

Examination of Modern Iranian Novelism

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Abstract

There are many old stories in Iran. But fiction has come from Europe to Iran. Mahmud Dowlatabdi is one of the most influential writers especially in Regional Persian literature. His works are valuable in the realm of story in Iran. He illustrates some elements in his work such as: political, social, and economical elements faced during his life. In this article, it is tried to present a brief explanation about story, short story and its appearance in Iran, summary of "travel" & then elements of story in it. In some parts, a brief explanation of story's elements & some sample of the work are given.

Keywords: Fiction, Novelism, Iran.

1. Introduction

In all of the different cultures, periods, and nations, story's narration was not conveyed in written form but orally. The history of it is as long as man's life when the Troglodyte hunted animals (At nights, cutting down the meats, tell the events of day to each other) (Forester, 2005: 40). While writing a story has a great influence in men's thoughts & also men try to support their ideas and convey them to the others by means of writing during different eras, longevity of writing a story is shorter than that of storytelling. Nowadays, story is absolutely different from what is called tale & legend in the past but these tales & legends are the roots of modern stories. In fact, stories in this time are the turning history of latest stories presented as modern stories by means of a new way & method.

2. Definition of Story

In fact, story is something included series of natural & reasonable events and adventures which has chronological order and made some effects on minds. (Naeemi, 1991:15) making a relationship with others by our experiences, & we are sure that those experiences are exclusive and could be interesting for others. Again, iterating the experiences release us from internal, mental, and social tensions. It seems narration is originated from minds of men.

Fatollah Biniiaz believes that: "any text originated from writer's imagination with no attention to quality & quantity of fact, in which one or several characters & events are depicted is called story." (Biniiaz, 2009:15) Story in its modern form appeared in Europe after Rabelais & Cervantes, almost after 18th century, since failure of feudalism and appearance of Bourgeoisie. According to Naser Irani: " All the narrative works of literature which are based on writer's imagination rather than history & fact is story. (Irani, 2001:48) It should also mentioned that all the narrative works are not story.

3. Short Story

Short story in its modern form appeared in 19th cent. First, Edgar Allen Poe defines it in 1842 (Mirsadeghi, 1997:24). Poe wrote important reviews of *Twice-Told Tales* by Nathaniel Hawthorne and defines short story as: " A writer should try to impact the reader by unity of effect and such a work should be read in one sitting in 2 hours." (The same, 25)

"Short story is some reported scenes which produce motivation for main character. He /She have special features to removes the problems in a best way and tolerate difficulties." (Arthur Nelly, 1995:9)

It can be said that short story has one main incident and other components to a far greater degree. It has limitation of time & economy of characters.

"Short story is a short narrative in which the writer represents the main character in a well ordered plot and all of these lead to a unity of effect."(Yunesy, 2000:15)

4. Narrative in Iran

Narrative in Iran has a noticeable & widespread ground. Its history refers back to before Islam. Narration & story telling in Iran is like Dramatic literature in ancient Greek & Europe. A group of people called narrator gather the people and tell a story. These oral narration during Islamic period were written and the people who write these oral narration were called scribe. (Shamisa, 1996:193, 194) the beginning years of (1921) were determinant years in manifestation of different aspects of contemporary literature of Iran. Iranian becomes familiar with short story by French writers. Short story in Iran was introduced by "Once upon a time" by Jamalzadeh and was propagated by Sadegh Hedayat, Sadegh Choobak, and Bozorg Alavi. "One of the reasons for not firming of early novel was writer's lack of proficiency in creating believable characters & incidents. Also, writer's main profession in Iran was not writing story, so instead of writing novel, he/she wrote short story "said Mirabedini about short story in Iran. (Mirabedini, 1996:79)

5. Biography & Works of Dowlatabadi

He was born in 1940 in Dowlatabad; Sabzevar. He is a famous writer in contemporary Iran. He went to Dowlatabad for education and concurrently worked numerous jobs. He was a shoemaker, barber, and baker. "After finishing elementary school, the rest was working & working. Especially I continue my education disorderly after (1964-1965) _ this time I published some books_ and then gave up the educating for ever." Dowlatabadi said (Faryad/Chehelan, 1998:194). His childhood was spent during World War II and its descended poverty. Leaving for Tehran when he was 20, publishing His first story, *The Pit of Night*, was published in 1962 in the Anahita Literary Magazine. He was arrested in (1974) due to his books were found in every house. He goes on with writing assiduity and since (1968) his books were published.

