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Discrepancy between Fabula and Story in Shafak's Honour: An Investigation into the Narratological Practices

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the use of narrative techniques by Shafak in her novel *Honour* (2012). The primary focus is devoted to the various ways in which the 'story' and the 'fabula' of this novel differ from each other and to highlight the author's intent behind this discrepancy.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The chosen theoretical lens is that of Bal (2017, 2021) in the post-classical tradition of narratology.

Findings: It has been found that Shafak possesses astute narratological acumen and tactfully distinguishes the underlying fabula from the story. She introduces many manipulations/operations on the fabula such as external and internal retroversion, anticipations, embedding achronies, multiple focalizations, temporality, **Implications/Originality/Value:** In this way, the linear progression of events in the fabula is rearranged to break this linearity and the desired narrative effect is the arousal of interest in the reader. The resultant story not only becomes gripping but also helps to understand the motives and psyche behind the actions of the various characters thus shaping of the perception by the readers.



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1. Introduction

Narrative is often defined as cultural phenomena (Bal, 2017) through which events both real and fictitious are conveyed in the world. A specific way of conveying the gist of these communication reflects cultural expectations and remind the cultural ideals. Therefore, it is necessary to study various narratives from the perspective of exploring their underlying components to reveal these latent cultural indications. The same kind of curiosity has resulted into this investigation of the narratological basis of the novel, *Honour* (2012) written by Turkish author Shafak. The main research question of this research activity is to see how the events in the story of *Honour* deviate from its fabula, and what is the intended backwash effect of this manipulation? The significance of this investigation is that it helps in understanding the various narrative techniques at the disposal of the authors and

by understanding these various strategies, the readers can not only improve their readability of narratives by quickly comprehending the rhetorical craft of the author but also see how the characters' actions are perceived, and create a meaning for the reader.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings of this research inquiry have been provided by the seminal text of Mieke Bal (2017) entitled, *Narratology: An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Bal (2017) is a prominent thinker in post-classical narratology. Her theory leans heavily towards structuralism. The scholarly interest in narratology is very ancient and dates back to Plato and Aristotle but it has been developed as a distinct discipline in late 1960s. It is now divided into two epochs: classical and postclassical (Amerian & Jofi, 2015). The former epoch is dominated by Gerard Genette whose approach was structuralist and formalist, whereas the latter period in narratological research deals with the contributions of a multitude of thinkers belonging to diverse theoretical backgrounds which resulted in the development of various distinct theoretical lenses such as feminist narratology, trans medial narratology, postmodern narratology, etc. According to Eiranen, Hatavara, Kivimäki, Mäkelä, and Maria (2022), the classical period in narratology was inclined towards figuring out the narrative features that distinguish one narrative from other as well as a quest to reduce all types of narratives to certain basic structural categories whereas postclassic tradition in narratology sought to blend linguistic and narrative features with “world knowledge”.

Bal (2017) uses a tripartite structure in exploration of any narrative. They are text, story, and fabula. Text deals with the linguistic component of the narrative i.e., words which are used by the author to communicate the central idea of his/her communication. Fabula is that central idea whereas story is the presentation of that central idea using words. She terms text as words, story as aspects, and fabula as elements. In other words, fabula is the actual series of events on the chronological plane from commencement to conclusion. The “story” in the conception of Bal (2017) is the specific arrangement of various events in the novel which may not coincide with the chronological timeline of the real events. The author prefers telling one event before another event in the thematic progression of the novel despite the fact that the event narrated earlier has actually occurred later in the chronological time span of events. This rearrangement of actual events creates a storyline in which the manipulation of the arrangement of events signposts some underlying meaning. The reorganization of events in the story is not haphazard. There is a deep forethought of the author involved. Therefore, it is worth analysing the discrepancy between the arrangement of events present in the fabula and in the story.

