GEOCRITISM OF SPACE IN, LA MODIFICATION, NOVEL OF MICHEL BUTOR

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ABSTRACT

After World War II, human attention towards living spaces is becoming more obvious than ever. Paying attention to cities' spaces and architecture and totally living space is one of the postmodernism’s achievements. Believing in living space in creating literary works has kept high profile in postmodernism period. Therefore, Geography as a science of spaces plays a significant role in creating literary works. For the first time, Bertrand Westphal proposed geocritism in early twenty-first century. He observes human space from a new point of view. This sentence is a sudden concept, with incomplete meaning and grammar. Familiarizing with the update events in geocritism and introducing Michel Butor’s idea and opinion, the author of Modification novel, are the main purposes this study for which the elements of geocriticism have been employed.

Key words: Geocritism; Space, Literature, Geography, Michel Butor, Modification

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship of literature with space, environment and the nature where an author or an artist live, in most situations inspires them to creating works. This is an old story. After World War II, human attention towards living spaces is becoming more obvious than ever. Paying attention to cities' spaces and architecture and totally living space is one of the postmodernism’s achievements. This statement has been used in the abstract. Therefore, Geography as a science of spaces serves a crucial role in creating literary work. For the first time, Bertrand Westphal proposed geocritism in early twenty-first century.

Now, novel as a kind of a coincidence of literature and space is the creation of modern urbanist human, contradictions and modifications of his function in interaction with his surrounding space. For a long time literature has constantly been a panorama of the cities' reflection in its heart.

Around the year 1950, some of the authors created a new method with the title of "new novel", protesting against classical structure of novels and traditional method of narration. Among them, we can refer to Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, Claude Simon, Marguerite Duras and especially Michel Butor.

Michel Butor is among the authors whose wide range of works reflects environment space. He was born in 1926 and he is considered as one of the outstanding figures of French novel in 20th century. Space of Michel Butor's novel is a correct tense for an article investigated this time from new point of view and in respect of geocritism. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the degree to which geography and literature are complementary disciplines.

1.1. Background

Extensive work and research has not been done on Geocritism of space in field of literature. Therefore, it should be noted that there is no research in the context of geocritism study on Michel Butor, Modification novel. And this topic can be as a new one given that literary space of Michel Butor novel has been investigated from new perspective, which is geocritism.

1.2. Method

This approach is a geo-centered or geocentric mode of criticism. Geocritism is based on three theories of Spatiotemporality italicize all three words, Transgressivity and Referentiality. This present study will be written based on elements of geocritism from Bertrand Westphal's point of view.

1.3. Instruments

The instrument that was used in this study was books and papers about geocritism are the major instruments employed for geocritism.

¹ "Second thought" in English
1.4. Data collection procedures
This research lists the databases created by research library. These databases include the use of the geocriticism to index the content by subject.

1.5. Research questions
1) What is the application of geocriticism in creation of imaginary space in Modification novel by Michel Butor?
2) In what manner, the space in Michel novel is described?

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
2.1. Space as a focus of human attention in 20 century
Authors pay more attention to a place where a story happens in new ages more than before. The importance of urban spaces as human place has been doubled by World War II. Meanwhile, Bertrand Westphal professor at university of Limoges, France, observes human space from a new point of view and from different perspective. He refers to presence of reality in literature:

“It seems that the perception of the space has never been as complicated as it was during period after World War II. Horrors that has transformed human history between years 1945 and 1939 and the worst one was had concentrated on many hectares where had been surrounded by barbed wire, result in new study of time. They has not immediately influenced on space study; of course the condition had been prepared but apparently it was after cease fire which perception of space see itself in big changes.” (Westphal, 2000, p. 9)

