Retroactive reading of poem "Ibrahim in Fire" of Shamloo with an emphasis on the commentary by Michael Riffaterre

Lectura retroactiva del poema "Ibrahim en fuego" de Shamloo con énfasis en el comentario de Michael Riffaterre

Leitura retroativa do poema "Ibrahim in Fire" de Shamloo com ênfase no comentário de Michael Riffaterre

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Abstract

The aim of this research is examination the poetry "Ibrahim in Fire" of Shamloo according to the Riffaterre theory. This is an analytical-comparative research that was conducted using content analysis. The results showed that according to the structural matrix of the poetry, the poet's hidden object to express freedom-seeking and struggle and, more importantly, inviting the audience for uprising, has been pointed out, and the poet, in repression of that era, has had no way to express his ideal but the use of mythical allusions and allusive references to them.

Keywords: Riffaterre, Semiotics, Retroactive Reading, Literary Competence, Accumulation, Signification, Ibrahim in Fire

Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación es examinar la poesía "Ibrahim en fuego" de Shamloo de acuerdo con la teoría de Riffaterre. Esta es una investigación analítica comparativa que se realizó utilizando el análisis de contenido. Los resultados mostraron que, según la matriz estructural de la poesía, se ha señalado el objeto oculto del poeta para expresar la búsqueda de la libertad y la lucha y, lo que es más importante, invitar al público a la revuelta, y al poeta, en la represión de esa era, no ha tenido forma de expresar su ideal, sino el uso de alusiones míticas y referencias alusivas a ellas.

Palabras claves: Riffaterre, Semiótica, Lectura Retroactiva, Competencia Literaria, Acumulación, Significación, Ibrahim En Fuego

Resumo

O objetivo desta pesquisa é examinar a poesia "Ibrahim in Fire" de Shamloo de acordo com a teoria de Riffaterre. Esta é uma pesquisa analítico-comparativa que foi realizada usando análise de conteúdo. Os resultados mostraram que, de acordo com a matriz estrutural da poesia, o objeto oculto do poeta para expressar a busca pela liberdade e a luta, mais importante, convidando a audiência para a insurreição, foi apontado, e o poeta, na repressão daquela época, Você não tinha como expressar seu ideal, mas o uso de alusões míticas e referências alusivas a elas.

Palavras-chave: Riffaterre, Semiótica, Leitura Retroativa, Competência Literária, Acumulação, Significação, Ibrahim no Fogo.

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Introduction

Nowadays, the knowledge of semiotics has found "a special place in literary studies, and the analysis of literary texts has become one of the topics of day from the viewpoint of semiotics. While literary criticism formerly focused, mainly, on examining the meaning of texts. Semiotics shows how meaning is generated through patterns of interconnected signs or significations of the text" (Makaryk, 2009).

"The effect of semiotics on literary studies, more than anything else, focuses on the study of the structure of text; hence, it changes the direction of literary theory from the study of the meaning of text to the study of the relationships existing in the text, and provides grounds for more systematic and rigorous analysis" (Barekat & Efhekhari, 2011).

Theory of Michael Riffaterre "can be regarded as embracing discussions that try in its own way, in a coherent way, to use a thought of structuralism, post- structuralism, semiotics, psychoanalytic theories of literature, and other theories of reading. While, it should be said that his works are based on a firm and true impression of textual meaning and intertextual narrative"(Alan, 2011). The effect of semiotics on literary studies, more than anything else, focuses on the study of structure of text, hence, it changes the literary theory from the study of the meaning of text to the study of the relationships existing in the text, and provides grounds for more systematic and rigorous analysis (Barekat & Efhekhari, 2011). However, in our country, semiotic research in the field of literature has not yet been seriously raised. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the extent and complexity of literary texts (poetry and prose) in our country, and the other factor is in fact the diversity of approaches categorized as semiotics, most of these approaches share some basic concepts with each other, but differ in methodology.

This essay is an attempt to introduce briefly the cognitive theory of Michael Riffaterre, which is specifically used in poetry, and to apply it to the analysis and critique of one of Shamloo's poems with emphasis on "Ibrahim in Fire". Hence, first we will explain the most important structures of the Riffaterre's view on poetry and poetry analysis, and then we will examine its application in poetic examples.