3. Review of Literature

Anam, Ajmal, and Sharif (2024) have explicated Hamid's narratological craft in his recently published novel, *The Last White Man*. They have analysed this novel from the perspective of classical narratology and their chosen framework is Genette's theory of narratology. By this research, they have underscored the importance of narrative elements and the way this novel has been constructed. They have put forth this assertion that these narratological devices are responsible for the widespread reception and acclamation of this novel as its conveyed message and “aesthetic experience” are based on these narratological patterns. Similarly, Malik (2021) has analysed four works of Shafak: *The Bastard of Istanbul*, *The Forty Rules of Love*, *Three Daughters of Eve*, and *The Architect's Apprentice*. She has summed up her entire research with this observation that Shafak uses various narrative techniques especially magical realism and folklore, chiefly sufi and Persian folklores, to portray the character of Shams Tabriz as having supernatural faculties. Likewise, she has found that by using the technique of magical realism, Shafak undermines the Turkish version of the Armenian genocide.

Besides magical realism and folklore, there are many narrative techniques which are frequently employed by various authors. For instance, Mojalefa and Phala (2005) have investigated the technique of flashbacks in the literary works of Northern Sotho. They have observed five different types of flashbacks: internal retrospection, external retrospection, mixed retrospection, complicating flashbacks, and similar flashbacks. They have concluded

that these techniques of flashbacks serve two main purposes in the narrative i.e. foregrounding the themes of the text, and reminiscing past events. They have also contrasted foreshadowing and flashbacks and find that unlike foreshadowing, the latter gives rise to the elements of surprise, secrecy, and suspense.

Moreover, Hariharasudan and Thavabalan (2018) have displayed interest in the practice of narratological devices in postmodern texts. For their research inquiry, they have selected Arundhati Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things* as a literary text, and for the theoretical lens, they have derived insight from Lyotard, Kristeva, Hutcheon, Derrida, Waugh, and Barthes. Their inquiry has revealed Roy's extensive use of various narrative techniques of postmodernity such as pastiche, irony, parody, metafiction, black humour, intertextuality, and historiography. In addition to characterization, embedding/nested narratives is also an interesting technique in narratology. Zouichene (2024) has examined the narrative techniques of Shafak in her famous novel, *The Forty Rules of Love*. She has extolled Shafak for the wonderful embedding of narratives especially the finesse of shifting narratives from historiographic to real ones. Her theoretical framework has been deduced from Bakhtin's theory of polyvocality, and religious existentialist ideology of Kierkegaard. She has opined that Shafak's parallel narratives belonging to different places and different times in this novel was a remarkable feat and through this Shafak successfully highlighted the commonalities between 13th century and 21st century. She has liked the approach of Shafak to employ multiple narrators and has termed this multiplicity as "narrative democracy". Along the same lines, Mendonce (2024) has also conducted research in the multi-narratives portrayed by Shafak in her novels. He has found out that the resounding success achieved by Shafak by becoming a best-selling author is directly associated with the narrative devices that she frequently employs such as multiple perspectives, sandwich narratives, parallel plots, and complex temporality.

4. Analysis and Discussion

There are three levels in a narrative : fabula, story, and text (Bal, 2017; Bal, 2021). Fabula consists of events, actors, chronology, and place. The story has the elements of character, focalizer, and space, whereas the text comprises the narrator/speaker and discourse. The reader first interacts with the text and then connects with the story but it is fabula that becomes his/her "memory trace" after completely interpreting the whole narrative. Fabula is based on human logical principles and is understood by extending the notion of progression of events along the lines of cause-effect parameters. They are homologous to the happenings of real life owing to which they exert great influence on the mind of the readers. In *Honour*, (2012) the fabula comprises elements of honour killing; difficulties faced by immigrants and women; rampant racism, etc. The contemporary world is confronting all these issues which increases the readership of the story based on this fabula as it is relevant to the current times. Consequently, the opinion expressed through this literary text permeates the social fabric of society. It is because the structure of fabula is elucidated using the theory of elements, and Bal (2017) forcefully asserts that her theory of elements possesses "extra-literal facts" as well and may be put to describe the happenings of human life beyond the ambit of narratology.

