



RESEARCH PAPER

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

Afshan Abbas*¹ Dr. Fauzia Janjua ² Mahwish Abid ³

1. Lecturer, Ph. D Scholar, Department of English, IIU, Islamabad, Pakistan
2. Associate Professor, Department of English, IIU, Islamabad, Pakistan
3. Ph. D Scholar, Department of English, IIU, Islamabad, Pakistan

DOI

[http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022\(6-1\)3](http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022(6-1)3)

PAPER INFO

ABSTRACT

Received:

October 19, 2021

Accepted:

January 15, 2022

Online:

January 22, 2022

Keywords:

Cultural Hybridity,
Exclusion and
Inclusion,
Genette's Schemata
of Narratology,
Time Shift
Processes,
Turquoise

***Corresponding**

Author

afshanabbaas@gmail.
com

The present Study is primarily concerned with applying Genette's schemata developed in his famous 'Narrative Discourse' and theory of cultural hybridity of Homi Bhabha to the study of Aamer Hussain's Short Story 'Turquoise'. This study analyzes the temporal shifts in the short story. Since diaspora is prevailing as an important theme in the short story, this study is also concerned with the analysis of cultural hybridity. The research is concerned with the Genette's narratology, 'in order to bring out the intricacies of the temporal patterns of the short story. Furthermore, it deals with the analysis of cultural hybridity as the ideology of a new elite a "postmodern" cosmopolitanism. This study makes the case that hybridity helps us comprehend the dynamics of the global culture. Focalized through a double perspective, 'Turquoise' reveals Aamer Hussain's expertise in handling narrative temporality and providing a comprehensive study of Diaspora in terms of cultural hybridity.

Introduction

Time and space are the most important ingredients in the formation of a narrative, but also the evocation of diasporas. The two dimensions shape the horizon upon which diasporas conceive themselves as communities, emerge as cultural hybridity and rise in everyday discourses as part of the ways people perceive their past and future. The study of cultural hybridity involves expectations and memories, desires and losses. Multiple identities of today's world may be a sign of a new stability, self-assurance, and quietism, rather than of current social mobility and dispossession. The glorification of diaspora and hybridity as subversive areas can be seen in most of the modern cultural critique. The terms are appealing due to the inherent unpredictability of each notion. Diaspora is a geographical issue, including exile from one's own country and an effort to navigate that geographic displacement.

As they strive to establish themselves in new societies, diasporic authors are often fascinated with the notion of nostalgia. They write in connection to their own culture while also adopting and negotiating with the culture of the host country. Looking at diasporic literature in a larger context, it is clear that it aids in the understanding of many cultures, the breaking down of boundaries between nations, globalization, and even the development of world peace.

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 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 a consistent and accurate terminologies. Genette's narratology is considered as a starting point for the narratological temporal analysis for understanding the structural patterns of the narrative.

The present paper investigates how wider Spatio-temporal frameworks reveal the notion of diasporas in terms of cultural hybridity and Genette's notions of temporality in the Short story 'Turquoise' by Amer Hussain. 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.

Literature Review

Gerard Genette's work (1972 and 1983) is a renaissance of the school of narratology. According to Genette, narratological analysis foregrounds two characteristics. Firstly, it is concerned with narratives as independent linguistic objects, detached from their context of production and reception. Secondly, it aims to reveal an underlying structure that can be identified in many different narratives. Using a rigorous typology, Genette has developed a theory of narratological temporality that addresses the entire inventory of narrative processes in use (Garcia). Michael Lydon is of the view that Homi Bhabha's notion of "Cultural Hybridity" helps reveal the temporality of evolving identities as it is human nature to change with time and travel (2). Narrative theory, according to Bal (1991), is the study of narrative texts. According to Genette (1983) "narrative statement is a kind of oral or written discourse that analyze the event or a series of events in the narrative" (25). In other words, a narrative consists of a story made up of a plot, which involves characters, events, action, and dialogue. Genette established three levels of narrative, namely stories, text, and narration. These three levels relate to each other, represented by time, mood, and voice.