Problem Statement

Contemporary literary studies have been able to open up a new path to the study of poetic text by using valuable linguistic achievements, poetic theories, structuralism and semantics. Michael Riffaterre considers poetry as a special application of language and considers the language of poetry distinct from the speech and common language (Riffaterre, 1999).

In his view, "the ordinary language is used to refer to a reality, while the poetic language is based on the message" (Scholes, 2004). Riffaterre expanded his theory based on a firm and simple description of the structure of poetry meanings in the book "semiotics of poetry" (1978), in which he argues that "readers with literary competence can reach beyond apparent meaning; the real reaction of the reader to poetry occurs when we realize that poetry induces meaning only indirectly. To understand the meaning of a poem, linguistic competence is not enough, we have to reveal a higher level of meaning to interpret it "(Seldan, 2005). Riffaterre considers the second stage and "retroactively" retrospective reading as a kind of "interpretation and review, revision and comparison" (Riffatere, 1984).

In this research, we will analyze the semiotics of Shamloo's poetry (with the emphasis on Ibrahim in Fire) based on Michael Riffatere's poetic theory and will try to open a new window for understanding these poems. By studying the poems of Shamloo, it is determined that in Shamloo's poems, the phenomenon of "ungrammaticality" is seen as an indicator of poetic significations, and understanding of "meaning" is done using the usual linguistic competence, but "poetic significations" of Shamloo is possible using "literary competence".

Research Questions

The semiotic analysis and study of Shamloo's poems with Riffatere's theory is important for understanding his poetry, which can be studied with precise research. In this research, we tried to answer the following main questions and sub-questions:

1. What specific semiotic phenomenon is observed in Shamloo's poems?
2. How understanding of "meaning" in Shamloo's poems can become osible?

3. How "poetic significations" in Shamloo's poems can be understood?

4. How "meaning matrix" is organized in Shamloo's poetry?

Research Hypotheses

Examining and answering our research questions leads us to the following hypotheses:

1. In Shamloo's poems, the phenomenon of "ungrammaticality" is seen as an indicator of poetic significations.

2. Understanding the meaning of Shamloo's poems is possible using the common "linguistic competence".

3. Understanding "poetic significations" of Shamloo is possible using "literary competence".

Overview of the framework of Michael Riffatere's theory

Ferdinand de Sossoor was the first to talk about language and semiotics, after him many scholars began to study and theorize, that Michael Riffaterre, with the theory of poetry analysis in the twentieth century, was considered in the field of poetry and literature along with the views of Jakobson, Lich, Bakhtin, Mukarovsky, Hans Robert Jauss, Stanley Fish and Jonathan Culler. Riffaterre pays attention to the reader and the intertextuality, according to Riffaterre: "The reading method is a kind of understanding of the metaphorical basis of poetry, that is, the selection of elements. He emphasized that any literary phenomenon is not just the text itself, but its reader and the collection of reader's possible reactions to the text are considered the main elements of literary phenomenon"(Ahmadi, 2003). He considers the importance of the reader or receiver of the secret and the message more important than the sender or the poet, because he considers access to retroactive reading of poetry to be an interaction between the secret and reader of the secret. It is important to understand the significations of poetry of intertextuality because the intertextuality is entirely dependent on descriptive systems, which makes the meaning reach from the level of poetry to signification, this stage is the retroactive reading that leads to identifying the significations of poetry.

In the second stage or the retroactive stage of reading of poetry, which is also called paraphrastic by Riffaterre referee also read in a

transcript, the reader begins to decipher the text while recalling what he read in the heuristic stage.

"Riffaterre believes that intertextuality is an especial mechanism for reading literary texts. Only intertextuality creates semantic signification, while reading line by line of text inaccurately in the meaning of intertextuality in literary and non-literary texts creates nothing but meaning"(Ahmadi, 2003).

He emphasized that any literary phenomenon is not just the text itself, but its reader and the collection of reader's possible reactions to the text are considered the main elements of literary phenomenon"(Ahmadi, 2003). Since Michael Riffatere published his effective work, that is, structural stylistic essays in 1971. He wrote many articles about the poetic language that are now available in his two books: semiotics of poetry and La production du texte[146]. According to the theory of Riffaterre, the process of the communication between the reader and the text is completely different from the everyday conversation of people and says that the reader needs literary competence in addition to linguistic competence to receive the inner meaning and deeper level of poetry and states the reader must have enough knowledge of the social situation and the environment of the teller's life (Ahmadi et al, 2014).