Fabula contains both fixed elements (objects) as well as variable elements (processes). Objects include actors and location; whereas processes encompass events. An event is defined as a "transition from one state to another caused by actors" (Bal, 2017). She further restricts the scope of this definition by proposing three parameters: change, choice, and confrontation. Change is often manifested by an action verb though it is not the case always. If an indication from one state to another is signalled through an action verb or through any other structural component of the sentence, then that sentence indicates the start of a new event. Likewise, if there are choices available to the actors and a particular choice leads to such results which are deeply connected to the theme of fabula then that choice is also considered as an event. As far as confrontation is concerned, it is the result of two actors and one action. These actors should necessarily be relevant to the structure of the fabula. After carefully selecting the core events, the relationship between these events can be figured out. This structured arrangement of events is the fabula.

In *Honour* the fabula comprises these core events: Naze and the adverse impact of patriarchal conventions on her, the marriage of Adem with Pembe instead of Jamila because Jamila's honour was stained, Adam's immigration to London with his family, his subsequent abandonment of his family, Pembe's compulsion to work outside, her interaction with Elias, Iskender's perception of himself as the head and saviour of family honour, his attack on his mother, his life imprisonment, and his release and repentance. If the scope of fabula is restricted to the event of matricide alone then the time span important for the fabula starts when Adem and Pembe are shifted to London till the release of Iskender. In that case, the primary fabula may comprise the events of Adam's alienation of his family due to Roxana, Iskender's perception as the head of the family in the absence of Adem, Iskender's stabbing of his mother, his sentence, his regret, and his release.

In the fabula of *Honour*, the subject-actant is Iskender Toprak and the object-actant is his mother Pembe Kader, whereas the element of the intention of this fabula is to injure her so that she may mend her ways and not indulge in an extramarital affair with Elias. In one of the subsidiary fabulas, Adem is the subject-actant and the object of his action is to get riches and the path he chooses to achieve this desire is to participate in gambling. Likewise, in the secondary fabula of Mrs. Powell, she is the subject-actant and her son Captain is the object-actant. Her intention to act is to reform her only son but failing in this goal, she starts helping others especially other children from disadvantaged backgrounds. So, the object-actant in this fabula is widened later on to take into account other children as well. The element of intention to act, however, remains the same: to help and rescue the ones who are in dire need of assistance.

It is pertinent to mention that in order to explore the underlying fabula of any novel, a selection has to be made to only include the significant events of the fabula presented. Cultural sensitivity is necessary while making this selection. There are multiple such events that can only be considered significant by such readers who are sensitive to various cultures as Bal (2017) emphasizes the role of context in understanding any convention and what it is like breaking that convention in that particular context. Someone unmindful of the value of any cultural practice in a society would have difficult time in understanding the events of fabula and he/she may be clueless as to why breaking a "trivial" cultural convention created that much great mayhem. In the eyes of such readers, these events may not be significant, therefore, they may experience difficulty in comprehending the underlying fabula. For instance, a superficial and context-independent reading of *Honour* may suggest that Naze's obsession with having a male child resulted in her psychological imbalance and her painful death. This may appear to be her own fault but if the context of the rural patriarchal set-up to which Naze belongs is kept in view, then it is evident that it is not the fault of Naze to fixate on her desire to have a male child rather it hints at the cultural expectation from women to necessarily churn out male heirs to the family. At least one male child is the minimum criterion that saves a woman from the brutal inhumane attitude of the people around her. This event is indeed considered significant for one of the subsidiary fibulas of this novel in which the miserable condition of women is depicted in traditionally male-dominated societies. Owing to this, Bal (2017) cautions against this tendency of shrugging off the conventions of other cultures as illogical or unimportant and she drives home the concept that if a reader shows such insensitivity towards cultural conventions, then the reader is not able to enjoy narratives from other cultures and may consider reading narratives of other cultures as tedious.

