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A Study of Narrator's Psychodynamics in Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*: A Perspective on Narrative Strategies

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Abstract

The present paper tries to highlight narrative styles employed by French-Afghan author Atiq Rahimi in his acclaimed novel *The Patience Stone*. It focuses on the literary narrative strategies such as the use of faulty narration, foil characters, character development, symbolism, and internal conflicting. It intends to study the narrator's psychodynamics through perspectives on narrative techniques. It aims at revealing the narrating style of the protagonist in the novel. Atiq Rahimi through the protagonist in the novel represents Afghan woman who has been faceless and voiceless bravely and offers a distinctive identity. It also brings forth the issues created by war such as honour, love, sex, marriage in the lives of people living in Afghanistan. It further reflects Atiq Rahimi's technique in building a rich and intricate tale that tackles the concepts of love, religion, and power in a civilization that has been devastated by war. Narrator's talk with her husband reveals her desires, confessions, pains, and secrets about their married life. Her narration speaks about unsatisfied marital life, societal norms, and oppressive life of an Afghani woman through the narrator in the novel. This paper also highlights on the conventional narrative techniques such as stream of consciousness, and flashbacks in *The Patience Stone*.

Keywords: Narrative, narrator, narration, monologue, protagonist, flashback, symbolism psychodynamics

Introduction

The Patience Stone (2010) is a famous novel of French-Afghan author and director Atiq Rahimi born in Kabul, Afghanistan, on February 26, 1962. Rahimi has established a solid reputation in both writing and directing, with works including "Earth and Ashes," "The Patience Stone," "A Curse on Dostoevsky," and "The Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear." His debut book, "Earth and Ashes," which he started writing in 1996, was awarded the Prix du Regard vers l'Avenir at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival. His fourth book, "The Patience Stone," ^[1] his first in French, was made into a movie in 2012 is the best example of storytelling device known as the "inner monologue". The nameless woman who is taking care of her husband while he is unconscious tells the tale. She converses with her spouse frequently throughout the book, sharing her worries, secrets, and disappointments. She expresses her feelings through the "patience stone," a customary Afghan artefact used by women to confide in. The tale is written in a poetic and lyrical manner, and the protagonist's intense emotional agony is shown through the minimalist wording. According to J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series, narrative style is the way a writer chooses to tell a story, including the point of view, the language, the

structure, and the tone. It's the author's unique voice and perspective, and it can greatly affect the reader's experience of the story. Atiq Rahimi created *The Patience Stone* in a distinct narrative style that perfectly expresses the core of the human experience in a war-torn country. The writing in both books is spare and straightforward, allowing the reader to concentrate on the characters' feelings and experiences. The Afghan woman who is taking care of her husband while he is unconscious is an unidentified first-person narrator in *The Patience Stone*. As she talks to her spouse and shares her secrets, desires, and worries, the narrative is mostly told through her inner thoughts and feelings. As a result of being able to directly experience the protagonist's feelings and thoughts, this forges an intimate and personal connection between the reader and the main character. The reader and the protagonist develop a very close and emotional bond as the woman reveals her most private thoughts, worries, and wants with them. The language used in the book is lyrical and poetic, capturing both the beauty and ugliness of life in war-torn Afghanistan.

In literature, narrative style describes the method a writer uses to tell a story. As well as the author's use of literary devices like imagery, symbolism, and figurative language, it includes

the writer's point of view, tone, language, and structure [2]. How readers experience a tale can be greatly influenced by the narrative style. For instance, a first-person narrative might establish a closer, more personal bond between the reader and the protagonist, whereas a third-person omniscient narrative might enable a broader view and a deeper comprehension of the setting [3]. *The Patience Stone* does undoubtedly demonstrate Atiq Rahimi's prowess in narrating stories. The novel's unusual and audacious narrative style is carried out with tremendous skill and artistry. The language of the book has a rhythm and cadence that captivates readers and keeps them reading. A rich and evocative universe that is both beautiful and haunting is created via the employment of vivid imagery and symbolism. In *The Patience Stone*, the woman addresses her unconscious husband in a monologue fashion as if he were alive and able to hear her. It is difficult to carry out this unorthodox narrative structure, but Rahimi does so with tremendous finesse, tying together several plot threads to produce a seamless and compelling whole. The novel's use of flashbacks and ambiguity engenders a sense of mystery and intrigue that keeps readers interested and immersed in the plot. Through the use of these strategies, Rahimi is able to make complicated topics and ideas clear and compelling. In a nation that has been devastated by war, *The Patience Stone* examines challenging themes including love, power, patriarchy, and religion. Rahimi's ability of narrative enables him to explore these topics in-depth and to convey them in a nuanced and thought-provoking manner that encourages readers to ask probing questions about their surroundings. The narrative structure of the book makes us feel the protagonist's sorrow, desires, and challenges as we are lured into her internal monologue. Her narrative is told in a way that is both tragic and inspiring thanks to Rahimi's mastery of narration, which enables him to create a figure that is both universal and intensely intimate. One of the main causes for readers' intense engagement with the story and its characters in *The Patience Stone* is Atiq Rahimi's use of storytelling method. Here are some examples of how the narrative writing method hooks readers. The book is written from the viewpoint of the wife who is taking care of her husband while he is unconscious, which forges a close, personal relationship between the reader and the protagonist. The following quotation personified with readers,

In the story and you, for this to happen, you must get rid of three love; love of yourself, love of the father, and love of the mother" [4].