According to the famous model of Jakobson, in everyday conversation, there is a two-way relationship between encoder and decoder, as well as between sender / receiver.

Riffaterre does not attempt "to reveal the nature of function of a poem by changing the place and role of all six elements. He merely tries to convey the theoretical emphasis on the message to the receiver. In his opinion, the message and the receiver are the only effective factors in the communication whose presence is necessary, and in the next step he tries to reduce all other factors to the aspects or minutes of the message / receiver relationship"(Scholes, 2000). Riffaterre considers three processes to be involved in creating the poetic language that induces the meaning indirectly.

Ibrahim in Fire

"In the bloody song of twilight / there was another kind of man / who wanted the soil to be

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[146] Production of text

green / and love to be deserving of the most beautiful women / this quality of him / seemed / not so cheap gift / soil should be worthy of stone / what a man! what a man! who would say that it is more meritorious for heart / to fall in blood / with seven swords of love / and it is more necessary for throat / to say the most beautiful names / and lion of metal mountain a man of such a lover / bloody battlefield of fate / wrote / to the Achilles heel / an impregnable man whose death secret was grief of love and sorrow of loneliness / oh, brokenhearted Esfandiyar! to whom you closed your eyes ! / was not one, one not enough / to make my destiny? / I just screamed no! / I kept silent while drowning / I was a sound -a form among forms- and found meaning / I was and became me not like a bud, a flower, or a root, that a sprout, or one grain, that a forest right like this / that a common man, a martyr, even heaven prayed him, my poor I was not a complaisant servant / and my path of paradise was not on the rising and modesty / I needed another kind of god / deserving of the creature / that do not humble himself to get inevitable bread / and I created another kind of god / Alas! man you were lion of the metal mountain / you had died bravely and firmly like a mount before you felt to the ground / but not God and not Satan made your destiny to be an idol / that other worshiped an idol that other worshiped" (Shamloo, 2013). This poem is worth considering in terms of Riffaterre's semiotics. In this poem, some ungrammatical elements lead reader to a meaning except the literal meaning, for example, bloody song of twilight, another kind of man, not so cheap gift, seven swords of love, to fall in blood, more necessary, lion of metal mountain, such a lover, the Achilles heel, an impregnable man, paradise, inevitable bread, man lion of metal mountain, another kind of god and firmly died are not merely in the literal meaning that refer to death of a warrior. In fact, "Shamloo has composed this poem "Ibrahim in Fire" for shooting of the revolutionary young man "Mahdi Rezaei" in Chitgar Square of Tehran in 1973" (Basak, 2014).

But by mentioning words like seven swords of love, lion of metal mountain, Achilles Heel, brokenhearted Esfandiyar, another kind of god and died firmly, he also refers to rebellious and revolutionary spirit of himself. He has demonstrated the militant and contentious spirit of himself. Shamloo has mixed the realities and myths in such a way that shows a space beyond time and place. That is, the capture force in reality and the transformation of the real fact into a sublime reality and the combination of ultra-time and ultra-place reality. Referring to the shooting of the young man in the historical time

to the other, and the events of the same issue, he points out that using allusions in the same regard has made a suitable space for showing his original message in the poetry.

Of course, as we said before literary competence is a competence that explains signs of poetry based on signification not based on meaning. Given that the poem of Shamloo is very rich because of using strong poetic signs, mythical and archaism concepts, and figures and allusions, it has the potential to understand poetic significations based on literary competence. Therefore, it is followed by this question that can one reach non-literal meaning of the text from "poetic significations" in the poem of shamloo, based on the theory of Riffaterre based on literary competence?