Colonialism and occupations of weak countries in Europe, west and East Germany, African and Asian countries have made great changes in the importance of space category.
In regard to the effect of colonialism on space and geography, Westphal notes Decolonization process formed after the establishing of the new partition principles. Anyway colonial point of view is an essentially unilateral view and its nature requires that it contain space only from one point of view, its point of view. The other points of views are considered if they are peripheral or they defined in their unchangeable difference (ibid 10).
Therefore, destruction, demolition as well as west and East countries' divisions, colonialism and decolonization phenomenon were the World War II result.
But these destructions have created different perceptions of human spaces, borders and cities. Geographical study is a perception of space especially human spaces. Geocritism addresses the relationship between human and space. Among these human spaces, cities are in central attention of this criticism, considering their position in post-modernism era. In post-modernism era, artists and authors focus on geography and real places in geographical map more than ever.
Michel Butor is one of the French authors who wrote La Modification in (1975). It is a story of a middle-aged man who has serious doubt as to making a selection between two women. Leon Delmont, the protagonist of the story, was looking back on the past, present and future life in the compartment of a third-class train in 22 hours trip from Paris to Rome. In the end, these memories which finished with realities result in Modification and deep change in main character's personality.

Leon was in doubt about the love of two women and two cities. He narrates all his memories with Henriette his wife, and Cécile his roman beloved and two cities Paris and Rome in The past, present and future time with plural second person pronoun. He fails to choose between Cécile and Henriette. The selection between Cécile and Henriette is not the reason for this confusion and doubt but he is in doubt about the choice between Rome and Paris: “A detailed and romantic description that he provides of Rome makes it clear that he loves the soul of this city more than his beloved body. It can be said that Leon Delmont does not love Cécile, instead he loves Rome and entertaining himself and Cécile makes made it possible for him in this city.” (Butor, 2007, p. 7)

For the main character, Rome and historical attractions and amusement which are of greater importance than love for his beloved. Michel Butor praises Rome and Paris and considers them among the important cities of history which each of them contain an old history in itself.
Therefore, Leon Delmont, novel's main character reviews his memories in 22 hours in a dream. Two cities, Rome and Paris, especially Rome with all their ancient remains, building, restaurant, cafes and drawings have been depicted in Leon’s mind like cinema screen: “.... A cafe that its iron window shade is going up, a beauty shop where still use a tail of horse hanging from a golden ball instead of a sign, a grocery its name was stamped in bold with ponceau color on its board. " (Butor, 2007, p. 18)
Names of cities, streets, squares, museums, blocks and many other places in Modification novel have outside reference and they can be found in geographical map. Paris and Rome are describable from the perspective of new novel authors by Michel Butor novel.
In the new novel world, Michel Butor capable author of new novel in 20 century French in a period of time talks about a city where its people and their relationship have a great importance. For this reason, unlike traditional novel in which only author's information and views in the literary work are investigated, he pays attention to human spaces more than the other elements. Cities spaces are human spaces and indeed by describing the city and city geography he illustrates human and their relations, because a city without human
presence is nonsense: “Like a swimmer who arrives in Mediterranean Sea after many years, you dive into the city, pedestrian, suitcase in hand to Albergo Quirinale where savants will welcome you warmly.” (ibid, p. 187)

Real and imaginary places accept an instrumental challenge in this novel. By relying on geocriticism and presentation of different picture of the city with different scene, a new horizon of real places’ representation in imaginary will emerge. From this new point of view, the reader will have a clear picture of the city and They will seek new the concept of place. Butor illustrates concrete and mental pictures in representation of Paris and Rome.

2.2. Spatiotemporality
A large part of geocriticism deals with the subject of “being” in space – time. According to Euclidean space model, universe consists of the three dimension of place (length, width, height) and one dimension of time which are independent from each other. In Spatiotemporality, three dimension of space and one dimension of time merge together and establish a coherent and interthreaded four-dimensional environment. The notion of Spatiotemporality in a literary analysis states that in addition to temporal data such as incidents of the author, the history of the text or narratology, spatial data are also important.

Regarding to this matter, Butor selects Rome as an example:

“At the weekend, one belongs to Beromini, the other belongs to Boromini, the third one to Karavajo, Gueedo Reni, wall painting of the begining of Medieval, pre- Christianity tiles. Especially, in some weekend, you were trying to seek some various period of Rome Empire, Constantine era (its Arch of triumph, Mackzances church and its large sculpture in Capitoline), Antonian and Flavian periods, emperors era (their temples and castles on Palatinus, golden palace of Nero) and in this seeking you were attempting to rebuild monuments on huge ruined place as their primary form, and the picture of the city that could be amid of its newness and genuineness. Hence, while you were strolling in Forum, it could not be that you were merely walking in some insignificant stones, broken pedestals and walls or at the stands of brickwork marvelous buildings.” (ibid, p. 191-192)

The surface of this city like the other cities, and all the human spaces are dependent on the strata which are created them. Present time is the last phase. Therefore, perceptible spaces result from sedimentation. It is the time that results in stratal and intricate space and gives time axis to space. Space in addition to numerosity of Synchronicity as well as numerosity in proportion to the other spaces, has numerosity in different period in proportion to itself. For instance, Rome is not only different from Paris but also different from Rome in 18 or 19 century.