Bal (2017) adopts some of the semantic labels for labelling the structure of fabula from Bremond such as possibility, realization, and conclusion. In *Honour* the step that may serve as a 'possibility' in the structure of fabula is Iskender's discomfort about his mother's relation with Elias. Iskender had the choice to take a step or not to do anything. The same possibility was present before Yunus, Esmâ, and Adem. Yunus and Esmâ both knew this thing about their mother but they did not do anything in this regard. Adem came to know this as a result of Iskender's meeting with him outside the bar after their quarrel there but Adem also did not take a step after knowing all that, which could proceed the fabula. It was Iskender who decided to take a step i.e., attacking his mother with a knife to teach her a lesson and to frighten Elias. As a result of utilizing this available possibility in such a way, the fabula

proceeds to the next stage i.e., realization. In this stage of fabula, Iskender undergoes transformation. The first realization dawns on him when he calls his uncle Tariq who was one of the instigators of taking a step against his mother. His uncle tries to repudiate him by isolating himself from the actions of Iskender. It is a great setback to him. He also realizes that the Orator has also played a role in emboldening him to take such a grave step. From that point till the completion of his entire imprisonment, Iskender realizes the severity of his offence which matures him a lot. The third stage in the narrative structure is the 'result'. Here the fabula comes to a concluding point. The 'result' in the fabula of *Honour* is the release of Iskender, and Esma taking him back to her home. This rounds off the whole fabula as Esma despite her aversion towards Iskender, finally controls her anger, and helps him in readjusting to the life outside the prison.

As far as describing the fabula in terms of the processes of deterioration is concerned, then the misstep is taken by Adem as he continues his gambling habit and shuns his family for a dancer. According to Bal (2017), a misstep may be a crime or moral perversion. The next resultant process of "creation of an obligation" is experienced by Tariq as well as Iskender but both respond differently. The response of Iskender is relevant to proceed with the fabula. Tariq's response was to malign Pembe and brainwash Iskender which too is relevant to the fabula but as compared to the step of Iskender, this one is less related to the successive events in the fabula. At the same time, Jamila intuitively knows that she has to visit Pembe and she has to save her. So, the 'sacrifice' part is played by Jamila who came to London and as she was the twin sister of Pembe Iskender instead of attacking his mother, attacked Jamila and killed her. The last two processes deal with endured attack and endured punishment. Pembe was saved from the attack as a result of Jamila's sacrifice whereas Iskender has to spend 14-year-imprisonment due to matricide. This sentence sobers him up which concludes the fabula. In this way, the whole fabula of this novel is summed up in these five processes as well.

As far as actors in this fabula are concerned, *Honour* primarily deals with these functional actors: Naze, Berzo, Baba, Aisha, Adem, Pembe, Tariq, Elias, Iskender, Esma, and Yunus. These actors are termed as functional actors because they play a central role in the structure of fabula. Some actors such as Iggy Pop, Bogart, Khalil, etc are non-functional actors as they are irrelevant to the main events in the fabula. In another classification of actors, the fabula may be described as a confrontation between Iskender i.e., a subject actant, and his mother Pembe, an object actant. The object of intention is to punish his mother for smearing the honour of the family. The time span of this primary fabula starts from the immigration of Adem and his family to London and continues up to 12th September 1992 i.e., the day Iskender left Shrewsbury Prison. On the other hand, the story of this fabula comprises 51 chapters in which only one day has actually passed i.e., 12th September 1992. All the story is narrated through retroversion (Bal's favoured term for flashbacks due to its psychological clarity).

The story discusses all the instances in retroversion/flashbacks and also includes the contributions of various focalizers to the story. As a circular narrative, in the third last chapter of the book (Chapter 49), the story completes a circular movement and this third last chapter connects directly with the first chapter of the book. This could have been the last chapter of the story but Shafak deliberately closed this circular narrative and spared two chapters to discuss something of greater value i.e., the actual death of the protagonist of the story, Pembe. The second chapter of the story deals with the birth of Pembe and her birth year (1945) is written there as an epigraph, whereas the last two chapters (Chapter 50 and 51) deal with the death of Pembe. It gives prominence to the characterization of Pembe in the story and highlights her life span and her recurrent challenges in all her assumed roles of being a daughter, wife, and mother.

