Study of Mustafa Mastoor’s Short Stories in the Light of Reception theory

Zahra Lorestani1, Maryam Navidi2

1Department of Persian Language and Literature, Kermanshah branch, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran. Kasra avenue, Islamic Azad university Department of Persian Language and Literature.
2Department of English Language, Kermanshah branch, Islamic Azad University, Kasra Avenue, Islamic Azad university Department of Persian Language and Literature.

ABSTRACT

Reception theory appeared in Konstantin school, in which Yaws and Iser are well-known. They believe that a text horizontally has made of other texts, therefore the reader expected social and literary knowledge which leading to the innovate concepts. Mustafa Mastoor is also a contemporary writer whose short stories have the great examples of reception theory. The reader cooperates Mastoor’s short stories in the different ways including: open setting, uncertain rings, reference to other texts, open ending, introduction, unexpected ending, acknowledged stories, cultural writing, question-based tell-tale.

KEYWORDS: Mstoor, reception theory, Yaws, Iser, hermeneutic.

INTRODUCTION

Whereas hermeneutics does not shed light on literature and philosophy, some of its approaches are innovative especially those which are reader based. In this writing, reader is more important than the text and writer in the literary approach and reception theory. This theory has not happened to come to the fore, instead it is based on Gadamer, Sartre, and Husserl. It was the first that phenomenology introduced reading seriously. The same approach has been emphasized by Sartre, Gaston, Basilar and Rolland Barthes, but Gadamer introduced the innovative theories to Constance school (Namvar Motlagh, 2008: 96). Iser emphasized on the other texts, open ending, introduction, unexpected ending, acknowledged stories, cultural writing, question-based tell-tale.

Iser

The other critic who is concerned with phenomenology is Iser. He’s one of teachers in Constance school, in other words, he is one of founders. He was influenced by Husserl’s phenomenology. “Iser said: Interpreters change while the works are also different (Ahmadi, 2001: 685). Iser emphasized on the reader so much that he compensated the reader with the text. Regarding the reader’s intentions, the reader interprets a text, in other words, reading makes two processes complete: the first, art which belongs to text and aesthesis belonging to the reader (Namvar Motlagh, 2008: 104).

One of discussions that Iser has introduced is “to file a text which simplifies Iser’s idea. “Interaction between text and reader is based on two levels: external and internal. There are the text approaches which pare the way for internal and external levels. The external a connections form the text files that have two literary references, on one hand, they concern with social and historical environment, and on the other hand, they concern with what Kristeva called intersexuality. In fact, the interaction between text and context is set the process which Iser called the Dialectic between background and foreground. The chosen element is placed in the background of reading and the context in which the element has been made in the background (Ibid, 106).

The other point that has been introduced in Iser’s reading is the different reading. It is necessary to say that Iser mind the reader so much that he believes meaning comes to the fore by the reader. It was Katil who wrote about critical, cultural reflection of the same matter: “In Iser’s reading process, meaning is neither arbitrary nor constant, instead it forms in signifying a text in the process between text and reader (Peen, 2003: 48).” In other words, Iser does not expect a text to explore the meaning. Instead the possible meanings have been explored in the interpretations. Iser has emphasized his book several times that interpretation does not pave the way for end meaning of text, instead it provides conditions for possible meanings in the text (Ahmadi, 2005: 428). It is
reader who direct the main way instead of text. But text influences on the reader so much that it changes him into what the text asks him, therefore there would be a special reader for Iser. “If we accept the experience of a text, it may nullify ourselves, therefore a person is not same one who has read the text before, hence Iser believes a reader is not either author’s imaginative or interpretative person, instead it is transcendental which appears in reading (Martin, 2007: 123)”. Therefore it is the text that influences on the reader to change him, “for Iser an affective literary work makes the reader attain the new critical knowledge of common signs and expectations. A literary work challenges our objective beliefs, in order to degrade our common habits of knowledge. The innovative beliefs make us cafes them” (Eagleton, 2001: 109). He continues to say about contrary connections between reader and text, affect and affective fallacy, in fact Iser’s reception theory is based on Liberal anthropologist ideology, it means, he believes the reader should be flexible and unbiased in reading a text, we should be doubtful about our beliefs (Ibid. 110).

