

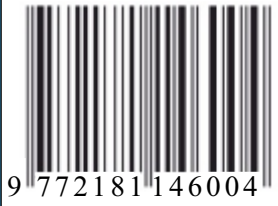


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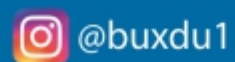
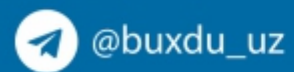


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POSTMODERN NARRATOLOGY IN “TIME’S ARROW” BY MARTIN AMIS

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Abstract. *The article discusses the postmodern features of narration in “Time's Arrow” by Martin Amis. The novel unfolds from the perspective of a protagonist named Tod Friendly, who experiences consciousness in reverse. It details the events of Friendly's life from his death to his birth, examining the consequences of his actions, and unraveling the reasons behind them. The reverse chronology adds complexity, forcing readers to reevaluate their assumptions about time and the effects of events.*

Key words: *postmodernism, narrative, novel, dialogue, metafiction.*

ПОСТМОДЕРН НАРРАТОЛОГИЯ В “СТРЕЛЕ ВРЕМЕНИ” МАРТИНА ЭМИСА

Аннотация: *В статье рассматриваются постмодернистские особенности повествования в «Стреле времени» Мартина Эмиса. Роман разворачивается с точки зрения главного героя по имени Тод Френдли, который испытывает сознание наоборот. В нем подробно описаны события жизни Френдли от его смерти до рождения, исследуются последствия его действий и раскрываются причины, стоящие за ними. Обратная хронология добавляет сложности, заставляя читателей переоценить свои предположения о времени и последствиях событий.*

Ключевые слова: *постмодернизм, повествование, роман, диалог, метапроза.*

MARTIN AMISNING “VAQT O'QI” ROMANIDA POSTMODERN NARRATOLOGIYA

Annotatsiya: *Maqolada Martin Amisning “Vaqt o'qi” romanining postmodern xususiyatlari muhokama qilinadi. Romandagi voqealar teskari ongni boshdan kechirgan Tod Friendly ismli qahramon nuqtayi nazaridan rivojlanadi. Unda Friendly hayotining o'limidan to tug'ilishigacha bo'lgan voqealar batafsil bayon etilgan, uning xatti-harakatlari oqibatlari o'rganilgan va ularning ortidagi sabablar ochilgan. Roman teskari xronologiyasi murakkablikni oshiradi va o'quvchilarni vaqt hamda voqealar ta'siri haqidagi taxminlarini qayta ko'rib chiqishga majbur qiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *postmodernizm, hikoya, roman, dialog, metafiks.*

Introduction. “In recent years, the study of ‘unnatural’ narrative and the development of an ‘unnatural’ narratology has become an exciting new research program in narrative theory” [2]. Since its release, “Time's Arrow” has drawn interest from a number of narratologists. The defamiliarizing effect of its narrative skills can be attributed to “the experimental, extreme, transgressive, unconventional, non-conformist, or out of the ordinary”. Because of its “antinomic temporality” it has also been linked to the “anti-chronological narrative” in the field of narrative studies, which rewrites the storyworld to go against the flow of time and challenges the chronological and progressive order of events. Anti-chronological narratives typically contradict or deconstruct the chronological order, but their storyworlds stay stable and mimetic, allowing readers to recreate the story world by drawing directly from their own experiences.

For instance, we witness Benjamin Button's remarkable transition from an elderly man to a helpless youngster in the 2008 film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*—a life trajectory that stands in stark contrast to those of other characters in the picture. Martin Amis reconstructs Tod T. Friendly's life using a similar backward chronology. But the distinctions between the storyworlds those two narratives offer set them apart. The ordinary events in Benjamin Button are ordered in accordance with physical and natural law, while the storyworlds in “Time's Arrow”—including the “existents” and “actions”—are warped past recognition. The familiar landscapes are inverted.

“Time's Arrow” by Martin Amis is an intriguing novel that possesses postmodern features. The entire novel is told in reverse chronological order, with events unfolding backward in time. This unconventional narrative structure is a key feature of “Time's Arrow” and contributes significantly to its

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postmodern nature. The reverse chronology in “Time's Arrow” serves as a powerful narrative device that challenges our conventional understanding of time. It allows the reader to witness events in a way that mirrors the protagonist's reversal of consciousness.

