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A READING OF PLACE IN ARTHUR HAILEY'S *HOTEL*

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ABSTRACT

The idea of place has a basic role in shaping human beings. The human beings have realized that distinctive role of place since their early existence. The concept of the place received its signification in literature as it is received in life. One of the best novelists who tackle the concept of place is Arthur Hailey. This paper aims to show how he reflects his artistic vision to create realistic atmospheres and places, as he reflects the significance of the place in shaping human perception for life and human relations.

Key words: place, human mind,

Introduction

The idea of place has a basic role in shaping human beings. The human beings have realized that the distinctive role of place since their early existence. They have observed through their daily life the objects and bodies or matters that occupied space or place, and they noticed that one body cannot occupy two places at the same time. So the place cannot be occupied by two separate bodies at the same time, and on that basis the human mind cannot by his spontaneity refuse the place as a conjurer for bodies because that place is necessary to discern and realize the objects.

The place in ancient's times takes the mythological mode, without finding philosophical answers about the place nature and their relation with the body, action and time. The perceptible notion of place has dominated the ancient people intrinsic thoughts according to their beliefs that, the place can be divided into three main worlds. They are: the heaven, the earth and the lower world, and these worlds are occupied by Gods and Goddess, humans and dead respectively.

The idea of place had passed between mythological and philosophical concepts, but its development reached its dominant view in the science. It is the relativity hypothesis which gathers between the time and place and considers the time as a fourth dimension for three dimensional places, which is called the Chronotope.

The increase in bioregional literature and thinking further reflects the importance of relating place with the ways in which we live our lives, Robert L. Thayer Jr.'s *Life place* considers bioregionalism in the primary importance of regenerating deep place connections and awareness. He describes simply by some as "living a rooted life" it "means you are aware of the ecology, economy, and culture of the place where you live, and are committed to making choices that enhance them"(76).

The physical and natural environment of places, as determinants influential on sense of place and place value, are indubitable. J. H. Crawford, discusses the significance of making magical places. Accordingly he believes that in *Carfree Cities* such

places are marked by "human scale, rich detail, beautiful setting, and harmonious sound and evocative scents. They require an appreciative public to come alive; people involve themselves in the magic helping to sustain it"(288). Making magical places, emotional places, unique and genuine and inspiring places, is the charge and challenge, and it is a hard one today.

Places develop the novel constriction and become the carrier of the ideas of the protagonist, and represent writer's vision of life, so in this case, the place doesn't become a part of fabric for painting, but the space made by the painting. Bahharwestates that in his book *The Shape of the Narrative Structure*, that the place "does not increase the element in novel, it acquires similarity and includes many meanings, and in some time becomes the aim from all the work"(33).

The place and reality

The idea of the 'place' in a novel is still deemed as one of the main artistic elements in creating the novel. Most novelist refers to it as realistic place or even though calls it, or intends it be similar to the reality. According to Al Faisal, in her book *Arab Novel*, she says "the place in novel is a literal imaginative place created by the imagination and by use the language according to writer's needs"(251), also in same idea Qasim refers to it in his book *The structure of Novel*, "the narrative text creates the imagination world by using words. It has a special valuable and distinctive dimensions" (4).

Usually in novels the place does exist in reader's imagination not in the outside world. It is made by language and through it, it becomes distinguishable to suggestions or occurrences. So it looms between the external and internal realm for the novelist world. Qasim states that "if the starting point of novelist is in traditional realism, it will be realistically arrived point, not through the return to the realistic world, it creates an independent world which is distinguished from than others"(785).

When the novelist uses the descriptions of place or its names, he is not headed to depict the outside place, but he does depict a narrative place

and any similarity between it, it is untrue and the cause that makes the writer use descriptions and names of place, are just meant to excite readers' imagination.

Function of the place in the novel

In the traditional novel, places appear as a background characters move in or a place of events for the novel, and the writer doesn't care about it, the place for the novelist is just a technical place, but in the romantic place, the place reveals the psychology of characters and harmony with universe and life. It carries some ideas, so in this case according to Bahrhawey "the place appears as a real dam for ideas, feelings and guess where mutual relations between human and place and can effect on each other"(31).