Yaws

Phenomenology introduced another philosopher in Germany. He was a literature teacher in Germany Constance university, he was founder of Constance school. Like Iser he has known for his reception theory. Yaws has influenced by phenomenology especially Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutic (Namvar Motlagh, 2008: 97). One of Gadamer’s effects on Yaws is the concept of horizon, he believes in the connections among texts. “Yaws has used Gadamer’s concept in the reception theory. In aesthetes’ perception, the horizon of expectations means the degree of reader’s understanding about limitations of new meanings (Ahmadi, 2005: 429).” The concept of horizon concerns two concepts: the text itself and the audience. “it is dialectical relations between text and the reader, it is better to say, there is two worlds in dialect, the world of text and the reader. In fact every text shows how to habituate in the world, and the interaction between text and reader is the interactions among all horizontal claims about text, it shows there is another horizon, the horizon of reader’s expectations. The analysis of Constance school means aesthetics of Yaws’s reception theory, and Iser’s phenomenology (Ricor, 1994: 63).

It seems the horizon of expectation is not constant and definite in the different races, in fact, “it is the horizon of expectations is a complex organ of addressee’s needs which leads him to work itself, it provides some expectations to follow the replies (Namvar Motlagh, 2008: 100). The expectation is not constant in the text in the different careers. “Gadamer and Yaws believe that text does not ask anything, and the different people answer it differently according to the wisdom horizon of their age.

It is necessary to say that the questions of text is different in the various careers. The historical study of reception theory is a require, because we should know what a text say in every career for people, how it makes them contemplate and what methods reveal in responding (Ahmadi, 2005: 431). Yaws believes in three main causes for addressee’s horizon of expectation: Experiencing the assigned value of addressee is an art which background is form, it is contradiction between poetical language and pragmatic language of imaginary world and fact (Namvar Motlagh, 2008: 101). Yaws has classified the horizon of expectations into two groups: literary and social horizon of expectations, their relations are bused upon art. The literary works provide some expectations. The social horizon of expectations include some spiritual, aesthetical expectations that addressee achieves after reading. Spiritual properties and aesthetical signs have originated from unconscious (informal) and conscious (formal) traditions (Ibid. 102).

Research Plan

Tales accompany the reader in the different methods including: open setting, uncertain rings, referring to other Yaws and Iser believe in interconnection between text and other texts horizontally. Reader expects texts in the light of his literary, social knowledge. The same horizon causes the new meaning. It should be considered that the meanings of text are infinite and there are some limitations in this field, though these limitations won’t cease the new meanings, unless the meaning is set in the margins of text. This study is to examine Yaws’s and Iser’s ideas in Mustafa Mastoor’s short stories according to the reception theory. It tries to show the exploring methods of new meaning in the texts. The same methods are in the form of question and answer between text and reader. It is clear that these methods can be also used in other texts. Mastoor’s works have been published for several times. He has considered the horizon of expectations in the different ways. Mustafa Mastoor is a contemporary writer whose texts, unexpected ending, dedicated tales, and cultural writings.

Open Setting

Mastoor’s short stories have open settings. It is so open that reader is able to fill it with his own sentences. Sometimes such open settings hide some matters in the text. There are the different ways not to show a text clearly. There are some allegories about resurrection and characters speaking about some issues unclearly for example: “All loves are one, but men are so hypo critic that they show it in the different forms in order to deceive women!”

I asked him: “what do you mean by one?”

He lied on his arm and set his cigarette on me, he asked me, “do you smoke?”(Mastoor,2001:42)

This unanswered question provides an open setting in the story. The reader is also able to replace anything
instead of it. A conscious reader chooses some words that are appropriate to the personality of the person who has spoken in the text. If it was so, the chosen word is not actually true, and there are many words to be replaced for, here, the reader decides about it in the light of horizon of expectations. His choice is based on his social, mental background.

Uncertain Rings

The doubtful matters should be considered in Mastoor’s works. They provide the different interpretations, hence the reader would be able to read the text as he wants to be. In “some Cured lines” we familiarize with a person called “Yaghoot” who is crazy about imaginations. He imagined that he has met his beloved who gave him her hair-pin, but while he asked her to show it: “Yaghoot put his right hand in his trousers pocket, then he brought out his fist rising up. Asghar Jegari was the shortest man among all, he climbed up a chair in order to see Yaghoot’s hair-pin behind Gholam Vineston. Abas point to his pupil to turn down the radio ... Yaghoot who was involved in the crowd opening his fist: there was nothing” (Mastoor, 2001:39)21.