Another reason of highlighting the actual death of Pembe is that the novel opens with a suspenseful line in which Esma asserts that her mother died twice. Till Chapter 44, the reader has figured out who was the mother of Esma and the first 44 chapters of the book deal with first death of Pembe as everyone including the reader confused the death of Jamila with that of Pembe. If Shafak had embedded these last two chapters within the main narrative, the

second and actual death of Pembe would not have exerted a lachrymose impact on the mind of the reader. In Chapter 44 entitled “The Watch”, Iskender as well as the reader for the first time came to know that the person who died as a result of Iskender’s stabbing was not Pembe. Before that moment, the reader also thinks that Pembe is already dead. In fabula, chronologically it is clear at that moment when Iskender attacked Jamila that he attacked his aunt but readers, who are following the story line and they will reconstruct the fabula after completely reading the book, did not know this until Chapter 44 in which Yunus tells Iskender for the first time that their mother is alive. In Chapter 45 “Mirror Image” and in Chapter 46 “Lemon Tree”, the missing piece is finally narrated that Jamila came to London with the help of smugglers and she safely makes her way to the home of Pembe but is finally killed by Iskender in confusion. Therefore, the last two chapters of the book dealing with the second and actual death of Pembe, are necessary to satisfy the curiosity of readers that has been created in the opening lines of the novel.

Regarding time span of the fabula, the fabula of this novel is located mainly in London especially the climactic episode of matricide but the development of the fabula owes a great deal to the episodes near the Euphrates and in Istanbul. This background of primary characters from eastern lands and the climactic scene involving matricide in western land highlights the theme of racism in the West as is mentioned in the novel. Shafak points out two types of racism in her novel using the words of Iskender when he says that in various parts of the world, racism is manifest but in England, it is rarely the case that a person experiences manifest racist attitude but this does not mean that racism is non-existent in England rather racism is “subtle and always polished It is about how civilized you are” (p. 147). Two more examples in this regard are: when a female journalist after interviewing Iskender in the prison writes in her article, “This is a typical case of Middle Eastern patriarchal tradition” (p. 145); likewise, when a politician uses the crime of Iskender to malign all immigrants by claiming “This man is a prototype of the kind of immigrant who is clearly incompatible with the basic tenets of European civilization” (p. 145). This racist attitude is present even in the functionaries of the government as is expressed by McLaughlin, an officer in Shrewsbury Prison: “Why did you people come to England and bring us all your crap?” (p.147).

After discussing the fabula of *Honour* along with its constituents, the other level of narratological analysis i.e. story is now discussed in connection with this novel. Bal (2017) calls ‘aspects’ those features which distinguish a story from fabula and text. Fabula is the result of imagination, and text is necessitated by the medium of communication. Story, unlike both of them, is the product of structured but subjective arrangement of various components to convey the underlying fabula in a distinct manner. Many a time the underlying fabula of multiple works is the same but one book is extolled by critics and another book is criticised bitterly. The difference in such varying reception is due to the narratological level of ‘story’. The components of a story are temporality, sequential ordering, rhythm, frequency, characters, space, and focalization.

By temporality, Bal (2017) defines time in a different way. It is not the time of the clock rather it is the time that is subjective and it may vary from person to person. When a person is waiting for something, the time of the clock displays the same duration which he may spend in some leisure time without the feeling of anxiety about the length of this duration, but in the former case, it seems that the time has greatly slowed down which results in anxiety and restlessness. This is temporality which is different from chronological time present in reality which was the component of fabula. In presenting ‘story’, temporality plays a crucial role. For instance, some events in the novel are discussed in so much detail that the temporality given to these events exceeds the natural time taken by these events in the fabula whereas certain moments pass by very quickly. In *Honour*, the 14-year sentence of Iskender passed quickly as compared to the events in 1977 and 1978 in their lives. The temporality of these two crucial years is more than that of the subsequent years of imprisonment of Iskender. Similarly, the day Iskender murdered Jamila, as well as the day of his release of Iskender, is greater in duration as compared to so many other days such as Adem’s intention to go to Abu Dhabi, and in a couple of moments, it seems he is transported to that land which

in reality had taken more days i.e. duration than that of these two aforementioned days. But the greater detail supplied regarding those two days exactly conveyed this to the reader.

