

Emphasis Recruited: Phrases as Repeating Frequency (nN/1S) in Selected Nineteenth-century British Fictions

Mi'ad Mahmoudizadeh ¹

PhD Candidate of English Literature, Department of English Language and Literature South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Javad Yaghoobi Derabi (Corresponding Author) ²

Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Foreign Languages, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.34785/J014.2023.004>

Article Type: Original Article Page Numbers: 47-61

Received: 17 December 2021 Accepted: 15 August 2022

Abstract

Repetition in fiction is a very common device that many authors employ to bring forth motifs and themes into their works or as a means of creating emphasis. Therefore, it is quite expectable to observe many works with repeated sentences, phrases, and even words in various periods, which either are repetitions of a character's own words or the repetitions of a character's utterances by another character in the narrative in a small scale and the repetition of the whole work in larger scale. Through the use of Genettian repeating frequency type (nN/1S), authors are able to stress particular events, provide themes and motifs, and make use of prior narration, simultaneously. By means of scrutiny of repetitions in Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, and Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* as three canonical works of British literature through Genettian nN/1S frequency type, this study could elaborate on the crucial emphatic role this frequency type plays in emergence of specific effects in these narratives.

Keywords

Narrative; Repeating frequency (nN/1S); Emphatic function; Repetition.

1. Introduction

One of the most prominent and influential figures in the world of narratology is the French literary theorist Gérard Genette, undoubtedly. His analytical categories have brought about considerable changes in the way we perceive of narratives today. Through centuries, it is observed that quite a lot of literary schools manipulate the concept of a narrative and present it in their favorable technical way. Moreover, there seems to be a considerable common concept ground, taken as narratological in the present research, which repeats itself over and over again in various narratives. Therefore, it can be argued

¹ Miad_mmz@yahoo.com

² yaghoobi.kiau@gmail.com

that the framework of a narrative foregrounds the technique, formula, and the mechanism it requires. The techniques, however, cannot create a narrative per se. Moreover, it could also be argued that even the transformations we observe regularly, are done within the realm of the narrative framework.

Genette's categories comprise Narrative Mood, Narrative Voice, and Narrative Tense, in brief and his study is rather a study of relationships, which mainly deals with giving birth to a method of analysis of the very relationships. Throughout his writings, especially in his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, the treatise which allowed a great line of subsequent narratologists to consolidate and develop the field (Puckett 256), Genette looks upon the universal to seek the specific; as he puts in the first few pages of the very treatise, "I must therefore recognize that by seeking the specific I find the universal [since] ... the general is at the heart of the particular, and therefore (contrary to the common preconception) the knowable is at the heart of the mysterious" (Genette 23) and to do so, he invents a great number of terms to address the events within a narrative and ever since the number of devised terms was huge, he needed to divide and subdivide them. While, this very long list of coined terms at times has led to both confusion and appreciation, his theory operates as rather a self contained system and some of the terms in this system have worked out and attained fame in the world of literature, especially in narratology field; such terms have more or less become necessary to classical and postclassical narrative analysis (Puckett 256-261).

What is more, Genette's theory is focused upon a sets of relationships. More specifically he considers narrative as an intermediary element whose presence gives birth to story and narrating. Narrative discourse and its existence depend, in other words, on its relationship to the story it tells and the narrating that tells it; That is to say, "As narrative, it lives by its relationship to the story that it recounts; as discourse, it lives by its relationship to the narrating that utters it" (Genette, *Narrative Discourse* 29).

In this study, the researchers are apt to discuss the use of Genettian repeating frequency – a sub division of Genettian Narrative Tense – as means of creation of narrative themes, motifs, and emphasis in the three canonical works of British literature including Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, and Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*. Although repetitions are to a great extent employed in many works of fiction – in both large and small scales – they are mostly referred to as demerits, rather than merits, of the very works. However, as it shall be discussed in the present study, repetitions are not so bad all the time and it will be shown how they could even prove beneficial in creation of meanings and themes in narratives and emphasize certain events to foreshadow future happenings in narratives.