Rome has been depicted in different period with its historical layers. In order to acknowledge Rome you have to study and analyze beneath layers of this ancient city in addition to studying Rome in 20th and 21st century. Rome is a city that was constructed on the basis of old belief and myth. Once, Rome was the capital of the world. This city must be introduced by its ancient gloriousness and Baruch works. For the formation of Rome in present time, temporal strata have been stacked to a place named Rome has been formed. It cannot be possible to compare every city with the other in geocritism; rather it is possible to investigate each city in its different period of time. Rome is the manifestation of love and history.

2.3. Transgressivity
According to Westephal, departure from a familiar space and facing with a new place is considered as a kind of transgressivity. To enter into new spaces and to represent them, whether real or imaginary, you should to rebel and exceed the borders.

Butor reviews Paris and Rome in mind geography. In geography of imagination, the border of cities sometimes opposes the real one. Sometimes the border is omitted and two cities become so close that it is difficult to define their maps and works. In mental geographical map, cities which are remote from each other, and people who may not be beside us had omitted the borders and situated in a collection and in a city in this geography: “And before that you didn’t ponder about this important change. You were content with this binary life. In Paris, you were in dream of Rome’s days but yet you would not think seriously about changing of your days in Paris.’ (ibid, p. 166-192)

2.4. Referentiality
There is a dynamic and mutual relationship between literary work and environment. Outside world is an inspiration to create a literary text and in interaction, also literary work has an effect on the public perception of real space. Westephal believes that this relationship is an "interaction": "all his memories and plans appear in his mind in format of pictures, pictures of continuous trips to Rome or Paris in which he blends fancies and thoughts of these two cities" (ibid, p. 6-7). Leon portraits ancient relic and buildings of Rome for readers and since the story is narrated by plural second person, this feeling appears as if we are waking in Rome’s streets.

3. ELEMENTS OF GEOCRITISM

Westephal, theoretician of geocriticism, describes the principles of the elements of this critic as follows: Multifocalization, Polysensoriality, Intertextuality, stratigraphic approach. This description states that you should not be satisfied with one point of view in geocritism rather it requires at least two domestic and alien point of
views with two different languages and cultures. In other words, numerosity and a variety of point of views have especial importance.

Therefore, different author with different point of views by using of urban places seek to describe cities from their perspectives. From the other perspective, Paris is absorbing and lovely in Cécile, Leon Delmont beloved, point of view: "again, are you addicting to your dear Paris?" (ibid, p. 211)

At the same time, Yugoslavia author Danilo Kiš illustrates the picture of Paris in his first travel in 1959 from the other perspective as follows:

“I have not come to Paris as a stranger but as someone who goes on a pilgrimage in the innermost landscapes of his own dreams, in a terra nostalgia.....the panoramas and sanctuaries of Balzac, the naturalist 'underbelly of Paris' of Zola, the spleen of Baudelaire's Paris in Petits poems en prose as well as its old woman and its half-breeds, the thieves and the prostitutes in the bitter perfume of the Fleur du mal, the salons and fiacres of Proust, the Pont Mirabeau of Apollinaire......Montmartre, Pigalle, the Place de la Concorde, the Boulevard Saint-Michel, the Champes-Elysees, the Seine...." (Casanova, 2013, p. 35-36)

In other words, in geocritism, all the senses are in center of attention in creating the picture of a city. Polysensoriality emphasizes the importance of human senses, other senses are as important as sense of sight. Literary sights can be created as many as all human views, senses and emotions.

