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SCENERY AND CONTRAST IN THE FORMATION OF NARRATIVE SPACE: IN THE NOVEL "TASHARI" BY THE WRITER INAAM KACHACHI AS A MODEL

Ghazwan Attia Wardi*
University of Tikrit - College of Basic Education, Sharqat - Department of Arabic Language
Email: ghazwanatwardi@tu.edu.iq

Abstract. Critical studies that focus on the elements of narrative text are preoccupied with achieving the maximum reading possibilities of the text by delving into the deep meanings of those elements. Among the elements that are of great importance is place, which is a central signifier of the text and an important actor in its formation and the completion of its structure. Accordingly, it is necessary to delve into revealing its significance and realized meanings. Therefore, we adopted the connotations of symmetry and contrast as a basis for judging places in the narrative text. Place, which has been dealt with for a long time in studies according to marginal dualities such as closure and openness, as well as familiarity and hostility, must leave these usual paths to deeper spaces of significance that rely on symmetry in describing the place and revealing the harshness of contrast and difference on the narrating self. This is what the Iraqi novel achieves, in which place has remained narratively dominant in its structure and a central factor in building its general fabric and overall significance. This is what the novel (Tashari) by the novelist Inaam Kachachi achieves, as it is a spatial novel par excellence through the symmetry and contrast active in its spatial structure.

Keywords: symmetry, contrast, spatial, structure, narrative, novel.

1. Introduction

This study looks at place from a primarily symmetrical point of view, assessing location and the effectiveness and narrative function of it, and how this symmetry relates to the place's similarities and differences. The research problem is to identify the dimensions of active places in the novel of the novelist Inaam Kaja which is a modern novel that uses place as a narrative element of the novel Tashari with the dimension of meaning of the novel, using the principle of difference is essential as a dimension of professionalism and awareness.

1.1. Research Problem:

In a way, it is a dialectical process, and this dialectic process is the actual value of place in the construction of the novel This is the creative framework that the author Inaam Kachachi used in her novel Tashari. It is one of those novels where reading casually isn't enough to get the idea of dissonance and difference, and this is definitely not going to work without getting a hold of the symmetries that lie in the narrative elements that make it up.

1.2. Research Objective:

This research aims to demonstrate the semantic dimensions of place—through its symmetry and contrast—which transcend traditional meaning and move beyond a superficial view to reveal deeper meanings achieved by the narrative fabric in the form of a novel, and to establish place as an element of the narrative text that contributes significantly to the overall meaning. Therefore, the dual nature of contrast and symmetry needs to be considered when reading place values, decoding their significance and comprehending their use in creative and aesthetic manner.

2. Research Methdology:

After the introduction and preface, this study was divided into four sections, which were followed by a conclusion, the introduction involved a theoretical discussion on place in relation to the critical scholarship, Bachelard's definition, which still remains the most important definition of place, and the semantic efficacy and sensitivity of place. The first section was called "The Procedural and Conceptual Grounding of Place" and the second section was called "Spatial Closure and Openness and Their Connection to Human Suffering and Characters." The meanings assigned to self and contained in memory, including the link between place and time and memory were explored in the third section, "Place Symbolically Representing Contradictory Human Existence" that includes war and prison, and the fourth section, "Place as a Temporal Structure Shaping Memory" that includes "Tashari." At the end of the chapters, the researcher's major findings and recommendations from the research were presented in the conclusion.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Place

Place is the space in which events unfold and within whose orbit and dimensions characters move; as Plato says, it is "a receptacle capable of containing things" [1]. One of its most famous definitions is that of Bachelard, who stated: "A place captured by the imagination will not remain neutral, subject to the measurements of a surveyor; one has lived in it not in a purely objective manner but with all the biases of the imagination. It is, in particular, often a permanent center of attraction because it concentrates existence within boundaries that protect it" [2]. It is essential to define a social vision of place in accordance with social theory—"including the way in which social theories address geographical heterogeneity, concepts of location, and the sense of spatial dimensions"[3], for place is shaped according to a narrative vision conveyed by the narrating self-as a social signifier-within the text, which furnishes its form and delineates its dimensions; and it undoubtedly remains a self that is conscious of what it reveals and narrates its events. Hence the agency of place stems from its being both the overarching narrative structure among the elements and the physical container for those elements, for humans "do not live in isolation from the rest of the narrative elements, but rather enter into multiple relationships with the other narrative components, such as characters, events, and narrative perspectives… Failing to view them within these relationships

and connections makes it difficult to understand the textual role they play" [4].