Now, let us provide some details about the reasons the three aforementioned works are selected as the case studies for this research. First and for most, these narratives are enlisted on the category of canonized works in British literature; more importantly, they are all rich in their use of Genettian typological devices – especially the repeating frequency type (nN/1S) and through a meticulous look at the works, it will be revealed that a similar trend of repetitions is employed in all of them. There are actually two types of repetitions we shall expect to observe in these works: repetition of events and repetition of phrases. Although both repetition types will be scrutinized, as the ultimate purpose of this study dictates, the type of repetition we will mostly focus upon is actually the repetition of a similar – or better to say the exact – phrase for a number of times in various occasions in these works. The employment of repeating frequency by authors in various works of fiction seems to be a prevailing trend. However, recurrences and repetitions in form of nN/1S frequency type, occasionally, stand for a much more crucial thing than mere repetition, which shall be discussed in this study.

2. Literature Review

In *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels*, J. Hillis Miller discusses repetitions in nineteenth and twentieth century English canonized fiction quite thoroughly by drawing upon Giles Deleuze's divisions of repetitions into two categories of Platonic and Nietzschean repetitions. As Miller suggests, repetitions in a work of fiction “may not be true, but the reader is safe in assuming that it is significant” (2). That is to say, repeated events and utterances are provided in a literary work for a specific reason and the quest for why they are employed is what needs to be done. According to him, repetitions are usually “repetition of verbal elements” (1) and duplications of “events or scenes ... previous generations or historical mythological or characters” (2). Moreover, he considers repetitions as means of repeating “in one novel motifs, themes, characters, or events” for authors from their other novels. As he further continues, “every novel is a complex tissue of repetitions and repetitions within repetitions, or of repetitions” (2) by which he argues that repetitions actually create and control the meaning they generate.

Robert Scholes is a scholar who pens down his thoughts upon Miller's work by calling it “a defense of close reading as the major purpose of literary study” (97). As far as repetition is a tenant of narrative structure, it justifies why Scholes highlights the undeniable importance of close reading. That is to say, the very trend of repetition in fiction that is theorized by Miller is never to be spotted if it would not follow the traditions of close reading. However, Scholes does not fully agree with Miller and believes that there are problems in his “theory of interpretation” (99). One of the problems that he refers to is as follows: “How Miller can respect Plato's "words" and still call a theory of realistic imitation a "Platonic" one I do not know” (99). Furthermore, Scholes argues that Miller disregards his very two divisions of repetition when it comes to practice. That is to say, Miller mostly finds repetition in theory and only “wherever he wants to, at whatever level of the text he chooses to seek it” (100).

Regarding the theory of repetition in novel proposed by Miller, John Preston further explains that this theory actually does not only depict elements of repetition in fiction, but it rather attempts to represent “how the fictional process is bound up with processes of repetition” (319) and further argues that the purpose of Miller’s theory is “to reaffirm the 'heterogeneity of works of literature' and to reject the kind of interpretation which assumes that 'meaning is going to be simple, unified, and logically coherent'” (319).

Furthermore, the theory of two modes of Platonic and Nietzschean repetitions that are devised by Miller borrowing from Deleuze is then altered by John M. Neary in his article. Neary explains that “Miller's Platonic mode is straightforwardly mimetic; the repetition repeats a clear, substantial first term ... [while] The Nietzschean mode, on the other hand, exists in a world in which there is no substantial archetype to be repeated” (90). However, he does not fully agree with Miller when he asserts that he is actually “impressed” (91) by Miller’s idea but “would modify it” (91) as follows:

I would say that there are repetitions of absence – the most “ghostly” examples of Miller's Nietzschean repetition, in which the X and Y cancel each other out, generating a kind of non-image rather than an image – but also repetitions of presence, of substance, that are not “Platonic” in the reductive, mimetic way which Miller describes (91).