His Works:

Stories:

The Pit of *Night*

Salomon's Hegira

The man

By Shobeir

Curve coil

Cattle Neat herd

The Travel

Aghil

Guzzle, My Destiny Gazelle

Desert's layers (stories)

The world's log

Novels:

Kolidar

Missing Soluch

The Behavior

The days of aging people

Other Works:

The Hardship (play)

Inevitably & Artist Selection (articles)

General position of art & current literature (articles)

Phoenix (play)

We also are a kind of people (interview)

Never sighted drop (interviews & speeches)

6. Summary of Novel

The main character, Mokhtar, a blacksmith, decided to leave for Koveyt because of poverty, willing to find a way to rescue of bad economic situation. His house was placed in Tehran's suburb on a height, near train station and several old cattles. He talks about his decision to his wife, Khatoon. Not given any attention to Khatoon's disagreement, he repairs the wall of his house and goes to station accompany his wife, her mother BiBi and his daughter, Khavar and leaves for Koveyt. After his departure, a melancholic atmosphere covers the family. Then Marhab comes to the story, He does not stay on a fixed place nor has a fixed job. Making friendship with Ali in Moshir's coffee house, by his help, Marhab finds a job in a factory. A long time after Mokhtar's departure, no news of him comes, most of the time Marhab Thinks about Khatoon and wandering around her house. One night a gendarme brings a letter shows that Mokhtar has sunk in the sea. Hence, Khatoon should find a job in factory to subsistence. Because of these events, Marhab & Khatoon get closed to each other & fall in love. After a while Mokhtar, who is not dead in fact, comes. Shooting to the sea in a struggle with police, His leg was cutted by a shark, so he is ashamed to return home. Wandering scruffy around home For 13 nights, Mokhtar saw that some men went his house every night. He denied it. One night Marhab refuses Khatoon's love & tell her he would leave the city, abandoned her. Mokhtar saw and chased him but couldn't reach him, so goes to the coffee house and starts talking to himself and delirium. Meanwhile, the master of Coffee house, Moshir, insulted him. This event made Mokhtar to leave the Coffee house and throws him before train.

7. Studying the Elements of Story (Hero or Character)

The heroes or characters form the plot of the story by their actions & their utterances or dialogues. (Shamisa, 1996:162). The writer could create any character freely. By means of his imagination, he could create the characters which are not real & do something not in writer's abilities, and totally different from people we see every day. The most noticeable fault in studying the characters is to consider them as real one. But most of the short story writers try to close the character of their stories to real people. The characters of story are divided in different aspects such as: dynamic characters & static characters. Static characters are those who have no changes or a little change during the story. In contrast of static character, dynamic one changes permanently (Mirsadeghi, 1997:93_94). both kinds of characters existed in "Travel". The main character, Mokhtar/ his wife, his mother_in_law, his daughter, Marhab, who appears after Mokhtar departure and does not stay in one place, other minor characters like: Marhab's friend, Ali,/ Mokhtar's master, / gendarme, and etc. The main character, Mokhtar, is a dynamic character that left his family and traveled to Koveyt because of economic problems and sense of responsibility to change bad situation.

"Putting his forearm on his forehead, Mokhtar lays supinely, stares at the dark side of ceiling. He was silent." I want to go Koveyt "Mokhtar said. "Koveyt? Where is Koveyt?" asked Khatoon. He replies: "It is somewhere in the world"

*_: Is there lots of smithery?
_: not smithery, but other jobs...it is said that there are well paid jobs.
_: How do you know??
_: Every body said.
_: In a foreign country??
_: There is a lot of Iranian there.
_: What should we do when you are not here?
_: I'd send you some money" (Dowlatabadi, 2004:12, 13).*

8. Atmosphere

It is dominant and mental, atmosphere and mood of story, which refers to the feeling the reader gets about the story based on what the author uses. It is the feeling the reader pick up. (Biniaz.2009:67). In fact, the atmosphere of the story related to the author's will and his uses of it. Sometimes the narrator's tone makes an atmosphere and has an effect on readers. The sad atmosphere of "Travel" is described by character's mood & the weather condition. Description, is an important device to create atmosphere.

