Structural Analysis of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* –A Stylistic Approach

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Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms follows a very unique narrative structure. This novel has been analysed according to the category of narrative transformations set by Tzevtan Todorov. This paper will entail how the two types of narrative transformations work and are crucial for the development of the plot. The patterning of these narrative transformations in these two texts is supposed to reveal their development as narrative pieces and also to give an insight into understanding how underlying elements of fiction such as theme , plot, and point of view work together to build up their narrative structure.

Keywords: *Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, Narrative transformations, Tzvetan Todorov*

Introduction:

This paper takes into account the narrative as the object of its observation. In this study the object of observation i.e. Narrative will be broken down into units. Having dismantling the narrative into units, the researcher will discover the rule and laws by which these units are combined for the proper description of them. In this article, I would like to introduce analytical tools for the structural study of narrative developed by a leading narratologist, Tzvetan Todorov, hoping that the structural study of narrative will give us a clue to the exploration of the grammar of narrative.

Due to Ernest Hemingway's mastery over the art of modern narration, he earned the Nobel Prize. His writing style is characterized by objectiveness, minimal metaphors, moderate diction, multitude of simple declarative sentences and detailed narration etc. He is also known to convey a lot of information with his laconic style. (Zhnag, 2005)

NARRATIVE TRANSFORMATIONS IN *FAREWELL TO ARMS*

Simple narrative transformations depend on sequences of simple propositions which are connected by structural relations. They depend on the principal of modification or addition which involves the addition of an operator to the main verb in the predicate such as modality or negation etc. However, this high frequency in simple transformations can verify some descriptive labels attached to Hemingway's style and particularly in its early phase as characterized with predominance of simple sentence structures. His style in the more familiar stylistics analysis has been described as 'simple', 'direct' and sometimes 'linear' (Heyes, 1970; Carter, 1982; Martin, 1983; Fowler, 1986; Phelan, 1991). Young (1966:204) states such general attributes saying:

> [Hemingway's style] is characterized by a
>
> Conscientious simplicity of diction and
>
> Sentence structure. The words are chiefly
>
> short and common ones, and there is a severe
>
> and austere economy in their use. The typical
>
> sentence is a simple declarative sentence or a
>
> couple of these joined by a conjunction; there
>
> is very little subordination of clauses.

 It seems that such narrative attributes are very much true in his early style. This is evident in most critical descriptions of most scholars who agree on certain characterization. The sentences are short and declarative with a tendency to avoid complications. Clauses having the least subordination or complex form, are separated by commas and joined by additive or sequential connectives 'and' or 'but' (Locher, 1979; Rao, 1980; Rao 1983; Tripathi, 1990). The following are some examples of such propositions which show this type of simple syntax:

> You could not see his face but only the top of
> his cap and his narraow back [8]
> " I would like to go with you and show you
> Things," [11]
> "You will please come and make a good
> impression on her."[17]

Simple Narrative Transformation in *A Farewell to Arms*

The statistical analysis of simple narrative transformation in *A Farewell to Arms* manifests the predominance of 'transformation of mode' over the other five subdivisions of this type. Propositions of this major type function in developing the general setting of the novel and other sub-settings in which the action in every one of its five books of the novel takes place. However, the general setting of FWA is Italy during World War I. So war here serves as setting element for all themes in this novel. The narrator, who is the hero himself here and from the first-person type, tries to picture these scenes in a way similar to cinematic shots. He describes the way things look and the way he feels in a manner that visualizes in frames that allow the reader to be more aware of the scenes than the narrator himself. This is h highest objective point of view which is 'dramatic' one:

> At night we could see the flashes from the
>
> artillery. [7]
>
> I could not see the guns [15]
>
> The attack would cross the river up above the
>
> Narraow gorge and spread up the hillside. [17]
>
> I could see a guard too at the bridge. [178]

Transformation of Mode depend on modals that accompany their main verbs to show the possibility, impossibility or necessity of the actions expressed in the narrative for example,

> You could see them through openings in
>
> the forest on the mountain side.

The verb 'could' expresses the possibility of action expressed in the narrative.

Transformation of status suggests the replacement of the positive form of the predicate by its negative or opposite form. It is expressed by 'not' for negation and lexical substitute.

> 'There aren't enough troops here for a real attack.' (41)

Transformation of intent indicates the intention of the subject of the proposition to accomplish an action and not the action itself. Verbs like 'want,' 'try', 'intend', 'plan', 'premeditate' formulate this type of propositions in the text. This type of narratives mostly uses the verb 'want'.