Likewise, Bal (2017) comments about the concept of sequential ordering on the level of 'story' that this is a theoretical construct and belies the logic of everyday life and to clarify this point, she gives an example that a person first starts off his journey to a specific place and then he reaches to that place. In real life, it never happens that a person reaches the place first and sets out to that place later on. But she stresses that in a story, this may happen. This manipulation of sequencing is a characteristic trait of a story. As is mentioned above in the discussion of functional actors in the fabula that the sequence of events on 30th November 1978 when Iskender stabbed Pembe are not narrated sequentially and the reader assumes that Pembe is really dead but in the last lines of Chapter 44 "The Watch", Shafak through this manipulation of sequencing on the level of story creates a twist in the story when the reader also comes to know for the first time that some important piece from the actual fabula has been missing and it has not been purposefully communicated to the reader before in order to make him feel the agony which Iskender experienced as a result of his guilt to act impulsively. If the reader knew the proper sequence and details of the events before and after that murder, the reader may not have felt the nostalgia as well as the agony that Iskender was going through in Shrewsbury. Bal (2017) attributes this shift of narrative from present to past and then from past to present, to the source of "basic rhythm" in the story. Likewise, continuous change of narrative from Euphrates to London then to Shrewsbury Prison and vice versa helped in maintaining the suspense of the story and in gluing the reader with the narrative.

Furthermore, anachronies or chronological deviations are defined as the discrepancy between the chronological sequence of a fabula and the sequential arrangement of a story (Bal, 2017). This anachrony is present in all novels including those which have the purport of chronologically arranged story. The extent of anachrony, however, is different in different novels. When the fabula is simple, the extent of anachrony is less but when the fabula is complex, the greater chronological deviations are witnessed. Another reason behind anachronies in general, and retroversion/flashbacks and anticipations/flash-forwards in specific, is the need to weave together multiple threads of the same fabula to create coherence. This is the chief reason in *Honour* where retroversion constitutes the entire story and these flashbacks create a link between the story of Pembe and her early life in Turkey with her later life in London where her kids take the central importance in the story. Later these two threads are weaved together in a composite narrative. The anachrony in *Honour* creates readiness in the reader to pursue the story line with a quicker pace. In the first chapter having the affixation of the last day as far as chronological sequence of fabula is concerned (12 September 1992), Esma's words create a literary effect in this anachronic backdrop when she says, "My mother died twice" (p.9). This first sentence stimulates a desire in the reader to know that what exactly is the story of her mother. Furthermore, she uses a vague expression of "before he was released from prison" (p.9) to create a thrilling twist in the story. The antecedent of the pronoun 'he' is not mentioned in the entire chapter save the last line of the chapter where she finally discloses the identity of this 'he': "He is my brother. He, a murderer" (p.12). If such anachronic start had not been provided to this fabula then definitely the reader would not have intensively read this chapter by closely trying to search for the identity of this 'he' and the speculations as the reader is reading these lines are also made possible as a result of this chronological deviating manipulation with the events in the fabula. The second chapter "Names Like Sugar Cubes" takes the reader not only to a totally different land but also to a different time belonging to a distant past which is 47 years before the event described in the previous chapter. This second chapter has the mentioned date of 1945 and a host of new characters are mentioned in this chapter. The reader due to this abrupt anachronic shifts is again beset with another challenge i.e. to find out who is the mother of the narrator of the first chapter i.e. Esma. The name Esma is not mentioned in this chapter. The reader wonders as if Naze is mother of Esma and she has died twice but how, or among the two daughters of Naze mentioned in this chapter, one of them is mother of Esma but if yes then which one of them? The last line of this second chapter again compels the reader to keep continuing his/her journey of exploring the identity of various characters and their interrelation as well as their individual stories. After attributing names to the two daughters