Place attachment, or emotional commitment to a place, is another way, Mesch and Gustavo in their book *Social Ties, Environmental Perception, and Local Attachment*, state that "place that has significance or special meaning to us, also it engenders special consideration in our action and behavior" (504), and "place attachment can be described as a 'positive emotional bond' and the emotional linkage of an individual to a particular environment"(505).

The *Hotel* presents one of the characters, called Christine, who suffers from sad memories related to the first city or place which she abode. All her family died in a plain accident. She travels to other unknown city to forget these sad memories which are strongly associated with the place, such as the loss of her family. As Hailey writes "she supposed, in a way, it was this lack of knowledge which brought her to New Orleans. After the accident in Wisconsin, dully and the vaguest of reasoning, she had sought a place where she could be unknown and which, as well, was unfamiliar to herself" (4). But in other hand we observe that the Manager of hotel doesn't leave his room in his hotel although he loses his daughter in the same place, because it is the same place that carries his beautiful memories thirty years ago:

The memory stirred him. How long ago it seemed more than thirty years since he had

carried her, as a new, young bride, across the threshold of this very room. And how short a time they had had: those few brief years, joyous beyond measure, ...leaving Warren Trent, mourning and alone, with the rest of his life to live and the St . Gregory hotel ... in the silence, a swift soft movement and a rustle of silk seemed to come from the doorway behind him. He turned his head, but it was a quirk of memory. (74)

So the place permeates the novel as an active element for construction and development of the novel. Also, it passes inside the nature of characters which affects it and the other relations. Bahharwe affirms that "the place can be considered as a network for relations, visions and viewpoints, which are united together to build narrative space. The place should be organized with the same accuracy that organized other element of the novel, as it reflects the author's endeavor to empower it" (32).

Al Faisal claims that "the narrative environment is more wildly to comprise than the place, it is all places of the novel, in addition to the relations with events and characters' view point"(256). In the same manner Bahharwe thinks that "narrative space rises through many viewpoints because of the place, levels of life, narrator, language and characters in one place, and the efficient reader who gives his accurate view point"(32).

So the place passes its primary determiner function, as a setting of events happen into extensive space for novel construction, and effect on it through basic angles. It is a human aspect, but the technical abstract place doesn't have arts value, and here lies the difference between place in novel and that in the outside reality. Simply because the place in the novel is introduced from a narrative angle, characters, events, and ideas.

Bahharwe assumes that "The narrative place is not built, unless the characters penetrate it, and there isn't any place determined previously, but the place is constructed through events created by protagonists and their characteristic" (29).

Hilssa in his book *The place in Arabic novel*, divided place into three kinds according to relation with the novel. The first one is the metonymy place, it can be found through the events of novel. It is only a place for occurring events, its rules don't pass only for exploration, and express activities of characters and events. The second place is called the technical place, it is depicted by novelist in accuracy neutrality trans-visual dimension to alive destiny and trans petty cases with no life on. The third one is the place as experimental depiction which carries the suffering of characters, ideas and vision for place. It excites the readers' imagination for preparation as a special distinctive place (8-9).

So describing a place will not help create a narrative environment, it must be the human's penetration and activation of the place. Also introducing a place from limited angles serves the general frame of novel until the description is a land where space can be built on. That space requires an intelligent writer to be established. Al Faisal affirms that "the standardized is built in narrative space, if the author succeeds in the process of building the real place and creating distinctive artistic place"(261).

The place is converted into an active element. So, the place in novel can be described as mere decoration if it lacks these essential aspects. Mostly it is the best way to understand the characters, but it is not converted into space.

The Call of Narrative Place

The call of place is the first task the novelist considers before attempting the process of place creation. This call of place transforms reader into realms of place which has certain real name. The place in novel is not similar to real place; this gives rise to differentiate between the real and the imaginary. The call is only a primary device that lacks the ability to build narrative place by self. Al Faisal argues that "the literal narrative imaginative place transforms self. Its attempts to call by real name aim to deceive reader's concept of truthness and realism of narrative community"(283).

The Place and Reality

Description is considered a basic device to depict the place for it endows it with life. Qasim believes that "it is an endeavor to present the scene of the external world not through painting but by author's words. He doesn't describe abstract reality, but reality in artistic way. The discretion in novel is drawing painting more than describing subjective reality"(110).