I had wanted to go to Abruzi (14)

Transformation of aspect refers to the 'aspect' of the verb. It is expressed through verbs such as 'start', 'begin', 'finish' etc.

And the leaves on the trees in the park began

to turn colour (105)

The different subcategories of Simple Narrative Transformations such as Transformation of Mode 372 (54.3%), Transformation of Intent 23 (3.3%), Transformation of Result 0, Transformation of Manner 0, Transformation of Aspect 4(0.5%) and the Transformation of Status 286 (41.7%) are found in the Book I of the novel.

Following are some of the examples of the above subtypes of Simple Narrative Transformations from the Book I of A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway.

Complex Narrative Transformations in *Farewell to Arms*

The statistical analysis of complex narrative transformations in this narrative manifests that transformation of description form the highest proportion in the level of predominance in the narrative structure of this novel. Such type of complex narrative transformations describes the action denoted by another predicate. This function is often performed by a subject of verbs of communication. The performative verbs denote autonomous actions. Transformations of description are expressed by verbs such as 'tell', 'recount', 'say', 'explain', and 'report'.

These narrative propositions render the narrator an indirect technique for the representation of the action, and thoughts and feelings of the hero and other characters. This also sustains the dramatic structure of this narrative text as a direct objective narrative technique. Here, the narrator is merely presenting details and facts without attempting to influence the narratee's perception of them very much. Such type of narrator lends the narrative immediacy and stylistic variation through direct description and reported dialogue without the appearance of authorial intervention. This idea is stated clearly by Rao (1980:32) who claims:

> The writer makes no comments, expresses no
>
> emotion. It is a cool objective recording of
>
> objective recording which looks like Kinetographic
>
> reproduction of action. But the details in the picture are
>
> suggestive …Such emotive detail should give the reader
>
> amentalpicture of the tragic scence and give him the
>
> rught emotion without the writer trying to inject his own
>
> emotion into the reader's mind…By selecting and using
>
> dramatic and emotive correlates, the writer makes the
>
> reader objectively participate in the narrative.

According to Todorov's (1977:27-28) classification, the 'I' of the narrator in this type of point of view is " on a basis of equality with the 'he' of the hero, both are informed in the same way as to the development of the action." In such a narrative technique, the narrator attaches himself to one of the characters, here Frederic Henry, and observes everything through his spectacle. Consequently, there will be a fusion of 'I' and 'he' into another narrating 'I'. The 'I' of the narrator is totally blocked out by the 'he' of the hero. In such type of objective narration, the narrator is observing the character participating in action and speech and knows nothing about his characters. Here, even Henry, on whom the writers depend as being the narrator himself, is not very much authoritative in his narration as he again presents things objectively. That is what Scafella (1991:233-224) emphasizes:

> "Fredric describes the way things looked and he felt in a
>
> manner that comes natural to him. Hemingway arranges those
>
> descriptions so that we can understand more than Fredric
>
> is aware he is communicating."

The most frequesnt verb used in these propositions in this novel is 'say' as it is often used in its past form 'said', mostly in tag phrases. This verb appears 59 times which forms a ratio of 95.1% while the other verbs which appear 3 times form only 4.8 % from the whole of the verbs used in transformations of description in the Book I out of total 62 verbs.

Complex Narrative Transformations in FWA.

The subcategories of Complex Narrative Transformation in the Book I of the text such as Transformation of Appearance 4 (3.4%), Transformation of Knowledge 16 (13.7%), Transformation of Description 62 (53.4%), Transformation of Supposition 4 (3.45%), Transformation of Subjectivation 30 (25.8%), Transformation of Attitude 0, are found and account for total 116 complex Narrative Transformations in the Book I of the novel.

Albeit this paper dives into the micro-analysis of Ernest Hemingway's one of the masterpieces, the research intends to broaden the scope of this research and develop it into a full-fledged inquiry of this text as a whole.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, Ernest Hemingway was a great master of narrative arts with a global influence. As the analysis in the Book -I, he skillfully employed all the techniques especially, the narrative transformations in A Farewell to Arms. This paper gives an exploration of narrative order, narrative voice and narrative situation in this novel, which reflects Hemingway's exceptionally talented writing arts. The tentative probe of the employment of the narrative strategies will give a light on Hemingway's fiction narrative, offering fresh appreciation of Hemingway's works.

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