Homi K Bhabha presented his idea of 'Cultural Hybridity' in his work entitled 'The Location of Culture' (1994). According to Bhabha, as man is a 'social animal' and evolves through the interaction of people and places as a liminal place of cultural hybridity or the "in-between third space" in which multiple cultures interact with each other (22). This interaction involves the powerful discourse and seeks to highlight the discourse of the marginalized group in postcolonial theory. Since, Bhabha talks about three aspects of cultural hybridity; colonial stereotypes of Us v/s them, mimic, implicit power of written discourse. This theoretical paradigm fits our research as the selected text implicitly reveals a powerful discourse between two characters; Nusra and Danny who are in a hybrid 'third space', which can be observed by their interactions and help the researchers to explore cultural hybridity as represented in the text.

Material and Methods

The investigation was conducted in a qualitative manner. The researchers focused on close-reading of the selected material and analyzed it. The study focuses on a detailed textual study of the selected story "Turquoise" in order to address two primary issues. The first research question requires an exploration of cultural hybridity through Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity in the context of diaspora and addressing the ways narratively constructed realities serve as creating 'Third Space' (Kaur, 8) in the short story 'Turquoise'. The second question aims at analyzing the structural and temporal elements of the narrative suggested by Genette in his theory of Narratology (Steinby, P.2). The methodology developed to address the main questions is based on Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and Genette's model of narratology.

Results and Discussion

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 compare to Mimesis (showing) in narrative sequence. Diegesis is employed frequently in the selected short story which is in the form of dialogues between characters. The category of Mood refers to the distance and functions of the narrator. Mood embodies various strategies of speech and thought presentation. The narrator can also make a choice from various narrative functions. Aamer Hussein has employed the strategies of free direct and narratized speech to allow the characters to narrate their experiences. Short conversations are introduced in a high frequency for the sake of variety in the short story. The compact, concise style of Aamir Hussain is evident in the selected short story. Aamir 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 create a sort of assimilation between them. It is also significant in terms of ideological representation of the characters in the short story. The imperative questions in the story provide the testimonial for the emotional bonding between the two characters Nusra and Danny. The story depicts the

elements of Distance and Function to highlight the structural patterns of the story. The category of "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 make reference to himself in the story. The Authorial heterodiegetic narration has been used in Amer 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. According to Genette it can be simultaneous or subsequent. Sometimes, according to the context writers prefer prior or interpolated narration. In Amer Hussein's story the major events have taken place in a form of subsequent narration indicating chronological order of short story. The story is a subsequent representation of the progression of events. The element of focalization is also present in the story to attract the focal zone of the readers as they assimilate themselves with the characters. Amer Hussein uses zero focalization in his short story "Turquoise." Moreover, In Amer 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 Dany help readers to perceive their ideological shifts. Other characters in meta-diegesis like wild child also contributes 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. The events in the short story Turquoise are chronologically developed by the narrator from April to December. The opening of the story provides pause in form of static descriptions. The pattern is that of union and separation of the main characters in the short story. In the short story Turquoise' Amer 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. Amer Hussein does not use a traditional sequential strategy to reveal his characters psychology in "Turquoise." Instead, he breaks up traditional narrative strategies, and employed time-shift processes, stretching out the plot over months. Through a succession of analepsis, the readers inform about Nusra's life in forms of flashbacks. The story starts with a description of Nusra's family. This brief narrative has a complex blend of analepsis in form of major and minor analepsis. This is a variation in the story's order, in which the usual sequence of events is set off at the very outset, and readers are taken to Nusra's previous years. The instances of analepsis, are evident in the opening of the short story in forms of flashbacks. With the progression of the story, the events in the story are interrupted 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 dialogues between Nusra and Danny in the short story are instances of "scene", in which the events of the story are speeded up.