This emphasis should not be interpreted as elevating place as a narrative element above the others, but rather as recognizing its importance in shaping the narrative structure as a whole and its essential function; as it is a key agent relied upon by the narrator to convey the most significant meanings, signs, and references to the sources of pain and suffering experienced, through the functional efficacy represented by what it offers and achieves. Its function is both framing and decorative, serving purposes that have both semantic depth and those that involve spatial references [5], Nor is it lost on the reader or the critic alike the impact that place has in intensifying the meaning of time and character, as well as the event, which gains emotional power through the setting and its atmosphere-whether it be a place of war, peace, worship, or open space that evokes tranquility and reassurance, in contrast to the connotations of death and war of mortality and the inevitable destruction of life; for through this, it "conveys a sense of the meaning of life and reinforces the assurance of its continuity and duration" [2].

3.2. Spatial Closure and Openness and Their Connection to Human Suffering and Characters

The spatial dualism closure--openness in the novel Tashari is one of the most prominent structural themes that exceeds its literal denotative meaning and becomes a mechanism whereby the novel creates meaning through a process of encountering bodies and spaces, and the intertwining of selves and places. This polarity rests on a dialectic that surprises any reader by sometimes ending in captures and sometimes in opennesses. The following is a critical analysis, in depth, of the four excerpts taken from the novel.

In this description of the hospital as a confined space, the narrator tries to make the spaces he is imposing on the characters feel more hostile and confining, for example, "In the first few months, she rarely went out onto the street, except when they came to fetch her to examine a patient nearby--she would walk with them or ride in the horse-drawn carriage before she bought a car"[6].

On the first reading, this passage reminds one of Gaston Bachelard's theory of "spatial intimacy", the confined space being not only metaphorically a cage but also—like Bachelard says "a space where the will is condensed and identity is crystallized". As Bachelard says, the spaces in which we have lived for our own lives hold the "sequence of our dreams" [2]. But what makes this room in "Tashari" special is that it's a place where Wardiya has her own free will, beyond her brother's reach and the guardianship of her family; its physical imprisonment becomes a symbolic liberation. Contrastingly, this room limits her ability to travel and enhance her social status and reinforces her geographical isolation, as she is safe in her room created by the patriarchy. This tension shows that Yuri Lotman is right that the fictional space is always split into 'opposing zones separated by symbolic boundaries, and that the character realises her true existence at the moment of crossing or colliding with those boundaries' [7].

The rare street appearance, which is always linked to a professional obligation, rather than any choice, redraws the borders: The street/room dichotomy isn't only a geographical dichotomy; it's an ideological dichotomy, which becomes woven into the repressed female psyche which is, in turn, bound up in the dichotomy of safety/danger. An example of the contrast in the meaning of place is the expectation created by the collective consciousness's accumulated knowledge of a place—an expectation shattered by a reality that is both suspicious and confusing—as exemplified by the description of Paris as a city: "Not in the hallways, nor near the mailboxes, nor in front of the elevator, nor by the trash cans. And do not slam the apartment door; instead, hold it shut behind you until it exhales its final breath with the utmost politeness. Everyone practices the art of whispering behind closed doors, fortified with multiple locks reinforced by vertical bars and iron frames" [6].

This seems to address the level of a profound semantic reversion: Paris, the symbol of freedom and openness for the collective Arab and Eastern imagination, is a fortress of locks and sealed up doors. The scene is a direct reference to the Lefebvre's "production of space" [8]: Lefebvre claims that "space is neither neutral nor natural, but rather a social and political product in which relations of power are formed and embodied".

What is remarkable about this picture is the fact that in this case the confinement is not enforced by outside repressive authority, which is the case in Iraq, but by a voluntary, self-imposed confinement, in which the Parisian individual is himself responsible for the multiple locks and iron bars: these were not imposed from the outside, but brought in from the inside. This means—in the light of Foucault's idea of "surveillance and punishment" — that mechanisms of control and discipline have become internalised such that the individual has become his/her own jailer, or Foucault's "internal discipline," where the means of power move from outside to within [6].