A gloomy evening fill master Safi's stithy. It was not day nor night but glum like a mixture of dust and smoke. The spot and black walls were disappeared in darkness of air. The forge was off. Mokhtar was thinking"(Dowlatabadi, 2004:7).

The characters live in Tehran's suburb & near Shahriar, Mokhtar's house is totally full of poverty, grief, and misery

that these conditions seems more clear after his departure.

"The train comes and makes a wall before them, covers them, reduces its speed and stops for a moment, then moves and accelerates, leaves the station. Now Mokhtar is on train and the family is in the station, looking the back of train. A cool silence covers them, all were starked"(The same, 17).

9. Conflict in Story

There are some kinds of conflict in the story (struggling between two people, struggle of man and nature, and struggle of man & God or man & destiny)(Shamisa, 1996:160).

"It is one of the important elements of story which increases the excitement of the story for readers. It is the struggle between two forces or two characters that makes the foundation of story, raises it to climax, then Crisis(Turning point) and finally relief. Without any conflict, the story is a simple piece of writing" (Mirsadeghi.1986.231).

The conflict in "Travel", is struggle between man & destiny. Dowlatabadi tries to show Mokhtar's struggle with poverty.

"here is a lot of factory. Said Khatoon.

_: I'm a blacksmith, I'm 35. To work in these factories I should be young and expert, there is no enough wages. Yet, it is hard to be accepted." (Dowlatabadi) (). In the story, Mokhtar's wife, Khatoon, is forced to depend on Marhab, because of bad situation. "Khatoon looked at his morose face and asked: what about you? Didn't you want to visit?

_: no, I'm not in these mood.

_: I like to accompany me...

_: Do you want to visit? So ...do it yourself. Said Marab imperiously.

Khatoon like a meek wife and as she obey her man, asked: "what about my shoes?"

_: Put them there. "Replied Marhab"(The same,59)

"Marhab smiles at her. Khatoon knows the meaning of his smile, understands that she involved his mind and be proud of it. A kind of womanly pride. This mood is existed in all of the women. And Marhab finds out she wants to find her place in his heart"(the same, page 61).

10. Events in the Story

The event of a story is the important things that happen during the story and nothing is like foretime.(Biniiaz, 2009:220). According to Shamisa: "Conflict leads to event. To find the reasons of happening the events and motivation, we should refers to conflicts."(Shamisa.1996:160)

Events are divided in: main events & minor one." Main events are those which are essential for plot while the minor events are subsidiary one which the author use them to report the plot." (Mirsadeghi, 1986:193). Sometimes a simple event could make the plot of a story. In "Travel", Mokhtar is forced to travel to Koveyt because of poverty and it leads to several main & sub events which makes the plot.

Khatoon is forced to sell the carpet: "_: Master Safi, do as this carpet is yours. We need its money to solve a lot of problems.

_: I do my best, we should wait for customer. The carriage moved. Khatoon stays and watch for a moment, then returns home and shut the door."(Dowlatabadi, page: 66)

Marhab comes to Keaton's life:

"Marhab & Khatoon were walking by the glacier.

_: Who are you? What do you want?

_: You saw me later. Said Marhab.

_: Does that guy come again?

_: Which one?

_: He who comes that night...

_: How do you know about it? Where were you? Asked Khatoon.

_: Most of the night I'm there, and you never saw me. All the time that I'm not busy I'd come near your home" (the same, page 55).

11. Point of View

"It is a specified or stated manner of consideration or appraisal; standpoint. Point of view is the mode of narration that an author employs to let the readers "hear" and "see" what takes place in a story. It shows the position of the narrator in relation to the story."(Mir sadeghi, 1997:385). According to the most of authors, critics, and theorists, "The most important elements of a narrative is its point of view, it takes not only the structure of the narration but also that of the plot under its impact."(Biniaz, 2009:291)

Most of the time in a short story, point of view is fixed. Point of view comes in three varieties, it may narrate as first person, second person, and third person narration. Each kinds of point of view employed by the author influences other elements of the story. It influenced: characterization, plot spread, language, etc. "Travel" is narrated by third person, omniscient. By this kind of point of view at the beginning of story, setting (place, time i.e. near sunset, on master safi's stithy) is described very well. Dialogues and events are narrated from out.

"Bed? asked the master of coffee house.