What a beautiful story, Danny said. What happens next?

I can't say. I haven't finished it yet. But it's for you.

You've seen through me, then? I'm a sick child alright.

But you're not the Danny of the story, Nusra said. I'm the one who swam in the lake when I was a child in Karachi and got diphtheria. I guess you're the wild child from the lake. No. You're my wild child. And you're also the lake (Para, 12).

There are also instances of ellipsis in the short story in which details are omitted for highlighting implicit meanings of the text. The short story "Turquoise" follows the lives of two main characters Nusra and Danny present their ongoing struggle for seeking their identities. This study explores how Aamer Hussain constructs the characters of Nusra and Danny to examine hybridity across various planes. Aamer Hussain has presented the two primary protagonists to occupy multiple transitional territories: they are constantly moved from one 'home' to another, breaking any relationships they may have made in either place. They are split emotionally between familial devotion and selfish self-improvement in terms of cultural assimilation. They are positioned upon this dividing line between their own country and the West. Aamer Hussain highlights the challenges that a hybrid identity might present in its development stages. The close association between rejection and assimilation suggests that colonial identities are formed via a constant process of abandonment.

Islamabad and London became liminal locations for Nusra similarly Bali and London are for Danny. The notion of primordial pluralities embedded in the Aamer's characterization of Nusra and Danny in an arguably positive way, because their identities are transitory and therefore, fluctuate and change, represent the concept of hybridity in *the short story Turquoise*. According to Bhabha(1996) Cultural fluidity is a displacement and disjunction process that does not totalize experience. This encapsulates the difficulties and anguish of Nusra and Danny's predicament, as they are displaced and disjointed from their home and placed in an unfamiliar context, leaving them with a sense of self that is unable to adequately understand their experience. As a result, their identities are not only fluid, but also incomplete, which is obviously problematic in terms of developing a sense of self.

Another complicated form is the conflict of languages employed throughout the novel, such as the distinction between "their own language" and "Western English," or the distinction between "low prestige" and "proper" language.

To return to Bhabha, he writes that to speak a language is to 'assume a culture, to withstand the pressure of a civilization to take on a world,' implying the importance of language in achieving successful assimilation into a culture, with the word 'assume' implying a sense of performativity on the part of the speaker. In Nusra and Danny cases, the culture, civilization and world that they want to take on is that of the Westernized world. In order to do so, they must learn to speak 'English' as the language of civilization and opportunities. In the selected short story, Danny is willing to abandon his home in favour of speaking a 'proper' language. Thus, Danny's hybrid identity is freely constructed on a social level, notably in terms of class, reinforcing the concept that hybridity is not an internally generated state of being, but rather a result of several external forces. The present study also investigates how ideas about

community intersect with those of diaspora and cultural hybridity. Hybridity functions as a form of emergent complexity resulting from the mixture or blending of heterogeneous elements in the short story. Dualistic thinking of the main characters in the short story Nusra and Danny offer a conceptual framework for the analysis of their association with dual cultures. The concept of third space is represented skillfully by the writer to enhance the significance of migration and its impact on the lives of the main characters (Nusra and Danny) in the short story.

This paper is depicting how individuals deliberately utilize elements of London's identity with the intent to empower or elevate themselves. Bhabha (1996) notes the borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be consensual as conflictual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity; realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, high and low and challenge normative expectations of development and progress. Thus, the switching identity enables an individual to become empowered. In a short story the main characters in the story are in control of their own hybridity, at least to some level, and it is voluntary. It is possible for a person to be aware of how to interact with their own hybridity in an intentional, beneficial, and autonomous manner.