The passage gains further resonance if read in the context of Wardah's experience in repressive Baghdad, where she learned to lock herself away out of fear, and in Paris, where everything is locked—but not in fear. This parallel might be said to be the 'cross-cultural poetics of confinement': there coercive; here voluntary; but the end result is always the same: isolation and solitude.

The following is another example of the same: "The radio broadcast an appeal to the people to exhume the graves of their relatives and transfer them to Khan Bani Saad, outside the city, where the state had allocated a cemetery to each sect" [9]. It is the phenomenon of the "semantic reversal of place", in a war situation, of the cemetery, that as an enclosed place and as a center of death and separation, becomes an object of conflict, an area where the living compete. In Tashari the entire fabric of the novel is allusive, and in this scene, the reality of mass uprooting is alluded to: "When the dead are taken from their graves, the most sacred boundary in human culture as a whole is violated—the boundary between the land of the living and the land of the dead." That is what Michel Foucault describes in his notion of 'heterotopia'; the cemetery is an authentic model of a 'different place' that remains within the heart of each culture as it is a place of individuals, but simultaneously a place of the 'temporary' as it reflects the ordinary place: 'The cemetery is someplace else, it is a place outside of ordinary places, a place in the heart of every culture, a place of individuals, but a temporary place' [10].

The self splits its contradictory orbits and paths among these places that shape character and create bitter contrasts and discord, the "diwaniya" where "Wardiya will live out the sweetest years of her youth" [6].

This description becomes most meaningful when read in Bakhtin's chronotopic context, the diwaniya is not simply a place of work, but rather the "foundational chronotope" in the development of the character of the Wardiya; for Bakhtin states that place resonates with and responds to the flow of time and history and this is exactly what the diwaniya represents in the novel: it contains both temporal and spatial aspects, the years of the youth and formative development of person and space, and "a complete existential experience, not reducible to either time or space alone" [11]. The idea of spatial openness here does not imply complete freedom but the redefinition of the self, both in relation to society and place, as in Simone Weil's terms of "rootedness" which is neither a "geographical" but "the most important human need," to belong to an "alive community" that "nourishes one's being with the past and the present."[12] This meaning is accentuated once again if we remember that the novel recounts the opening-up from a meditative remembrance perspective, a melancholic one. The very core of al-Tashari is the scattering and fragmentation of all the relationships and identities constructed there, which were once the sweetest years.

3.3. Places that symbolically represent contrasting forms of human existence

In the novel Tashari, the narrative form is used to examine war and oppression, not as an event in the background, not as a passing episode, but as an inevitable path that maps new and adventurous routes and generates unforeseen and unexpected routes that make places an unavoidable destiny. This is an aesthetic that is worked through in the novel; four textual examples illustrate that place is not only a site of oppression, it is an instrument of oppression. The space of contact between consciousness and its central area, symbolizing revelation and illumination, is active in the narrative form, especially in the characters' roles in relation to the event in a spatial context that suggests revelation and illumination rather than darkness: "I wrote as he wished, and the plan came to fruition; I entered the medical school, an ancient

building teeming with intense political activity." [6]. This brief sentence combines two layers of spatial structure – it's an "old building" that implies stability and institutionalism, but it's also a "fierce political activity", which implies dynamism and confrontation. Edward Said's idea of "implicit political geography" – geography in the novel is never neutral – but rather bears the traces of power and its conflicts – is exactly the duality of the exterior and the interior.

As a space with epistemological value connected with consciousness, the college serves a double spatial purpose: it is the "temple of knowledge" to which Wardiya has to go after the struggle of her family, where she enters as a personal victory; on the other hand, the college is a space that allows for freely expressing your memories of that era.The college as a space with epistemological value, connected with consciousness in the experience of its users, serves a dual function: it is the "temple of knowledge" to which Wardiya has to go after her struggle to get there against the will of her family, and she enters as her own victory, but also it is a space where you can express freely your memories of that time. However, it is also a "dangerous space" which contaminates any activity it houses, scientific or social, with political suspicion and which doesn't just divide, but also renders the college as a space of surveillance in the Foucauldian sense [13].