of Naze as Pembe Kader and Jamila Yeter, the last line of the second chapter reads: “Who could tell that one of these names would someday be printed in newspapers all around the world?” (p.16). The reader after reading this line wonders whether Pembe’s or Jamila’s name will be in the newspapers and why? The addition of the words “all over the world” after “newspaper” presents another riddle for the reader to solve during reading. The phrase “All over the world” signifies that the story is of great consequence and cannot be avoided. In short, there are so many examples in this novel where this chronological shifting has made reading of this fabula a memorable experience for the readers.

On considering the parameter of distance, Bal (2017) classifies retroversion and anticipation into further two classes: external and internal. Internal retroversion is that type of retroversion in which the event present in the flashback is within the time span of the main fabula whereas in case of external retroversion, the time span of fabula and that of external retroversion do not coincide. In *Honour*, Shafak first portrays a scene in which Officer McLaughlin laughs at Iskender as his records mention that Iskender does not eat meat. McLaughlin thinks it very ironic that a person who killed his own mother in cold blood cannot tolerate the slaughter of animals. McLaughlin thought that like many vegetarians, this is the reason for his refraining from meat and that he considers slaughtering animals an injustice. But the actual reason was something else which Shafak communicated through the technique of external retroversion. After the conversation with McLaughlin, when Iskender goes back to his cell, he is absorbed in his thinking, and in that thought process, an external retroversion takes place. External because the time span of this event is before their arrival in London whereas the primary fabula happened when they came to London. In their last year in Istanbul, before they immigrated to London, Adem slaughtered a ram on the insistence of Pembe. Iskender as a child had liked the ram so much that he refrained from eating the meat of the ram. On that occasion, Adem manhandled Iskender and made him eat the meat forcibly. This created a strong aversion in him that Iskender vowed never to eat meat again. The theme in this external retroversion of Iskender has a deep connection with the happenings in the past life of Adem and thereby a new information emerges as a result of the similar strands present in the lives of both of them. Adem refrains from drinking alcohol and is a gambler.

This apparent inconsistency is highlighted by the Moroccan in a conversation with Adem during the break in the gambling game, “You’re hooked on gambling but when it comes to booze you turn into a pious Muslim” (p.53). Upon this, Adem gives the reason that his father was a drunkard. The details of the abusive nature of Adam’s father have been mentioned in one of Adam’s external retroversion. By comparing the instance in the life of Iskender and Adem, it is revealed that the abstinence of both of them are motivated by their fathers and it gives a glimpse into the impact of fatherhood on the lives of children that the children’s life-lasting decisions are sometimes based on the interaction with their fathers. At the same time, this retroversion underscores another theme that both Adem and Iskender drew narrow conclusions from their experiences. Adem refrained from drinking because he considered this act of his father was responsible for the devastation in his family but he indulged in another vice i.e. gambling which proved to be the destructor for Adam’s family especially for his children. If he had drawn a better conclusion that he would not indulge in anything that may displace his family from being his top priority, then things would have been better. Similarly, if Iskender had drawn the conclusion that he wouldn’t force anyone and would try to listen to the perspective of others before using aggressive manoeuvre then probably before stabbing his mother, he would have discussed this matter with his mother and might have given her a chance to explain her viewpoint or to show penance. Such type of reiterative events in the lives of different individuals substantiate the underlying themes of the fabula and are deliberately created by authors in the narrative to forcefully present a theme to the readers.