After initial reading of poetry which is heuristic, given that the theory of Riffaterre is on the basis of potential of receiving by reader (audience), reader, relying on his/her linguistic and literary competence, puts the literal concept of the poetry aside and by reading this poem, this hypothesis is formed: "rebelliousness and freedom-seeking have been accompanied by sacrifice for the purpose over time", in heuristic reading of poetry reaches a realistic report. The fact that the poem refers to the story of shooting of a young man (known) and is regarding fight and death for the purpose. And since for any signifier in the poetry there is a signified and this is possible relying on linguistic competence, s/he should distinguish signifier and signified, the second reading is in a thought-provoking and interpretive manner, it means that the reader should examine the hypothesis s/he has raised. In this part, decoding is done and if the hypothesis is confirmed, s/he should be able to identify matrix of the poem (said by other fundamental prepositions) that makes the conceptual unity in poetry.

Main accumulation of the poem

Accumulation is based on compatibility of same concepts or commonality of at least a semantic similarity that its necessity is link and similarities in appearance and situation of some of words in the text, synonyms of words are considered more than words that create accumulation. Sememe in this poem the main accumulation of the poem is formed on the basis of sememe of "rebelliousness" and "death" and words such as the bloody song of twilight, another kind of man, like a mount, what a man, martyr, what a man! Bloody battlefield of fate, falling to ground bravely, pray, death secret and died firmly all refer to the concept of rebelliousness, death and

freedom-seeking. And these words have a kind of synonym relationship with accumulation of rebelliousness and death and are in a situation that shows these synonyms well and based on the semantic similarity they are linked to accumulation of rebelliousness and using archaism and myth and metaphor the relation between descriptive system and its accumulation is established. "Ibrahim in Fire", as its name implies, is a kind of allusive narration of end of the hero who is executed, has been composed in four paragraphs that refers to mythical elements from the beginning to the end and in an archaic space it has created the content using figures of speech such as allusion and simile and metaphor and symmetry and by conquering feelings of the writer takes him to depth of layers of history and portrays its thought for the reader. The reader is led to deeper level of the poem and receiving the main accumulation of the poem (freedom-seeking and rebelliousness) using a certain literary competence (myth, epic and metaphor). Decoding the poem and receiving messages of the poem become possible by specifying descriptive systems of the poet (mythical allusions, mythical man, poet) and eventually lead to retroactive reading of the poem. In this reading, the poem eventually, in an ancient space that causes more enjoyment, leads to stimulating the audience for disobedience and rebellion and freedom-seeking and the main accumulation of the poem is an epic movement against injustice and dying for ideal cause and martyrdom. Descriptive systems are in harmony with accumulation of the poem based on syntagma and in significations of the poem each mythical signifier to a signified in elements of the poem refers to all three cases of poetic systems "mythical man", "poet" and "mythical allusions" involved in a rebelliousness and freedom-seeking issue and the inner space of the poem beyond the literal meaning (initial and heuristic reading) induces this situation to the reader and eventually leads to retroactive reading of the poem, for example referring to the words Esfandiyar, Achilles, an impregnable man and … using archaism is to lead superstructure of the poem to deep structures of the poem such as being a hero "another kind of man" and the word "debris" signifies ancient ruins and interpretation of "twilight" is an old interpretation that shows both the difference among people and ambiguity of the situation, this kind of phrases are derived from culture and life of ancestors that being old is its man attribute (Basak, 60 & 61, 2014).

Descriptive systems of the poem: (mythical man – poet – mythical allusions - reality)

Four descriptive systems can be drawn in "Ibrahim in Fire" that their kernel is mythical man, poet, mythical allusions and reality.

Descriptive system of mythical man: in this poetry, Shamloo has made a mythical human. This myth, in a bloody space and twilight in which good and evil and beauty and ugliness cannot be distinguished from, with rebellion and breaking the norm of the ruling conditions, for the ideal of freedom, being such a lover, considers the heart deserving to fall in blood with seven swords of love, the mythical man of Shamloo wants the soil to be green and considers love to be deserving of the most beautiful women and considers the throat to deserving of the most beautiful names and etc.

Descriptive system of the poet (himself): another descriptive system of the poem is "poet". This may be complicated why did Shamloo (poet) place himself in line with the hero but by paying attention to code of the poem it becomes clear that by deliberate encoding of some interpretations he shows himself as a synonym with the hero. In this poem, Shamloo uses metonym to establish an inseparable bond between himself and the hero of the poem (warrior and freedom-seeking rebel) and combines the two with each other. And by creaming, keeping silent, being a voice, a form among forms, finding meaning and so on being recreated he shows himself seeking freedom. And explicitly he says that I was and become me.