These are closed areas, where the power of signification is dominant: Not in the hallways, Not near the mailboxes, Not in front of the elevator, and Not by the trash bins. And don't slam the apartment door – hold on to it, behind you." [6]

This image, in the context of war and repression, describes another form of confinement: not a submissive seclusion, but a defensive one, which is a mechanism of survival in the presence of an omnipresent fear; and the practice of "whispering behind doors" is a spatial metaphor of the way of life under total surveillance: where the individual internalizes the constraints of reality and transforms them into daily practice, where he or she thus reproduces fear from within rather than from without, This echoes what Edward Said observed in the context of Culture and Imperialism: "Geography in the novel is not innocent; it bears the traces of colonialism and hegemony." The fortified doors in Paris (where everyone was supposed to be free) and the doors of Baghdad (where everyone was supposed to be oppressed) produce the same behavior, though, suggesting that historical trauma transcends geography and resides within the body when it takes on a new space [14].

3.4. Place as a Temporal Structure That Shapes Memory

It is a syntactic conclusion of the analysis, as it explores the deeper relationship between place, time and memory—the one that transcends place and time as "simply context" and makes place in Tashari not only a place that contains time, but also a structure that creates, shapes and reproduces time. The analysis follows mainly Bakhtin's idea of chronotope, but also incorporates Bachelard's idea of dreamlike memory and Said's idea concerning the subjective experience of exile.

As the story unfolds, we see that the temporal correspondences run parallel to the spatial correspondences, and that they run in opposition as well as connected signifiers; more importantly, they are descriptively interconnected in the meaning of the story as a whole. An example of such a temporal correspondence is the following description:

"It is now 7:00 a.m. in Paris.
9:00 a.m. in Baghdad.
10:00 a.m. in Dubai.
Still mid last night in Manitoba.
And it is 1:00 a.m. in Haiti.

Like if a slaughterman grabbed his cleaver and said, "Let the pieces be dropped in all those areas…." This line, "the liver toward North America, / the lungs toward the Caribbean, / the arteries floating on the waters of the Gulf," is the novel's central metaphor and at the same time the perfect embodiment of the notion of chronotope in the text, Bakhtin's definition of which is "an essential interconnection of temporal and spatial relationships as manifested in literature," and "the structure in which 'time condenses to become artistically visible, while space responds to the movement of time and history"[15].

The differences in time between the cities are not just technological, but a symbol of the breakdown of familial unity and identity in space and time. When these differences are metaphorized as "a butcher with his cleaver", and then compounded with the physical metaphor, the family is not only spread out across several maps, but is being dismembered, scattered like the limbs of a body torn apart, and the image of the butcher with his cleaver is the very subject of Al-Tashari's concept, one of dispersion and the dissolution of unity, that is announced from the very beginning of his title. There is also a rather deep philosophical dimension: "Simultaneous time" is the present "now" that is felt by the body, which is experienced in 5 different locations simultaneously. This dispersion is the opposite of Bachelard's concept of "full presence": that which is needed to belong, and "belonging" in his thesis is the sense that one is "whole in one's place," which is not the case with Tashari's geography" [3].

The patterns of relatively absolute places include spatial designations that imply belonging, as the "diwaniya" does, and which also structure the overall narrative fabric of the novel, but also become an obsession, and imply much of the character's movements and her sense of belonging based on memory: "In the Diwaniya, Wardiya will enjoy the sweetest years of her youth; she will be confronted with the dangers of her profession, stay up late tending the fire or sleep soundly, she will make the strongest friendships, meet people, learn how to deal with them, either a farmhand with a plot of land, or a feudal lord who owns estates."[4]

In this passage, a fundamental moment in the relationship between place, memory and identity is embodied; Wardiya makes an explicit temporal distinction, one that is not chronological but located in the space: before and after the Diwaniya. So place becomes a temporal axis, which retroactively restructures the story, and the metaphor of the plant (the 'rootedness') is a metaphor that becomes ironic, the deeper the roots in the Diwaniya, the more painful the uprooting when it comes[5].

Wardiya's Diwaniya is not the real Diwaniya, but an idealized version of it, one that is always in conflict with the actual, continually changing homeland; this is what Edward Said has termed a "virtual place" when he says that the exile carries in his memory an idealized version of his homeland that is always at odds with the actual, ever-changing homeland [6].

