

Investigating the Relationship between Pluralism and the Collapse of Temporal Order of Narratives and the Multiplicity of Narratives in Persian Metafiction

Dr. NargesSadat Sangi¹, Dr. Mohammad Javad Mahdavi^{2*}, Dr. Samira Bameshki³

¹ Phd of Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

² Assistant Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

³ Assistant Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Metafiction is the tendency of postmodernist fiction to refer to works that do not adhere to the structure and rules of the novel and speaks about these rules and techniques during the novel. There is such a postmodernist style of writing in Persian fiction as in western fiction. Despite of existing a vast variety of devices in postmodernist fiction, there are only a few dominant devices in Persian metafiction. The collapse of the temporal order of the narratives and the multiplicity of narratives are the most important of these dominant features. This study aimed at examining the relationship between the "overcoming" of these two features in Persian metafiction with pluralism in Iranian society. It is true that these features are scattered in Western works as well, but it is remarkable that they are predominant in Persian metafiction.

2. Review of Literature

To explain the relationship between pluralism and the two dominant features of Persian metafiction, we have used Bourdieu's theory. This theory goes beyond the objectivist/subjectivist and structure/action dichotomies. These dichotomies have been relatively constant poles of social sciences: while structural analysis of social life looks at it as something purely objective and external, the sociology of action looks at the social life as an objective experience. According to Bourdieu, sociologists not only should pay attention to both sides of the problem, but also understand how these two dimensions

*. Corresponding Author Email: mahdavy@ferdowsi.um.ac.ir

are inextricably linked. On the one hand, this relationship is not a direct, mechanical one that can be examined by structural analysis, but on the other hand it is far from the sociology of action. Hence, Bourdieu's eclectic theory can well analyze this relationship.

Bourdieu argues that the best way to empirically examine the dynamic relationship between structure and action is the "relational" analysis of the attitudes and actions. This relational analysis is based on three central concepts: position, habitus, and position-taking. In our study, the society of the seventies and eighties facing pluralism in Iran is the position and two features of the multiplicity of narratives and the collapse of the temporal order of narratives in Persian metafiction are position-taking. Habitus is actually a socialization of activists in the field of religion and, depending on the social conditions and characteristics of the situation, 'relativism' can be regarded as a habitus. The presence of such a habitus in the activists of the seventies, as a result of the position of that period and the emergence of pluralism, led to an action in Persian metafiction that manifested itself in the multiplicity of narratives and the collapse of temporal order.

3. Method

This study uses grounded theory. The main purpose of grounded theory is to search for social processes and themes which have a fluid nature. Therefore, the aims and basic questions of such a research should also be open and flexible. We have used this method for our study, because it is based on analytical interpretations and grounded theory. It also has an interpretive-constructive approach. On the other hand, the evaluation of this approach is based on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, unlike quantitative probabilistic sampling, is based on purposeful and criterion-based selection of study items or units. Therefore, we only extract those examples which are consistent with our claim - the relationship of metafiction with the discursive signifiers in the situation under consideration - and we describe aspects of the situation that are relevant to the multiplicity of narratives and the collapse of time order in Persian metafiction.

4. Results and Discussion

In the year 1370, with the publication of Kian Magazine, new topics in theology began in Iran. By studying Kian Magazine as an example, one can better follow these issues. In this magazine, various articles discussed the different dimensions of pluralism and the multiplicity of identities, religions and cultures. It also specifically addressed the issues of pluralism and the evolution of religious epistemology. The magazine also published interviews

with western theorists about pluralism. As a result, these issues gradually became more accessible to the public. Eventually, this situation led to the publication of the book *Fatter than Ideology*. In the following years, there were also lectures on tradition, modernity and postmodernity, and the contents of these lectures published in Kian Magazine. This continued until Shayegan published his book *The New charm: An Identity with forty pieces and moving thinking*. In this book, he explores the broader dimensions of pluralism, multiculturalism, and postmodernism. The most important outcome of pluralism in Iran in seventies was relativism (*habitus*, according on Bourdieu), and the product of this relativism in Persian metafiction was the multiplicity of narratives and the collapse of temporal order (position-taking).

5. Conclusion

The most important product of pluralism is relativism. To Bourdieu, the situation of the issue of pluralism in society can be taken as a “position” and relativism as a kind of “habitus”. Despite the wide variety of features in Western metafiction, there are only a few dominant features in Persian metafiction, among which the collapse of temporal order and the multiplicity of narratives are the most important. These two features can be seen as the action arising from the situation which is associated with relativism. this conclusion can be deduced from reading the works of Persian metafiction.

Keywords: Persian metafiction, pluralism, temporal order, multiplicity of narratives

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