_: I have a blanket. "said Marhab, puts the bundle under the head, pulls the blanket over himself, snuggles, breathes deeply and then cedes his tired body to sleep)" (Dowlatabadi, 19).

12. Tone

"It is poet or writer's attitude towards the subject of the story as the readers feel it."(Dad, 2006:413). "it makes the feeling and atmosphere in speech. Tone decides how it should be read by the readers, the characters introduce themselves to the reader by using different tones. So it has a close meaning to style. The tone can be formal, informal, serious, comic, sarcastic, sad, etc."(Shamisa, 1996:165) The author's attitude towards the subject is introduced by tone, so it is almost like a style.

"The role of tone in a story is important and complicated, but the most important effect of style is to create a tone." (Kani, page 98)

It can be said the tone is production of events, subject and components of story which is tangible in narrator & characters statement. The tone and atmosphere are related to each other. When there is a sad atmosphere, the tone is sad and when there is a happy situation, the tone is cheerful. In "Travel", as the atmosphere is sad, tone is sad. At the beginning of the story it is clear:

"A gloomy evening fill master Safi's stithy. It was not day nor night but glum like a mixture of dust and smoke. The spot and black walls were disappeared in darkness of air. The forge was off. Mokhtar was thinking. Maybe was not aware of his position, he was astonished and silent, looking at the extinguishing ash as he was looking for something" (Dowlatabadi, 7).

"Khatoon takes the letter from policeman. She stares at it without recognizing the handwriting. Suddenly, crumpled the letter, bursting the tears and broke down. Khavar comes near her mom, Khatoon hugs her and wails. Bibi cries too, the policeman stands up and whispered:" O, God!"And leaves the house"(The same, page 47). In every situation, Dowlatabadi employs a proper tone in the story.

13. Setting & Background

The time and place in which the story is occurred is called setting.(Mirsadeghi, 1997:449). Description of situation and events which introduce the characters and heroes to the reader is called Background. "A good background, inform the readers about the historical, geographical, and sociological aspects."(Shamisa, 1996:164)

The background gives some information not only about the time and place of the event, but also about other aspects of the story like: habits and customs, ways of living, and general thoughts of characters. The place of the story is Tehran's suburb, near Shahriar, at the beginning of 50th decade, which describe the social problems, the Pahlavi's tyranny, and injustice in the society. The problems of Mokhtar & his family is a simple instance of people difficulties in that years. Through characterization, Dowlatabadi tries to sympathy to and show the circumstance of the society.

14. Pattern

"A texture which includes all components of the story, for example: characters, and related them to each other, so it is like form in poetry. The pattern, makes the events of a story believable. But, what is the pattern of a story? Is it traditional or modern? Real or imaginative? Dowlatabadi use the form of short story to write this realistic work. It is about a particular subject, Mokhtar's emigration because of poverty, and some sub events like: Marhab's arrival to Mokhtar's life, Keaton's love to Marhab, Khatoon forces to work.

There are some minor characters in the story who did not take serious: Moshir, the master of coffee house/ the policeman/ Gendarme/Marhab's friend, Ali/ Khatoon's mother and her daughter, Bibi & Khavar.

In fact, the main idea of "Travel" is about emigration and its bad effects, difficulties after Mokhtar departure, and then his death, Marhab's departure, Khatoon's Prostration.

15. Plot

Aristotle defines the plot as: "Combination of events and imitation of actions" (Mirsadeghi.1997.62). The plot has a deep relation with form, content and character of a story and attached to them. "An event begins from introduction and then in order there are: rising action, crisis, climax, resolution, falling action, and finally, ending.

In fact, plot is sequence of events according to cause and effect. The logic of every story is based on ordered sequence of cause & effect" (Shamisa.1996:162).

There are two kinds of plot: open plots & close plots."Close plot has a complication, nested and technical quality. In other words, its artificial order predominates its natural order. It is employed in mysterious stories which have resolution and absolute conclusion" (Mirsadeghi, 1997:79). "In open plot, unlike the close one, the natural order predominates artificial order and there is not a noticeable resolution in this plot. In other words, there is no absolute conclusion in open plot. In this type of plot, the author tries to hide himself and lets the story currents like a real life, to be tangible & believable. Hence, the author does not answer the questions and the reader should find the answer by himself" (The same, 80).

