

Taufiq Rafat's Play *Foothold* and application of Genette's Theory of Narratology of Timeline

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims investigating Taufiq Rafat's play Foothold in the light of Gerard Genette's narratological theory of timeline. This theory of timeline is basically an integral part of the two broader components of narration and focalization. Signification in a narrative largely draws upon the agencies of 'telling' and 'seeing'. Telling denotes the verbalization of all the events in a narrative and the seeing accounts for the vision that works behind the aestheticization of the story. Both of these two areas cannot operate/function properly if the provisions of time that are pursued there are not skillfully manipulated. The timeline works with the help of various instruments that lie in its kit. Analepsis and prolepsis are two basic techniques to impart the artistic character to the narrative. Both the narration and filter in the narrative also make use of the three facets of focalization: the perceptual facet; the psychological facet and the ideological facet. In the light of Genette's theory the play Foothold is studied under three time slab: sequence, duration, and frequency. The frequency is broken further broken into discrete, iterative, and the repeated. The present study reveals that Taufiq Rafat's Foothold is encapsulated in a short space of the text with the non-linear definition of time through which the writer has presented occurrence of many signification based years of Saleem and his Disciples.

Keywords: Taufiq Rafat, Foothold, Genette; analepsis, prolepsis, narratology

Introduction:

Narratives technically refer to the systematic study of the art of narration that is the base of all types of literature. In this art of narration various key concepts are involved. One of these narratological concepts is the concept of 'time'. Scheffel, Weixler, and Werner (2013) define time in a broad sense as a constitutive element of world and a fundamental category of human experience. They say it is both a dimension of the narrated world, as conceived in the broader sense, and an analytical category, tense, which describes the relation between different narrative tiers. Furthermore, they believe that the relations between time and narrative is the most significant thing in narratology as it gives the narrative a specific level, angle, scope and focalization. The limited and unlimited knowledge about time imparts the temporal plus spatial dimension to a narrative. Then the core of the narrative that is called ideological facet of focalization is also closely linked with the manipulation of time in the narrative.

Foothold is challenging with reference to the processes of signification as its writer Rafat has manipulated time in his distinctive and unique way. He does not rely on a conventional linear approach but what we, as readers, perceive is the continuous shifting, stretching, and breaking the linear order of time. The play under analysis is quite a suitable candidate for the application

Genette's model of time which relies on the two concepts of discourse time and play time. The two concepts of story/ narrated time and text/ discourse/ narrating time are distinguished ones. Story time refers to the actual duration of events in the story. It is the sequence of events and the length of time that passes in the story. Discourse-time, on the other hand, covers the length of time that is taken up by the telling of the story and the sequence of events as they are presented in discourse. In the narrative analysis, the relationship between these two concepts are examined. To borrow Genette's term, story and discourse time are anisochronic in most cases. To analyze story time and discourse time, Genette utilizes three concepts of order, duration speed of events, and frequency of events.

The play spins around the issue of Sufi Faith in Islamic setting. The play starts with Saleem's excursion and finishes with the disruption of the Sufi way. The plot has various portrayals. The principal portrayal resembles soliloquy. The second portrayal is made by Saleem. The main portrayal begins with relating of past incidents. The play covers the time of characters' Faith, conversation of excursion and cultural positions. Only 119 pages of the text narrate all of these events in the lives of characters. Therefore, the play is observed in the form of flash-forwards and flashbacks with several time shifts that have forced the present researcher to reconsider the study from the perspective of narratological time to what Genette (1980, p.35) says time in the realm of fiction is distinguished as far as the connection between the play time and talk time and it doesn't follow sequential order. There is consistently mutilation of time in the account messages. This investigation highlights the segments of time move to respond to the sense of inquiry: how Taufiq Rafat has utilized the idea of narratological time to describe.

To investigate the idea of time move and its significance in the chosen play, the scholars have initially expounded the classes and sub-classifications of the time as introduced by Genette in his narratological model as hypothetical structure. Furthermore, the researcher has recognized those classifications in *Foothold*. The time change allows the protagonist to recount incidents of many years in the short space of the book.

Literature Review:

Many scholars have explored various themes in Taufiq Rafat's play *Foothold*. They meaningfully enriched the body of research on the play under discussion plus the grammatical grammar on the dramatic genre in Pakistani English. '*Foothold*' (1969) is a short play comprising of events of several years of lives of Saleem and his family recounted in three Acts of the text, the discourse time. Seemingly, Taufiq Rafat has employed the technique of omission. According to Genette (1980), it is not feasible for the protagonist to recount any moment in the narrative text of the real character plot, so he observes some omission strategies. In the field of narratology, certain methods are learned.