The narrative in “Time's Arrow” follows the life of a Nazi doctor from his death and old age in America to his return to his wartime employment at Auschwitz and, ultimately, to his birth in Solingen, Germany. The book retraces Tod Friendly's life's events from the beginning, sadly exposing his involvement in the tragedy of Auschwitz, where he worked in the medical division during the Second World War and fled to America thereafter. While participating in the narrator's reconstruction of the protagonist's history, the reader is challenged to comprehend the text's reversed logic and its backward process. The reader in Amis's book must actively participate in the meaning-making process rather than merely consume it. We must interpret the text as we read it.

Research methods. The story and discourse levels make up a narrative work, according to classical narratology. The latter relates to the methods of representation, whereas the former refers to the represented item. The meaning of the narrative is usually generated through the interaction between these two levels [5].

There are two ways to approach the story of “Time's Arrow”. At its most basic, it tells the tale of Tod Friendly's resurrection—a cinematic retelling of his entire existence. At a deeper level, it could be interpreted as the Bildungsroman of a young guy from a tiny village who became a Nazi doctor, left Germany after the Nazi movement fell, and died in America using a false identity.

Readers' reactions to the author's unconventional storytelling technique are reflected in those two stories. Amis's narrative technique blurs the lines between speech and story, requiring the reader to use various reading techniques to extract the meaning from the text.

Most of the time, it is difficult to distinguish between two levels. They are frequently deeply entwined with one another, a narrative phenomena that is frequently seen in postmodern and modernist writing. Shen Dan, for instance, has observed that “denarration” or the technique of providing some information for later negation, frequently appears in many late modernist and postmodernist works of literature. According to certain narratologists, the act of “denarration” blurs the line between speech and tale. Shen Tan, however, believes that the distance between the author and narrator is crucial in determining whether the act of “denarration” has undermined the line separating story from discourse. The reader can still harbor the hope of learning “what really happens” if the author stays apart from the narrator.

The narrator, who refers to himself as a “parasite” or a “passenger” is not Tod Friendly; instead, it is his double, who is likely his consciousness or soul and who observes Tod's actions but has no control over them.

It is challenging to rebuild Tod's life for his double who is living it backwards. Tod relocated to several countries and adopted new identities while frantically attempting to avoid being recognized. Finally, he wants to pass away quietly, but Amis prevents that. Since the past must be remembered and revisited, Tod's duplicate materializes at the moment of his death in order to live out his entire life backwards—from America to Europe, from old age to youth, from death to birth—and to make us spectators.

The torturer is referred to by a variety of identities throughout the narration. He is introduced as Odilo Unverdorben in Germany, where he was born, Hamilton de Souza in Portugal, John Young in New York City, and Todd Friendly during his final days in New England. The doctor's last alias—but the one Amis uses to introduce his protagonist—is crucial since it sounds like “friendly death” even when read backward because “Tod” is the German word for “death”. This naming choice plays into the novel's exploration of themes related to mortality, the Holocaust, and the moral implications of human actions. The use of symbolism in “Time's Arrow” adds layers of meaning and depth to the narrative, further enhancing Amis's exploration of weighty themes. By employing the doctor's last alias as a symbol that withstands reversal, Amis invites readers to reflect on the moral ambiguities, historical atrocities, and the fluid nature of time. In the “Time's Arrow” universe, where everything is upside down, the doctor offers death rather than mending and curing.

Results and discussion. His life can be reconstructed chronologically as follows: Born Odilo Unverdorben in Solingen in 1916, he was reared by his mother, a nurse, who sparked his early interest in medicine. He lost his father when he was a baby. After graduating from medical school, he began working at Schloss Hartheim where Nazi doctors tested various methods of medical murder. He wed Herta, a young secretary, and the couple had a kid who passed away shortly after. He relocated to Auschwitz in 1942 after aiding the SS in forcing Jews into ghettos. Here, he assisted Josef Mengele—referred to in the book as “uncle Pepi”—in administering phenol injections to death and other brutal experiments on the prisoners.

While this was going on, his wife began to write him letters inquiring about his behavior and claiming that he had started to treat her differently. When they finally parted ways, Odilo appeared

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unaffected since he was focused on and engaged in his profession. "You do what you do best, not what is best to do" was his guiding principle. By 1944, Odilo was helping slaughter the Hungarian Jews at an amazing rate, maybe like 10,000 a day by introducing Zyklon B pellets into the gas chambers.

He flew to avoid capture before the Russian soldiers came, first to the Vatican and then to Portugal in 1946. In those days, Schloss Hartheim served as a Nazi "euthanasia" death facility where persons with physical and mental disabilities were gassed and given deadly injections to end their lives. He served as a surgeon in a New York hospital for more than ten years before being forced to leave the city and assume a new identity as a result of the charges leveled against him. He finally worked for a Health Maintenance Organization in a New England suburb, where he eventually passed away in a vehicle accident, regretful and old.