Therefore, the reader justified that Yaghoot has not met his beloved, instead he’s imagined all, but at end while he was brought to be scarified by gravedigger, the reader knows about another fact, he says:

“Yaghoot’s fingers were fist, they were tightly fisted: there was a beautiful golden hair-pin in his palm in the window light” (Ibid:38)21. These lines show that there would be another reading to show that Yaghoot may meet his beloved, or he may find the hair-pin. These interpretations show an uncertain ring in the different readings.

Referring to Other Texts

There have been so many times that writer has quoted of some other tales, but sometimes they produce the meaning in the different numbers. On the other hand, the capability of reader needs his literary knowledge. In Mustafa Mastoor’s tales, there are many examples which have emphasized on the text itself, but it is only reader who is able to perceive their meaning, for example there are some references to the stories about death, resurrection and Ashoora tales.

Open ending

Open ending is the way of accompanying the reader in making a text meaningful which has been repeated in the text. In his other tale called “I will swim in your eyes and will die in your hands”, Mastoor narrates about a poet who has turned into a murderer because of his victimized beloved. It is who takes money to kill people. Once upon time he gets money to kill a young in the limited time, if not himself will be killed, but he speaks with the same young, he gets the young likes death because he has a love rival who wants to depart him to death. It is the end of tale: “Yoones has starred on his opposite wall thinking about continuous sound that was not able to hear it at all. Yoones whispers on phone: I adore you, Nillo, there were two drops in his eyes, but they did not fall” (Mastoor, 2001:66)22. Yoones is the same poet murdered and Josef is his subject. At end reader is left doubtful about his end crying if Yoones is regretful not to kill Josef or he does, therefore it is the reader who guesses the end.

Unexpected Ending

In this method it is necessary to read the text again, to understand the unexpected changing’s.

In his other tale called “Wish”. The story is about a boy and his friend Rasool who has fell in love with a girl called Arezoo. Rasool who has fell in love with a girl called Arezoo. Rasool accompanies him in his love, but at end while Rasool’s home is bombarded and he enters home says: “while I got the kitchen walls, my feet get dumb, because it was written Arezoo on the wall by coal, it was in the middle of a heart picture” (Mastoor, 2001:36)23.

Dedicated Tales

One of common methods to produce the gap in the stories is the dedicated tales. The reader tries to make connection between the name of person and persons in the tale. It is not easy to find the person who this work is dedicated to, for example in his tale called “some authentic tales about heaven” which was dedicated to his sisters. “Love in Pedestrian” is dedicated to Khoramshahi. Here, the writer is to make inter-textuality in the texts. It seems the writer is owing other works in creating his works, here inter-textuality appears between reader and text.

Cultural Writings

Culture is inseparable of human’s life, but it is not necessary that reader knows about the culture of Mastoor’s texts, because writer writes about all things in his work, for example it is not necessary for reader to know the different spots in his tale called “Tehran in afternoon”. Besides there are some behaviors and speech that are meaningful in the cultural field, hence it is reader’s view to explore a text, instead of his cultural field, therefore there will be the different readings, for example in the same tale; he says: “Abdi opens the pocket carefully until he can see the mouth of green bottle inside pocket, then he opened its door, he raised the pocket on his lips” (Mastoor, 2001:12)24. This example provides an example of Iranian culture, because drinking the
wine is illegal in Iran, and Abdi shows the Iranian reader that he has drunk wine, but it is illegal, so he hides it.

**Narrating Tale in Form of Question**

One of the best methods to leave the reader with the text is introduction of a question. In the same method, the structure of story is based on the reply to this question. It is very important in the reception theory. In the story called “Some simple issues”, Mastoor has asked some mathematical questions, which expected reader to answer them. While there are some humanity questions, there will be some unanswered replies, because these questions relate to humanity issues.

**Conclusions**

According to reception theory, reader is also influencing in the text, because there are some gaps in the texts that writer has not written them, and they have left for the reader. Regarding his mental, literary background, reader is able to fill the gap. Mustafa Mastoor is a contemporary writer whose tales accompany the reader in the different methods including: open setting, uncertain rings, referring to other texts, unexpected ending, dedicated tales, and cultural writings. In these methods, Mastoor finds a chance for reader to expand his horizon of expectations in the text and his short stories are not left aside from these norms.

**REFERENCES**

6. Ibid
11. Ibid
18. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. Ibid
24. Ibid