“The senses are geographical since they make it possible for us to determine location in space, find the relation among different places and recognize their features, whether places we practice now or met in the past.” (Rodaway, 1994, p. 216)

The appearance of mentioned sentence of Rodaway can be considered in selected sentences of Modification novel's main character:

“Next morning, you supposed to talk about them at Viadel kerso building, or concentrate on Italian food like a chef or an ethnologist that you love very much and even if you didn’t find other food during the travel, by the way you will deal with them. ; Or you were listening to Italian conversation at your table or next ones because no Frenchman was there, and ones who were there could not be heard since most of them were fatigue by train travel all the day; you were listening to Italian language which you love and unfortunately you are not very good at it.” (Butor, 2007, p. 226)

And also in the other part of the novel he says as follows:

“In the room space, three conversations by two languages merged together and you will not attempt to discriminate them and through these conversations, suddenly vague sound of the loudspeaker rises that announce the next departure. Again, the same familiar sounds begins along with vibration and escape of outer objects towards this huge line that passed under your beach and it is where the objects begin to fading away. Now wind is raiding and dries the weather. Pier, close the window.” (ibid, p. 163)

In summary, cities smell good or bad from different perspective, they are beautiful or ugly. Michel Butor's Paris is different from Sebbar's. Michel Butor praise Rome and Paris and considers them among the important cities of history which each of them contain an old history in itself.

3.1. Stratigraphic approach

This emphasizes time category and its effect on place. According to Westephal, the only way to perceive space is paying attention to all its strata and dimensions. Space and place are inseparable elements in geocritism. It can not only focus on the contemporary works in order to study Paris and Rome but also considers the past time and different period of construction of these cities.

“You praised the square, fountain, church and two oval bells, and hymns which every party is singing in response to the other. And for the first time you discussed historical building of Rome and started this topic with talking about monuments of 17th century. And this was she, who wants to show you "attractive corners " of Rome all the evening, in a long recreation which gets the color of intimacy soon, she became your leader and passed through Borromini churches with you which you did not know them that time.” (ibid, p. 139)

Delmont enters the alley from home, the alley which has changed over time. Even people and their relations are not free from time changes. In other words, Paris or Rome in 17th and 20th century are not similar from two authors’ point of view. Since the city has peeled in centuries and new strata has formed on old ones.

3.2. Intertextuality

Intertextuality refers to perception of space through text and literary works, and intertextual study is a requirement for Multifocalization approach. Therefore, in order to study Paris and Rome, drawings, pictures, photos and sculptures must be investigated in addition to movies and literary works that these matters assist researcher to analyze place-based works with rich sources: “Leon gets help from the photo to introduce the city: "because from where you sat you looked at glasses on two photos of Paris, above the bed, you saw that they turned to two mirrors.” (ibid 155)

In order to recognition of Paris, Rome and any other place, we can not only confine ourselves to their real maps but provided pictures of different spaces in literature and different texts which can show a new impression of that place which it doesn’t exist in reality. Indeed, it should be referred not only to a literary work but also to different literary works to represent the picture of the city.
4. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate space of Michel Butor's novel from the new point of view which is inspired by elements of outside space. Westphal critic seeks to eject literature from imaginary world and investigate it by outside world's dynamism. The present study attempted to investigate place and space from different point of views, relying on La Modification novel by Michel Butor in order to create a new study of this novel. Time constitute an inseparable dimension of place for finding pictures of different spaces. Space cannot be analyzed without considering the temporal strata and intervals.

The purpose of geocritism is the representation of places and human spaces in literature that is an old story. Literature is inspired by outside world in creating a work but in an interaction with presented pictures of created city in the text; it can help to construct of human spaces of future cities and even evokes their past. Imagination can be a solution to building and reclamation of human spaces and even be the omission of distance of views, borders, colonialism point of views.

4.1. Implications of the Study
Researchers and students of literature and language courses observe the application of the other courses especially geography in imaginary space of literary works and also, this time, geography students find a new way to observe terms and geographical definitions in literary writing. Inclusion of geography in literature can provide new research horizons to both scopes.

4.2. Suggestion for Future Research
The Objective of this study was to pay attention to the most important dimension of Research i.e. Research of geocritism. It will enable the Researchers to develop this methodology for their Research Studies.

REFERENCES