A parallelism is established between the two cities (Diwaniya and Baghdad), with the characters of the aunt and Wardiya, to create a simultaneous vision and a meaning: "My aunt's arrival from Baghdad did not change the steady rhythm of my life, but it disrupted the monotony. She sits among us and joins in with our conversation in our language; asking both specific and random questions, she doesn't settle for a single thread but unravels the web of conversation." [7]. We point out in this passage that it is a model of a narrative place that can be called the "absent-present place" for Baghdad, physically not there, but present in each moment of the conversation, the "specific and random questions" that represent moments of loss and heartbreak. The setting does not provide an interpretation of Bakhtin's notion of "chronotope," though it does in a different sense, of the "interweaving of time and space within one text," as the "chronotope in exile" does not exist in this sense, but rather in the sense of "interweaving of times and places within one consciousness," of the "fragmentation" of times and places within one person, of the "chronotope" of the narrator—who is in Paris, but whose memory is in Baghdad, whose body is present, whose spirit is past—and of the "chronotope" of the novel, which is that of the "fragmentation" of times and places within one consciousness. It is something that Edward Said noticed in Reflections in Exile, writing that the exile is a "multiple person": He exists in the present and recalls another time; he is at one place and yearns to be at another. This multiplicity of existence, which is what gives form to Tashari's novel—a tightly woven narrative structure, every dialogue and every scene contains a "dual place": the visible place, the remembered place [9].

This fragmentation is achieved both completely and partially throughout the novel's narrative arc, a dual harmony and contrast, as Bazzaq and his sons, his wife Julie and Kamala, go to the modern cemeteries in Khan Bani Saad, which are cold and barren, without any palm trees or zakkum trees in sight, a pyramid of square mausoleums, terraced across the landscape.

This is the metonymic half of the metaphor; the other half, the narrative half, is the

fragmentation that occurs within one city, rather than across several cities, that is, the fragmentation of one place (the cemetery) rather than the fragmentation of places. Presence in the cemetery at the same time carries the weight of the family distributed across continents and makes it a "spatio-temporal intersection" in which the past, present and future converge, in the face of the vastness of loss. From the point of view of Gérard Genette's theory in Thresholds of the Text, this scene reminds one of: The title "Tashari"—a Turkish word meaning "scattering" or "dispersion"—immediately suggests that all of the spaces in the novel are wounded, broken spaces, and the cemetery in this scene exemplifies this to the highest degree: Family members are divided, family members are separated from their loved ones, and the dead are left without their families. The dead are left without families, the living guests are separated from each other, and the families themselves will be dispersed over the map [11]. In this context, the title "Tashari", as a textural threshold (in Genette's sense of the word), functions on three overlapping levels: geographical (situational dispersion in the city), temporal (dissolution of the shared time and the multiplicity of timelines) and emotional (memory and identity fragmentation). But perhaps the significance is heightened because the novel concludes without the resolution or treatment of "Tashari" and this aesthetic choice is not only the title of a novel, but is an aesthetic diagnosis of an incurable condition, the condition of exile and uprooting.

4. Conclusion:

In concluding this study, we must highlight some of the findings and recommendations reached by the study, from the researcher's perspective. These are a research framework that combines the critical perspective of the study and the implications of the study, as described below:

1. Place is a narrative component, it is a pivotal component that is most evident in composition and most effective in terms of significance; it always plays a part in the narrator's purpose.
2. Place is an element which can't be just a single concept self-contained, because it has to be contrasted, compared and repeated, in order to increase its meaning; it can't be just a concept, because it is a structure of differences, a structure of diversity, it is what everything is about, it is the axis of life in general.
3. Place is important because of how much it is tied to the spirit of life and what role it plays in the development of the character, as opposed to what role it plays in the development of the events. It does not exclude variation in spatial patterns as diverse places are equal in their semantic contribution, they provide the symbols, furnishings and semantic pathways that contribute to the overall meaning.
4. The novel Tashari achieves such semantic efficacy that goes beyond the fragile meaning through the correspondence that takes place between places along the narration, as it is based on a correlative structure that will gradually shed light on the place and how its nature is changing.
5. Place is a symbol of presence; here not a transient connotation, but the human relation with the environment. Its reflection and correspondence are the actualization of life in terms of openness or closeness to the self.
6. One of the active correspondences that can provide a focus for theory and criticism may be the relationship between places and consciousness – how they resonate with it, or how they resist it. This is a process that takes place over time and is a conflict between a fascination with comprehending reality and a fascination with altering it.
7. One of the unavoidable consequences is that place is a temporal construct when it serves as a means of recall: It is the geography of the moment and the day, the bitter aftertaste of yesterday and the memory of tomorrow that is not in keeping with reality. All narrative forms are inextricable from place, as a realized temporal signifier, of memory.



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