, between the disaster and the atrocity. But I am detailing a chain of facts—and wish not to leave even a possible link imperfect" (BC 6-7). The author uses a narrator who is also a character in the story, he uses the term homodiegetic. Regarding testimonial function, the narrator shows his own internal emotions that have been haunting him. Such dreads were depicted in forms of figures as the animals and his own wife. Since he narrates the story to confess to his own fears: "when I first beheld this apparition—for I could scarcely regard it as less—my wonder and my terror were extreme" (BC 7).

The Analysis of "A Descent into the Maelström" Order

The first concept that will be discussed is order which refers to the arrangement of the incidents in the story and the way that are presented for the reader. As it was mentioned earlier, this short story is about a man who is on the top of the mountain and observing but his interrupted by an old man who wants to tell him his own story about therefore "anachronies are inserted into and disrupt the primary narrative" (DIM 48). To do so the technique of analepsis is used since it is the memory of the narrator from his meeting the old man. In other words, the person concerned is out of the events that occurred, he is only about to disclose them. Analepsis is started from the past as the first line of the narrator is "We had now reached the summit of the loftiest crag" (DIM2). Since the story that the old man says, is unbelievable and no one believed it before he expects the first man not to believe it, through prolepsis at the end of the story, this expectation is created: "They say too that the whole expression of my countenance had

changed. I told them my story —they did not believe it. I now tell it to you —and I can scarcely expect you to put more faith in it than did the merry fishermen of Lofoden” (DIM 13).

Duration

As it is known, this concept is related with the length of the story. Unlike other stories, this story which is mostly about the old man’s memory lasts longer compared to the time of the event. It is the story of one day which —was on the tenth of July, 18” (DIM 6) but several pages are allocated to describe the incident which shows the importance of details since duration pertains to connections of speed which is determined by rhythm. It has a deep bond with Anisochrony that is “rhythm of narrative discourse” [11]. Relating this concept, different techniques have been employed. In fact pauses are used to describe some places in details since knowing then can help the reader to visualize it better.

This short story is a narrating instance which is related to the fictive world and is not real. Even the story is not believable for the old man himself since the other characters “did not believe it” (DIM 13). About the time of the story, it is set in the past and the events are narrated from the past hence subsequent narrating is use. This can be shown through using different verbs in the past: “I could not tell you the twentieth part of the difficulties we encountered on the ground it is a bad spot to be in, even in good weather —but we made shift always to run the gauntlet of the Moskoe-strom itself without accident”(DIM 6).

Regarding the Narrative levels, this one takes place in “metadiegetic level” (Genette, 1980:228) which is embedded narrative. It means that there is not just a story but there is another story within this one. Why the author uses such technique refers to the “thematic relationship” [11] which shows the similarity of two events. In this case observing the maelstrom from the beginning reminds the old man of his own story: “I have brought you here that you might have the best possible view of the scene of that event I mentioned —and to tell you the whole story with the spot just under your eye” (DIM 2).

Frequency

There are different incidents that happened for several times but narrated just for once in the story. The using adverb of frequently in this sentence would prove it: “It likewise happens frequently, that whales come too near the stream, and are overpowered by its violence; and then it is impossible to describe their howlings and bellowings in their fruitless struggles to disengage” (DIM 4). This is done since the incident is not important enough and it is ordinary.

Mood

This concept is related to the information provided by the narrator to readers. Having read this short story, detailed information is presented for the reader particularly about the moments when the old man was facing the maelstrom. The narrator here in the narrative gives information according to a particular perspective or point of view of the old man. In fact, he tries to show the reader his struggle through his eyes. Therefore the distance between narrator and the reader reduces to some extents since the reader can feel what the old man has been through. Since most of the scenes are dramatic presentations, they are true mimeses. In Genette’s terminology it is narrative of events which is “transcription of the (supposed) non-verbal into the verbal” [11]. The old man dramatizes:

As I felt the sickening sweep of the descent, I had instinctively tightened my hold upon the barrel, and closed my eyes. For some seconds I dared not open them —while I expected instant destruction, and wondered that I was not already in my death- struggles with the water. But moment after moment elapsed. I still lived. The sense of falling had ceased; and the motion of the vessel seemed much as it had been before while in the belt of foam, with the exception that she now laid more along. I took courage and looked once again upon the scene. (DIM 10)

Regarding the matter of focalization, it should be noted that this story is told from a first person point of view from the beginning as the narrator says, “WE had now reached the summit of the loftiest crag. For some minutes the old man seemed too much exhausted to speak” (DIM 2). Therefore the narrator is one of the characters of the story. However it later changes and it is the old man who tells his own story which is “variations in point of view” and is called “alterations” [11]. After the narrator starts his speech, the narrator is changed to the old man and says “Not long ago, said he at length, —and I could have guided you on this route as well as the youngest of my sons” (DIM 2).

Voice

This short story is a narrating instance which is related to the fictive world and is not real. Even the story is not believable for the old man himself since the other characters “did not believe it” (DIM 13). About the time of the story, it is set in the past and the events are narrated from the past hence subsequent narrating is use. This can be shown through using different verbs in the past: “I could not tell you the twentieth part of the difficulties we encountered on the ground it is a bad spot to be in, even in good weather “but we made shift always to run the gauntlet of the Moskoe-strom itself without accident” (DIM 6).

CONCLUSION

To Kelly, the content of the Poe’s stories “comment on the proposed purpose of the narrative technique” which to him would be “that of exposing

readers' insensitivity" (80). However Poe's collusive inclination to tease the readers of his narratives, he expressed his critical concern for the response of his readers towards his literary work more overtly in relation with the unity of effect in art. In *The Philosophy of Composition* he argues that "it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment" (262). Although the intended effect of Poe's tales may differ from each other, that they are concerned with truth and passions rather than beauty which according to Poe is the main purpose of literature would indicate that both the intellect and the heart should be involved in it.

As it has been showed above, the effect of such techniques 'Genette's concepts' often involves both raising certain the passions in readers as terror in the his tales, hilariousness in the humorous ones and questioning identity, fiction and narrative as objective truths confusion, uncertainty, undecidability, which makes of it a useful literary technique. Being aware of such techniques, Poe makes narrative techniques permeate all of the layers of his tales. Having uncertain and reliable narrator makes the incident that builds the thesis of the story, and draws the setting where it happens. To summarize it all, our research confirmed that Edgar Allan Poe used in his gothic stories several kinds of focalization and narrative techniques including chaotic order, various types of frequency, mood, voice, and duration and mixed them in a way that can be called experimental, but still artistic and not disruptive, as the transitions are very subtle or clear enough to be called intentional.

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