Genette (1980) is one of the traditional narratologists whose models of narratology have been contemplated and will be read for quite a long time (Fludernik, 2009). Genette's (1980) narratological models contain three principle of classifications, voice, disposition and tense.

Genette isolates voice into storyteller and narratee relating to their levels and ideal models. He further partitions storyteller and story into extradiegetic and intradiegetic levels. This angle is not pertinent to this study. Genette isolates mood into story distance and centralization. This viewpoint is additionally not pertinent to this investigation. The third angle is tense that he has talked about thoroughly. Genette names tense as account time. Story time is pseudo-temporal which manages relations of sequence between the story and text. The story time is the genuine term of occasions which alludes to the succession of occasions and the time allotment that passes in the story. The content time or talk time as he calls, is supposed to be pseudo time where no sequential request of occasions is followed. The time request is twisted or is not followed carefully. The creator of the content describes or overlooks occasions where he feels the need. The talk time, the content time, covers the timeframe that is taken by the telling or perusing of the story and the arrangement of occasions as they are introduced in the talk. This transient connection of time has arranged into order, term and recurrence.

Reviewing Taufiq Rafat's *Foothold*, Baig (2015) covers the story from the previous literature can be taken as a critical overview of play. Baig says that his paper deals with the angst of the journey of life in accordance with Saleem who is a saint and a poet. It is through the character of Saleem that the conflict between self and identity is highlighted in the play as Rafat displays a marginalized character who is struggling because he can feel the angst of his existence and is in search of the self. However, this effort to discover his own self conflicts with his identities

Salman (2018), chooses *Foothold* as the primary concern of study and says, that the plot of the play revolves around Saleem, a beguiled Professor of Economics in search of answers to his existential dilemma. The play itself is primarily absurdist in character, though not only because of the subject matter, rather, because of the setting; it begins and concludes on a dusty train station amidst an interplay of the past and the present (Imran, 2018). An avid audience may be able to tell that the playwright was influenced by the absurdist theatre in Britain and beyond. The progress of the play, rather, the chain of events that signify the plot moving forwards, is marked predominantly by dialogue and flashbacks, while dramatic action takes on a notion of fluidity. One is immediately reminded of Samuel Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon. The disciples strike a similar note, as sheep in need of a shepherd. The only difference, in this case, would be that by the end of the play, they receive an answer.

Rizvi (2012) in her review of the play under analysis discusses the arrival of Gautam Buddha from his excursion to discover self. Her exploration point was to investigate the journey of Gautam in search for self and to discover the reality of life. This examination covers the characteristics of postcolonial writing, for example, personality and diaspora which are depicted through the character of Gautam. Gautam is in steady excursion and scanning for his self and is disengaged from his country which characterizes while he is discovering his personality is another quality of postcolonialism. This study brings up an issue of Gautam's accomplishment

whether he has accomplished his objective or not. Gautam's genuine accomplishment that he gets a make way towards his self: his character not at all like the genuine story of Budha who became holy person after his excursion.

Saleem, a youthful lively man is in the quest for truth. As Nageen Zahra (2015) discusses that the play helps us to remember Buddha's journey for the real world. It is an excursion of finding reality in a cutting edge setting. Saleem experiences outrage, insults, and anguish yet as you arrive at the finish of the play, he starts to understand that illumination that he gets through a formal life. This is actually what the Station Master causes him to learn by demonstrating him the railroad track and the two lines that run equal, representing a created and a healthy lifestyle.

All the evaluations by researchers on *Foothold* by Rafat are important ones. They increase the relevant information on the significant play but no has attempted a study of the play from the narratological concept of time. Hence the present research.

Research Questions

This research is conducted to find the answer of following questions:

1. What role does Gerard Genette's concept of analepsis play in *Foothold*?
2. What role prolepsis plays in Taufiq Rafat's play?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is based on the concept of time as is presented by Genette. He has divided time into order, duration, and frequency of those events. Genette (1980) explained, sequence is the pseudo-worldly game plan. It shows connection between the occasions introduced in the play and the manner in which these occasions are orchestrated in the account. As such, it decides the connection between the sequence of the play and the account. The arrangement of occasions of the story is upset or twisted in the either path in the account and named as anachrony. Anachronies are of different sorts of the harshness between the story and the account. This interference of sequence of incidents in the account occurs in two way, for example by placing occasions in the account which had happened some place before or quite a while past, analepsis, or by methods for describing occasions in the story ahead of time, prolepsis. He clarifies that these anachronies (analepses and prolepses) are put to misshape the request for the essential story. Analepses are regularly known as flashbacks; an analepsis is an account of a story-occasion at a point in the content after later occasions have been told. In straightforward words, prolepses decide the occasions in the account that are advised ahead of time which will occur at later stage in the story. Prolepses are regularly known as flash forward.