Another crucial constituent of ‘story’ is character. The difference between a character and an actor is that actor is a generic label and may not necessarily refer to a human agent whereas a character is mostly a human figure. The actor is the agent in the fabula and the story has an agent in the form of a character. In order to structurally reduce

a narrative into a finite set of elements, all different realization of agents in the level of story including characters are termed as actors in the formulaic construction of fabula. In the words of Bal (2017), the actor is a “structural position” in the fabula whereas the character is a “complex semantic unit” in the story. This distinction of character and actor helps in comparing apparently different stories having underlying same/similar fabulas. Moreover, Bal (2017) associates the narrator with the third layer of narrative i.e., text (words). It is the agent in this layer of narrative but it is by no means parallel to the actor of fabula or the character in the story. This agent of narrator/speaker has a greater persuasive appeal for the reader and in shaping the viewpoint of the reader. She classifies narrators in two broad categories: external narrators, and character-bound narrators. As is explicit from her chosen labels, an external narrator is one who only narrates the events but lies outside the story world of narrative and his/her self-referential expressions are also non-existent in this case, whereas character-bound narrator is one who narrates as well as participates in the events of the story. In *Honour* Shafak employs multiple character-bound narrators to communicate the story such as Esmā, Iskender, Yunus, Adem, Pembe, etc. Many characters have participated in communicating the story. This style of narration provides multiple focalizations and is effective in arousing the interests of the readers and enable the readers to view the world from the eyes of many individuals. Even if the events described by various narrators are different, still their viewpoints about happenings of the world are a source of edification for the readers.

Focalization is another key concept both in classical and postclassical narratology. According to Bal (2017), focalization is the “perception and interpretation” of specific agents known as focalizers. It is the specific viewpoint of these agents towards the events narrated. Focalizer is the key component of the second layer of narrative i.e. story. There are four types of focalizations. Among these types, collective and multiple focalizations are more important. The multiple focalization is that type of focalization in which the same event is described from the varying perspectives of more than one individual i.e. different focalizers. This technique creates a holistic view of the entire episode and enriches the readers with multiple standpoints on same event. Shafak has extensively used the technique of multiple focalization in this novel. For instance, the event when Iskender goes to his home by skipping his school lectures on 14th November 1978. He reaches in time when Elias has for the first and last time came to see Pembe in her home out of a curiosity to see the way she organized her private world of home. Pembe was unhappy about it but she consented hesitatingly. When Elias was inside the home, Iskender rang the bell. Shafak while conveying this incident in Chapter 7 entitled “Memories”, only portrayed the whole event from the focalization of Iskender and this gave the semblance that Pembe was in reality an immoral individual and cheating on her husband. Wrongly buttoned white blouse was taken by Iskender as the testimony of his doubt. In reality, the focalization of this event of Pembe and Elias preceded in the fabula keeping in view the chronological timeline but their focalizations have been deferred by Shafak and have been presented in later chapter i.e. Chapter 42 entitled “The Encounter”. The purpose was to first build a case against Pembe and for that purpose, the focalization of Iskender was expressed not only earlier but also explicated in detail with a central focus that the reader begins to incline towards Iskender. If Shafak had not preceded this focalization or even if she had preceded it but the other focalizations of Elias and Pembe of the same incident have been reported in one place then the impact on the reader would have been different. The reader in that case would never have questioned the credibility of Pembe. But Shafak did not want to give the reader a straightforward idea. She created a twist in the narrative by first presenting one type of focalizations and skipping others. In this way, the chronological deviation in story from the fabula resulted in an enriched reading experience by stimulating the reader to ponder and to predict the events which were purposefully deferred to the later chapters. If fabula had been presented without such deviations, the reading experience would have been a relatively straightforward rather a bland activity.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, fabula is the raw material which provides a basis for the story. Without the presence of fabula, no story exists. Narrativity is the art of creating stories out of fabula using variety of texts. The task of an active reader and a skilled critic is to reverse this process and extract pleasure from observing all these three levels of narratives

and their interrelationship. In *Honour*, the fabula and story exhibit sharp contrast as both belong to characteristically different levels in a narrative cycle. The rearrangement of the linear events in the novel by the use of many manipulations/operations on the fabula allows the story to not only become gripping but also helps to understand the motives and psyche behind the actions of the various characters thus shaping of the perception by the readers.

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