Readers can experience the novel through the protagonist's thoughts and feelings thanks to the first-person narration, which makes them feel as though they are travelling together with her. Secondly, the protagonist's monologue frequently jumps back and forth between various ideas and feelings, which gives the text an immediate and intense feel. With the help of this stream-of-consciousness writing technique, readers may vividly and viscerally understand the woman's inner agony and develop a strong connection to her character. The novel's title, *The Patience Stone*, itself serves as a key metaphor. According to Persian folklore, the patience stone relieves and heals individuals who speak to it by absorbing their problems and confessions. In the novel, the woman refers to her unconscious husband as her patience stone and uses him as a conduit for her innermost feelings, ideas, and secrets. The stone represents her desire for freedom, as well as her desire for redemption. These images and metaphors build a complex and multi-layered narrative that engages readers and offers them many ways to read and understand the plot.

As readers strive to piece together past events and predict what will happen next, the novel's use of flashbacks and ambiguity keeps readers interested and immersed in the plot. For instance, the woman reveals her feelings of being lonely by the fact that her husband was absent in the marital ceremony and she has no cares from him though he was at home. As she says, "I was talking about two of us, our marriage, my loneliness" [5].

Additionally, the story's ambiguity encourages readers to add their own interpretations and viewpoints. *The Patience Stone* stands apart from other works of literature due to its distinctive narrative structure and usage of a monologue format. The powerful climax monologue which attracts readers and presents them with a new opportunity to interact with the monologue narrative such as,

Yes, my *sang-e saboor* ... do you know the ninety-ninth, which is to say the last name of God? It's *Al-Sabur*, the Patient! Look at you; you are God. You exist, and do not move. You hear, and do not speak. You see, and cannot be seen! Like God, you are patient, immobile. And I am your messenger! Your prophet! I am your voice! Your gaze! Your hands! I reveal you! *Al-Sabur*! [6]

The characters in Atiq Rahimi's novel *The Patience Stone* exhibit a number of literary techniques used in narrative, such, the protagonist of the story, a woman who is taking care of her husband who is unconscious, is an unreliable narrator because she frequently offers contradictory facts and modifies her account as it is being told. At the beginning she is always reciting verses of *Koran*, perform regular prayer and later she is in protest against God. In desperation of her husband's comma, the woman is in protest against the God to prove that He exists by sending her husband back to normal life. Seeing that her husband remains silent, the woman gives up reciting the names of God for her husband's health while saying, "Prove that you exist, bring him back to life! [7] This literary trick raises doubts in the reader's mind about the veracity of the protagonist's story and produces ambiguity. Several foil characters are used by Rahimi to contrast the protagonist, such as her husband, her aunt, and the mullah. The author can examine various viewpoints on religion, love, and society via the lens of these characters, who also serve to highlight the protagonist's virtues and shortcomings. In an artistic way Rahimi has developed the character, as the protagonist grows more self-assured and aggressive throughout the book, she experiences considerable character growth. Her transformation from a submissive wife to a woman with self-confidence is a crucial part of the story. Another talent of Rahimi we see is the use of symbolism, the novel's title, "*The Patience Stone*," serves as a key representation. According to Persian folklore, the patience stone relieves and heals individuals who speak to it by absorbing their problems and confessions. In the novel, the woman refers to her unconscious husband as her patience stone and uses him as a conduit for her innermost feelings, ideas, and secrets. The stone represents her desire for freedom, as well as her desire for redemption. The characters in the book are also used to symbolise larger themes and concepts. As an illustration, the woman's husband can be taken as a representation of the repressive patriarchal society she lives in, whilst the mullah and her aunt stand for religious authority and traditional values, respectively. Characters in the book go through deep internal difficulties that advance the plot and heighten tension. For instance, the protagonist battles with guilt, desire, and wrath throughout the book; these conflicts provide as the basis for her monologue and help the story take shape.

Conclusion

Thus, Atiq Rahimi's novel *The Patience Stone* is a superb illustration of narrative. The novel's narrative structure is distinctive and engaging, which is a stirring and enduring piece of writing. Rahimi as a novelist is of altering narrative techniques but his considerable delicacy and sensitivity in his handling of the points of view and narrative forms can be said as his fictional invention. This has brought both beauty and dignity to his novels that have undeniably made an aura of impressive narrative aesthetics. The novel is a testament to Rahimi's skill as a storyteller, and stands as a powerful and unforgettable work of literature. These components combine to make reading this book a very fascinating and lasting experience for readers.

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