Span is another worldly segment which manages play's speed. It decides the connection between the span of occasions that occur and the length of text where those occasions are related. The connection between the span of occasions and the length of text is resolved in two ways. The single direction is the point at which an occasion of a story involving an extensive stretch is

described in a short space of the content known as the quickening regarding the account speed. The alternate way is the point at which an occasion of a story involving brief period is related in the long space of the content, normally, known as deceleration as far as the account speed. Genette has isolated term into synopsis, scene, respite and ellipses. Summary is the type of increasing speed which comprises of describing of occasions of a few days, months or years in a couple of sections or a couple of pages of the content without depiction of point by point activity and portrayal (Genette, 1980).

Recurrence or reiteration shows connection between the event of occasions in number of time in the story and referencing of those occasions in number of time in the account. At the end of the day, recurrence manages question of how regularly? At the point when occasions that happen once, twice or a few time in the plot are described once, twice or a few time in the account, the recurrence is noticed, has expounded three methods of recurrence, singulative, redundant and iterative.

This study is qualitative in nature and is based on the textual analysis of the play *Foothold* written by Taufiq Rafat. The study is analyzed in the light of theoretical framework based on narrative time, one of the aspects of Genette's model of narratology. The data was collected and analyzed with close reading technique.

Data Analysis

In this portion of the research, Taufiq Rafat's play *Foothold* by Taufiq Rafat is analyzed from the perspective of narratological concept of time. In spite of the fact that narratology is an emerging genre of analysis, it has a variety of tools in its kit to investigate any piece of literature. This study is designed to investigate the dramatic writing in the light of Genette's theory of time. Keeping in mind the temporal constraints, only those popped up paragraphs are selected for analysis where the where the narrative time of the story is manipulated in the form of order, duration and frequency.

The play begins with narration of Saleem to his Disciple who is recounting the past event that happened during his Spiritual Path, the mystic journey. "You are backing the wrong horse. You have followed me for six years with the faith of punter following the form book, and kept yours fingers crossed that I may be the favourite which romps home (p.10)". The opening sentence of the above paragraph is in normal order but the rest of the two sentences are in the mold of analepses. Saleem is recounting the events what happened somewhere in the past. This extract is the example where the time shift is observed. The normal order of the story is distorted after the first sentence and then the narrator takes readers to the past event. "We born in separate bedrooms. And destined to different ends, the years we spent together have served to show how unlike each other we really are, there have been times when you have been very much in my way. Now you are annoyed with me, but try to understand, I am telling you this because I Like both of you" (p.17). In this analepses, one may also observe instance of repetitive narration when

Saleem is mentioning of Disciples' company which happened once but is recounted several times, twice in the above passage and many times later in the play.

As the play moves on, analepses go on turn by turn. It is to be found in Mustafa's dialogue also: "Light begins to come on slowly to reveal sofa, three or four chairs, a tea pot. This is Mustafa's drawing room. The time, six years earlier. As the light brighten, conversation continues" (22). The above part is the example of a scene; here Mustafa is in conversation with Ali and Nasreen and this scene is the best example of flashback. Nasreen continued to recount. It means Saleem will step into his shoes. "He will have his own bungalow now in the college compound. Fully furnished too, and of course an immediate increase in salary, think all of things we will be able to do, things we could only dream of" (22). But, the dialogue "we will be able to do, things we could only dream of" is the example of prolepses. Here Nasreen is telling her plan in advance in the play that happens at the later stage of the play. Moreover, the following paragraph recounted by Ali and Saleem is another mixture of time shift: analepses and prolepses. "Our parents sent us mission school in the fond hope that we would be able to grab good job with British firm... The only books and news paper we read were in English. And so we grew up like washer man's dog... we are afraid, I shall not deny what you say" (29). In the first part, Ali recounted landed aristocracy, and in second part of Saleem is an example of prolepses. The given passage is another example of a flash forward: "The train will soon whirl these peasants away from our lives into any elsewhere. Those we talked to be will be talking to others. What remains except the husk of memory? One day as I lean against the garden railing in my background, I shall remember two peasants" (p.110). In the second act of the play, when Saleem entered after long time, the exchange of dialogue between Saleem and disciple is a great mixture of time shift.

2nd Disciple: Saints were like us

Saleem: These were irrelevant details what's matter

Station Master: No, they are not, go back where you came from. There's nothing here you can't buy cheaper in your own market.