They make free choices when they incorporate characteristics of the other culture and identity into their own sense of self. Therefore, Nusra is presented as a rebellious character, indulged in smoking and drinking represent the individual choices of lifestyle, which helped Nusra to turn into the unique person to her 'innate rebellious spirit.' As a result, it is clear from the narrative that the characters' goal is to establish themselves as individuals within the stereotyped mass, and that by incorporating and exploring western elements into their hybrid culture, they have successfully triggered a positive impact on their relationships with and within larger groups. In this way, Amer Hussain employed the tool of linguistic choices to emphasize the complexity of the hybrid ground in short story. Amer Hussain presented the notion of translation to develop speech synthesis for certain characters while this combination might be seen as a merger of two civilizations, it could equally be interpreted as a widening of the gap between them. Therefore, I argue that, cultural hybridity is employed as a key trope, in *Turquoise* as the plot focusses directly on two main characters Nusra and Danny associated simultaneously with dual cultures.

Conclusion

Thus, by an application of Genette's schemata of narratology, a reader can get a deeper level of understanding of the intricate design of the short story, and it can be used as a tool of analysis for the reading of any other short story. This study of "Temporal relations" in Amer Hussain's short story "Turquoise" has arrived a number of findings. Firstly, understanding and grasping the "time" of a story leads to a deeper and better understanding of the content (events and plot) of that story. Knowing the principles of time, will let readers access the deep structure of the story and also to be able to come to a wider and multiple interpretations of stories. Secondly,

the ability that an individual achieves in identifying analepsis and prolepsis, will give him/her a better and a more comprehensive understanding of a story. Furthermore, these two techniques can make clear the borders of the past, present, and future in a story. Therefore, readers will not be lost in 'time' when they are reading a story. This study also analyses the construction of cultural identity in the context of diaspora. Specifically, the ways in which cultural hybridity involves, among other things, immigration, identity and third space as suggested by Homi Bhabha. The present study also revealed that Hybridity is a theoretical tool that is helpful in describing and analyzing marginal phenomena, non-hegemonic productions of meaning, not necessarily in terms of identity or culture, but in terms of social and singular imaginary significations. Aamir Hussain has presented in his short story 'Turquoise' in a simplistic and unbiased way, is the importance of social relations in the context of cultural expressions and significations. Hybridity according to Homi Bhabha (1994) is then not only a question of race but also of gender, class and maybe above all of imaginary significations that are constantly subjected to "difference" and this difference has unlimited potential of inclusion which is evident by the analysis of the social and cultural dimensions of the lives of Nusra and Danny (Marota). The present study also revealed that Cultural identities are never static rather, they constantly change, without the limitations of special boundaries.

References

- Bal, M. (1991). Narration and Focolization. *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.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. (1996). Postmodernism/postcolonialism. Critical terms for art history. Ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bruner, J. (1991). 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', in *Critical Inquiry, Using Narrative inquiry as a research method*. 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.
- Garcia, Hose Angel. (2015). *Time Structure in the Story*. University of Zaragoza
- Hall, S. (1991a). The local and the global: Globalization and ethnicity. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization and the world-system: Contemporary conditions for the representation of identity* (pp. 19-40). London: Macmillan.
- 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.
- Joseph, M. (1999). Introduction: New hybrid identities and performance. In M. Joseph & J. N. Fink (Eds.), *Performing hybridity* (pp. 1-24). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kaur, Ramindar. (2005). *Diaspora and Hybridity*. Sage Publications, Ltd. London.
- Langemeyer, P. (2020). Bhabha, Homi K.: The location of culture. *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon (KLL)*, 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-05728-0_1586-1
- Lydon, Michael. (2006). *Revolution in the "Third Space": Homi Bhabha, Hybridity and Popular Music*. (London and New York: Routledge).

Marota, Vince. (2020). *Cultural Hybridity*. Daekin University, Australia. Vol VI. 03/31/2020. John Wiley & Sons. DOI: 10.100/9781405165518.

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

Steinby, Liisa. (2006). *Time, Space and Subjectivity in Gerard Genette's Discourse. Poetics Today*. International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication. Duke University Press.