Descriptive system of mythical allusions (ancient): the poet uses ancient allusions to take the reader to deeper layers of the history and transfers his wisdom and thoughts to him/her. For this purpose, he has used words and interpretations of lion of mountain, seven swords of love, Achilles Heel, being an impregnable man, brokenhearted Esfandiyar and an idol. Here, illusion is a kind of historical reference to ancient myths in order to rebuild the space intended by the poet to express the main accumulation of the poem, here freedom-seeking. Archaic and symbolic referral to Esfandiyar and Achilles signifies immortality and impregnability of ideal of the poem's hero despite of his physical death and without the certain literary competency, which is familiarity with myths and mythical language here, the possibility of retroactive reading of the poem is difficult. Descriptive system of "mythical allusions" clarifies ambiguous code of the poem

which is the similarity of the poem's hero with these mythical elements and these signs refer to their implicit signified and the main root of this signification is similarity and metaphor and typical and it has created a smart symmetry.

Descriptive system of reality: this poem has been obviously and clearly referred to expression of a creature with awareness and having will that chooses his way and is martyred on the way to freedom and eternizes his name. In this poetry, there is struggle for improving the situation and life and society. The satellite of this system includes: another kind (a creature with awareness and having will), a man (another interactive), lover, death (the situation established inside), to make destiny (fate) me (a knowing creature), screaming (struggle), I was and become me (transcendence), inevitable bread (event and historical situation), idol (another interactive), not humbling himself (freedom-seeking and being open-minded).

A man who does not humble himself for a god that does not give him an inevitable bread is as a myth that nation and folk worship him and is a role model for rebelliousness against oppression. The fact that this person belongs to a nation, a class, a family and so on, these are conditions of man's plans that the person looks at and goes beyond.

Conclusion

"Ibrahim in Fire", as its name implies, is a kind of allusive narration of end of the hero who is executed. This city has been composed in four paragraphs that refers to mythical elements from the beginning to the end and in an archaic space it has created the content using figures of speech such as allusion and simile and metaphor and symmetry and by conquering feelings of the writer takes him to depth of layers of history and portrays its thought for the reader. This poem is a good example for semiotic analysis with application of the theory of Riffaterre. And it is possible to read the poem (Ibrahim in Fire) based on the theory of Riffaterre. The reader is led to deeper level of the poem and receiving the main accumulation of the poem (freedom-seeking and rebelliousness) using a certain literary competence (myth, epic and metaphor). Decoding the poem and receiving messages of the poem become possible by specifying descriptive systems of the poet (mythical allusions, mythical man, poet) and eventually lead to retroactive reading of the poem. In this reading, the poem eventually, in an ancient space that causes more enjoyment, leads to stimulating

the audience for disobedience and rebellion and freedom-seeking and the main accumulation of the poem is an epic movement against injustice and dying for ideal cause and martyrdom. Descriptive systems are in harmony with accumulation of the poem based on syntagma and in significations of the poem each mythical signifier to a signified in elements of the poem refers to all three cases of poetic systems "mythical man", "poet" and "mythical allusions" involved in a rebelliousness and freedom-seeking issue and the inner space of the poem beyond the literal meaning (initial and heuristic reading) induces this situation to the reader and eventually leads to retroactive reading of the poem considered by Riffaterre in this poem can be briefly expressed in this way:

1. The poet refers to rebel that is martyred in ambiguous space of twilight.
2. The poet introduces himself rebellious and freedom-seeking.
3. The poet interprets the mythical person as a one who wants beauties
4. The poet, using historical and ancient myths, says that he praises each freedom-seeking person in the world without the aspect of time and aspect of place.

Receiving the accumulation of poetry actually decodes the poetry codes and more enjoyment of the poetry, and without the level of certain literary competence, it is not possible to understand these significations and interpret them. According to the structural matrix of the poetry, the poet's hidden object to express freedom-seeking and struggle and, more importantly, inviting the audience for uprising, has been pointed out, and the poet, in repression of that era, has had no way to express his ideal but the use of mythical allusions and allusive references to them.

* Definition of the keywords of the text is based on Riffaterre's book "semiotics" and can be cited.

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