Saleem: I can't go till I know what I want

Station Master: it will come at the proper place and 'time' (56)

The given extract is the example where the time shift is observed. These dialogues reflected burden of past and tension of future. "Fatima, you punish yourself needlessly, he could have ended up no other way. But after six years we have more important things to talk about, did you find your wonderful faith?" This sentence signifies that information regarding Saleem's journey that he narrated to the mother are omitted. We are not told what worries were and how he told. Moreover, we also do not know where he lived. 'Summary' technique is also manipulated in the above paragraph. Six year time is speeded up in one sentence. This sentence can be read within a few seconds which is the play time but events in the actual plot could have taken long time. These lengthy details are elided which result in accelerating the pace of the plot.

Further, the following paragraph is a mixture of different narrative tools: “The English are shameless people. I have seen an English women Shaving her legs...Doomsday is near. If Allah grants the money and the opportunity, I shall visit Mecca” (p. 72- 73). As the play progresses. In Act third of the play, there is abrupt time shift from Fatima’s dialogue to Railway station. The given paragraph is also an example of summary because the time passes like few seconds in just one sentence. It is again speeding up of the pace of the play. “Light dim, Music, Quick Curtain. Railway Platform again, time as if no interruption had taken place. A slight breeze has sprung up which turns slowly into gale by the time Saleem begins his final speech. As the curtain lifts Saleem walks onto the stage” (p.108).

In the last parts of the story, the paragraphs are more devoted to ellipses, and to different tools of narration. Most importantly, Saleem’s narration of his waiting I *Foothold* can be called as the best examples of summary: “I have wept, lone worshipper in a ruined mosque, for lost innocence, the faith that was.”p.117). Saleem’s above narration of six years journey covers two lines in the narrative. The next paragraph portrays summary as “You seek a faith outside experience and analysis; but all the faith you need is in the book, a beginning and a way. The foolish climber makes no preparation and tries to reach the top in leaps and bounds. Men who conquer mountains begin on hills. Theirs is no short cut to faith” (p.117). Station master’s above narration for Saleem’s journey of six years is devoted with the space of six lines in the narrative. Another paragraph on the next page has summary as: “So at this moment I must begin the other journey” (p.119). Saleem’s another narration in *Foothold* is just narrated in one sentence in the text. The Vendor's personal data is not given in the play like the Shakespearean plays. He is the person who acquires information on a murder in the town in Act 1. He is the one who can debate with the station master:

Station Master. A cigarette, Laloo.

Vendor. Here. The day you decide to buy a packet, the sun will rise from the West.

Station Master. You know me, Laloo. One at a ‘time’ is my motto.

Vendor. And an excellent one which you have always observed except in the case of matrimony

The structure of the play is also a trip uphill and downhill in the series of scenes depicted. *Foothold* stops at the train station, which indicates the current period. Scene 2 in Act 1, six years before Saleem tries to seek religion, is a scene from the past. The scenes from the past are set in Mustafa's lounge. In all the three acts, the action follows the same pattern.

I wanted to research about the concept of ‘time’ shift in play. For this I also reviewed the concept which was first used by Genette. He provides a flexible definition or concept of time which is primordial and is fixed in minds while associating the attributes with a reality.

Conclusion

The objectives of this exploration were to discover how Genette's model of narratology can be helpful in discovering the role of time in *Foothold*. This technique proved very helpful in

realizing the targets of the researcher. The research shows the presence of nonlinearity of time in the play under discussion. This investigation of time has shown up various findings. Firstly, learning and observing the length of the play leads to a deeper and greater comprehension of the story's structure - events in the plot. Knowing the concepts of time, ideally in a sense as is given by Genettes' model just enables readers to enter into the deep structure of the tale and also brings him to a broader and more diverse understanding of play. Secondly, two key narrative strategies in the time category i.e. analepsis and prolepsis can be confusing enough to leave readers distracted by reading a case. The person's ability to recognize analepsis and prolepsis would then give him/her a deeper and simpler interpretation of a plot.

Moreover, these two methods can clarify the boundaries of the past, present, and future in a story. Hence, pursuing reader won't be lost 'as expected when they are perusing a plot. Since being lost as expected signifies the inability of coming to cohesive comprehension of what is happening in the story. The play by Rafat incorporates numerous tools of narrative strategy linked to the notion of time. In the form of summaries, scenes and ellipses, length is presented in the plot. Rafat's concept of time in *Foothold* has many configurations that cause the writer to recount the characters incidents of many years of life. This study focuses to highlight the time shift processes in the play to show how the writer presents her characters' events of several years in a short space of the text. The current study is significant in the perspective that it investigates the distinctive core tents of time which was addressed in the previous studies on the topic.

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