Amis flips conventional reasoning, the causal chain, and the relationship between now and then. Thus, the narrator perceives events incorrectly in a senseless universe. According to him, individuals get younger and healthier, look backwards rather than forwards when they move and travel, and regret not having done things they haven't yet. Every morning, trash collectors come to collect trash, and every evening, pimps tip their call girls well. At the same time, petrol prices are falling and cars are getting slower and less effective.

Tod robs street kids of their smiles, toys, and money on Sundays from the offering plate at the church. His job at the hospital is alarming and horrifying; the facility itself is "an atrocity-producing situation" where patients are sent home in worse condition than when they arrived and get paid as a result. Due to the narrator's lack of historical knowledge, the irony of Tod's life's repetition escapes him. He describes his encounter as being part of "a terrible journey, towards a terrible secret"

At some time, he understands that chronology is reversed and wonders what his journey's laws are as well as its sequence: It proceeds as follows. "*You get October 1 following October 2. You get September 30 starting on October 1. Why do you think that is? [...].*" He feels that Tod's secret has to do with a fundamental misconception about human bodies, but he is unable to predict what it is since he is ignoring history. However, he does not understand what the logical repercussions of such an inversion are.

The second section of the book contains the protagonist's secret, which is the only one to make sense given the circumstances in reverse: "*He is moving in the direction of his secret. Whether he is a parasite or a passenger, I am going with him. It won't be good. It won't make sense and will be horrible. But at least the assurance is comforting. I will also be aware of how damaging the secret is*".

By presenting events in the incorrect order, the story inverts the link between good and evil. As a result, the distorted logic of the death camp is suggestively presented as the only one to make sense in a fictional world where time does not flow point-first. In the course of the book, doctors dismember and kill people's corpses, but at Auschwitz, they repair and rebuild them while appearing to perform acts of resuscitation. The Nazi physician is a healer who formerly had to be brutal in order to be nice today; he is not a mass killer.

In "Time's Arrow" the use is extreme: the story, dialogue, and explanation are all reversed. The narrator experiences reversed speech, discussions that start with the most recent words spoken and end with the first, and inverted descriptions of eating, drinking, and making love. His upside-down narrative and point of view enable the author to include absurd logic and gruesome events and to accept awfulness. Amis uses a style that emphasizes the absurdity and insanity of the Holocaust, of a place where there is no reason, while also implying the peril of ignoring, forsaking, or forgetting history. The book seeks to teach a moral lesson rather than being a lighthearted satire of history.

"Time's Arrow" addresses the subject of accountability and the requirement for moral clarity. Amis takes the Nazi doctor's involvement in the death camps as the theme for his novel and uses the narrative device of time reversal to explain it. Amis was interested in how a writer may portray the atrocities in concentration camps constructing a world of fiction. Amis claims his need for morals as a writer as he confronts the horror of the past. He struggles with how to write about the unfathomable fear and agony at Auschwitz and strives to address the Holocaust without endangering its objectivity.

His postmodern response is to revisit the past with bitter irony, using an unreliable narrator and the temporal reversal approach. As a result, he rejects a truthful portrayal of historical events. Amis conveys the idea that the only way to 'comprehend' the Holocaust is by looking at it backwards by making the reader feel time going in reverse in an effort to make sense of a reality that does not make any.

Far from implying that previous events never occurred, Amis urges a serious consideration of history, which he views as a form of collective pain that needs to be acknowledged and processed. Odilo Unverdorben will crawl inside his mother's womb and be slain by his father's body, and the novel ends with the narrator's death and the birth of the doctor.

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Amis rejects resolution because the Holocaust story should be conveyed over and time again, according to Keulks. The story binds readers to experience a constant oscillation between past and present, merging the past into our sense of modernity, so that they are not freed in the final paragraph. All postmodern writers who deal with history leave us with the message that we can never get by without it, despite any attempts to tamper with its meaning and construction, despite any doubt about its veracity and significance. We cannot ignore the past since it is a crucial component of the current experience, even though reconstructing the past may be challenging and ambiguous.

Conclusion. Overall, “Time's Arrow” stands as a remarkable example of postmodern literature, employing a reverse chronology to explore complex themes of time, memory, and moral responsibility. Amis's novel challenges our assumptions about narrative structure and offers a unique lens through which to view the effects of time on our lives.

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