Dowlatabadi's stories often have a simple plots. At the beginning of the story we face Mokhtar's confusion about leaving the stithy and traveling to Koveyt. In the way of home, looking at the past and feel absurdity. He thinks he loses his life. Coming home, talking to Khatoon about his decision and her disagreement doesn't change his mind. Then, there is rising action.

"He was as not fixed on any where, it was as there was no past, he was free, and it was as falling down the sky, where was his living? Was it lost? Is it possible to loose your life and then come to know that you loose it? What was the compensation? He looks at his hands...they were empty, rough, and crusty" (Dowlatabadi, 8).

The crisis in "Travel" is when Mokhtar's departed the city for a long time and there was no news of him, So his family have a lot of difficulties and because of this, Bibi decided to talk to Master or his son.

*": I go morrow and talk to him, if he procrastinates it, I'll talk to his son.
_: Who is he?
_: He's very humble, he's not like masters, does his work" (The same, page 36).*

When the policeman comes and brings a letter containing Mokhtar's death is climax of the story.

"The policeman twisting words in his mouth, finally said: to bring such news is really hard...I don't know...Someone has written the letter and send it to police station. (Khatoon takes the letter from policeman. She stares at it without recognizing the handwriting. Suddenly, crumpled the letter, bursting the tears and breaks down. Khavar comes near her mom, Khatoon hugs her and wails. Bibi cries too, the policeman stands up and whispered:" O, God!"And leaves the house" (The same, 46,47).

After a lot of struggle, Khatoon falls in love with Marhab gradually and tries to rely on him, the story currents to resolution. Whenever Marhab does not come home, she is moody and bad-tempered, whenever he comes, she is happy.

"Several days with any news of Marhab were spent, Khatoon makes an effort to don't care about it but Bibi knows that she went to find a news of him. If Marhab didn't come home for a night, Khatoon would be impatient like a pigeon that her couple was eaten by a cat. She became too angry like a rabid dog! Talking to her was impossible, she beats Khavar, shouts at her mother" (The same, 81).

The falling action begins when Marhab comes to her home and confesses that he couldn't support them.

"I couldn't support you and your family forever, I couldn't, you know...not getting used to do so. I couldn't call down myself for someone or something... I couldn't flatter the boss and obey his orders...I couldn't bow any one...I couldn't to do so ...

Silent and half dead, Khatoon bends and sits near Korsi (a kind of traditional heater) before Marhab's boot.

_ I never can...: said Marhab.

*_ I'd count on you, in my mind: Said Khatoon hardly (The same, 107).
And the story finished after Mokhtar was crushed under the train.*

16. Experience in the Story

"The current actions in a story are production of experiences" (Shamisa, 1996:160).

It could be said that Dowlatabadi depicted his own experiences, bitter or sweet, and others to write the story". Misery men emigrate with no plan and leave their family, without any news of themselves. Perhaps, they died or were exiled. Hence, some family around us, lived hardly with any headman and the family was managed by the house-wives" (Chehelstan, 1994: 143).

17. Theme

"It is defined as a main idea or an underlying meaning of a work in which the author shows his attitude towards life. It shows the main idea of the work" (Biniaz, 2009: 52). It exists in every parts of the story and shows that the story is exemplified by the actions & utterances. "Theme is main and dominant idea of work which is expanded in a story and relates the events and circumstances"(Mirsadeghi, 1997:174).

The writers fit the theme into the thoughts, feelings, and imaginations of characters. Schools believes that: "Most of the time the narrator don't presents and confirm his interpretations and comments definitely, but present it as a character's idea." (Schools, 1998:24)

Dowlatabadi's main themes are based on two basis: village & city. There are two streaks in his work. One of them is about rural issues and the other one is about the issues of city and urban life which is clear in "Travel". Dowlatabadi depicts the living in suburb of a city, poverty and misery which leads to Mokhtar's travel, and the problems and difficulties of his family, on his work.

18. Conclusion

Mahmoud Dowlatabadi is one the outstanding authors in Regional literature whose stories are based on two basis, village and city. He narrates the stories about village, problems of city and urban life with an exact insight in two schools, including: Realism and Naturalism. He tries to depicts suffers and difficulties of people and injustice in Pahlavi's era. He involved in such an issues, so those events and difficulties are told through his characters' utterance. "Travel" is one of his works about these problems.

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