The description deals with things and drawings by language, it is a basic element in the novel. If the mentioning of narrative events is essential in time, description is essential for the things, but it is not a goal in its own. It makes narrative place or creates narrative space. So it is not a subject depicting but it is art depicting. In the novel the description appears beside the mentioning and dialogue. Description has many functions one of them, is the beautiful art of depiction for place also another function it is glorification for personality that will penetrate the place. For example in *Hotel* there are many descriptive pictures, that make the reader feel the wonderful place in the novelist's world like the following paragraph from Hailey's *Hotel*:

While speaking they had moved from the corridor into the hallway of the suite, a tastefully appointed rectangle with deep broadloom, two upholstered chairs, and a telephone side table beneath a Morris Henry Hobbs engraving of old New Orleans. The double doorway to the corridor formed one end of the rectangle. At the other end, the door to the large living room was partially open. On the right and left were two other doorways, one to the self-contained kitchen and another to an office-cum-bed-sitting room, at present used by the Croydon's secretary. The two main, connecting bedroom of the suite were accessible both through the kitchen and living room, an arrangement contrived so that a surreptitious bedroom visitor could be spirited in and out by the kitchen if need arose. (10)

It is so important to say the description does not transform the color and shapes as the eyes see them, but it transforms through a scope of art the esthetic psychology to serve the novel, and through language in form it helps to create space, and helps characters to move on and express personality temperament and ideas. So, place becomes an essential part of novel structure.

Also Muir sees that "the imagination world for dramatic novel happens on the time and the imaginary world, for personality novel happens in the place, in the first case the author presents for us a determined pass to place and builds event in time circle"(62). Also he confirms "the second case as he supposes that, the time is like the event becomes permanent time, that frames always dispenses and assesses once by once in circle of place. The stability and circlet line in personality novel plot are both acquired parts suitability serving meaning, the dramatic novel, which makes the sequence of events and solutions"(62).

In every time when Muir talks about the place in the novel of character or novel of events, he confirms that time isn't absolute, but it is just for domination, and he confirms that and says "the talk of plot don't deny time movement. Also he says that time is strongly woven with events and situations, and place to be connected with dominant element"(63). Any way Muir's speech doesn't decrease the importance of place in the novel

Levels of Place:

The place can be seen from intellectual viewpoint, because the place does not only have subjective neutral place, but it is narrative artistic place which is depicted from view angle through activation with characters and events and that it carries a value or represents symbol.

In the novel according to Bahrawe he proposes that "we don't face special space but we are only parts and elements to be considered in special way. So the vision will be supplied by subjective knowledge or personality carried by characters about the place (42). Qasim states that The human beings, according to Lotman, are systematically associated with the place in

“submissive ways and systems that coordinate them with the place and use the language to edit places coordinates in their mind”(75).

Bachelard refers to a relation that is possible to be established between characters and place when he talks about the work of housewife “From one object in a room to another, housewifely care weaves the ties that unite a very ancient past to the new epoch. The housewife awakens furniture that was asleep”(68). But in Hailey’s *Hotel* a different situation can be found when we see a servant, who works in the hotel and has a different reaction against the routine work, as Hailey writes:

in the course of a working day the laundry would handle some twenty-five thousand pieces of linen, ranging from towels and bed sheets through waiters and kitchen whites to greasy coveralls from Engineering. Mostly these required routine handling, but lately a vexing problem had grown infuriatingly worse. Its origin: businessmen who did figuring on tablecloths, using ball-point pens. ;Would the bastards do it at home? (62)

Pleasant, desirable places are places that stimulate our sense, that encourage what Tony Hiss in his book *The Experience of Place* calls “simultaneous perception,” and that let us to, at once, realize or understand and draw in many different sensation and stimuli. Hiss states this kind of awareness that, “seems calmer, more like a clear, deep, reflective lake”(3). This reflection is clearly seen in Hailey novel, for he focuses on the very significant attitude for his characters and their reaction towards each situation in a remarkable way.

Conclusion

The place plays an important role in human life, it helps shaping their emotional associations with the world. Place is clearly presented through life and through imaginative works. Hailey succeeds in creating an intricate and amazing world through his novel *the Hotel*. Reality seems identical with Hailey’s works as if it was merged and absorbed in every single particle of the work. Moreover his work

gives rise for a new understanding for place to continue the course of the old predecessors who had requested the place with their variant level of realizations to complete the journey towards the targeted aim. Consequently presents life through closed places and how they influence human conduct a psychology.

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