Later on, Richard Keller Simon in his article “John Kennedy Toóle and Walker Percy: Fiction and Repetition in *A Confederacy of Dunces*” points out the use of repetition in creation of the *A Confederacy of Dunces* as a result of echoing numerous other works including “*Don Quixote*, *Gargantua*, *Henry IV*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Joseph Andrews*, *Tristram Shandy*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Gone with the Wind*” (99-100). Moreover, it is mentioned that the work profoundly derives from two other novels including the American authors Walker Percy’s *The Moviegoer* and “Boethius's philosophical treatise on dying, *The Consolation of Philosophy*” (100). In addition, by arguing that “Percy's novel is itself a repetition of two works by Kierkegaard” (100) and since Toóle repeats Percy, his work shall be considered “a repetition of a repetition of *Repetition* [since] Toole repeats Percy, who repeats Kierkegaard; Toóle repeats Boethius just as Percy repeats Kierkegaard” (100). However, Keller praises this collage of a novel – *A Confederacy of Dunces* – since as he argues, although it is created of a combination of a number of other works, it remains unique by maintaining its individuality.

3. Theoretical Framework

By narrative frequency, Genette mainly pertains to the “relationships between the narrative and the diegesis” (Genette 113). Frequency, in general, means the number of times something occurs and how many times it is narrated. That is to say, how many times the same event happens or how many times different events happen and the number of times they are narrated are all considered tenants of frequency of narratives; thus narratives “may tell once what happened once, n times what happened n times, n times what happened once, once what happened n times” (114). Therefore, narrative frequency discusses “An event [which] is not only capable of happening; it can also happen again, or be repeated” (113).

According to Genettian typology, frequency of narration is divided into four categories of Singulative (1N/1S), nN/nS , $nN/1S$ (repeating), and $1N/nS$ (iterative); however, this study deals with only $nN/1S$ frequency type. To provide a brief definition of the type of frequency this study aims at discussing, let us point out that the frequency type that narrates one event various times or better to say “*Narrating n times what happened once ($nN/1S$)*” (115), which Genette prefers to call “*repeating narrative*” (116) is what shall be referred to as repeating frequency ($nN/1S$) from now on. In this way, recurrent events, phrases, themes, and motifs in fiction are considered repeating frequency instances since they stand for the same occurrences and utterances, which reappear over and over again. That is to say, the same phrase or event is narrated at different occasions in a narrative, which acts as a what happens once and its multiple repetitions serve as narrating it n times.

Narrative strategies in Gerard Genette’s theory of narratology are used throughout this study since by applying Genette’s narratological schemata, a narrative could be discussed thoroughly and in details. The reason why a detailed analysis is what this study requires is that without such a meticulous look upon the selected works, it is almost impossible to provide insight into the formal principles that provide authors with the chance of creating the effects they intend. One of such formal techniques that enables authors to generate such intended effects is the technique of close reading of texts. The undertaking of such a technique for scrutinizing the selected case studies could provide the chance of revealing how and to what extent such case studies are similar in their use of the very formal feature we intend to discuss – $nN/1S$ frequency type. Ever since Genettian $nN/1S$ frequency is an element in Genette’s formal schemata, it is fairly a great means of fulfilling the objective of this present study, which is to unravel the existence of a similar trend of recurrences in the selected narratives.

Russian Formalists, at the beginning of the 20th century, introduced their specific method of discussing works of literature. They define a work of literature by not its author, but the text itself; they believed – in representing reader-response theory – that even the meaning of a novel, for instance, is determined through the reader’s perception

of it. That is to say, for Russian Formalists, the text is the first and the last determiner of the ultimate meaning and everything revolves around it. Close reading technique – the technique researchers use for scrutinizing the three selected canonical works of British literature in the present study – will be used to determine to what degree the Genettian model of repeating frequency applies to such works.

In the beginning, we need to have a glance at the definition of narratology as follows. The definition of narratology, in simple words, is not how we read a story or how the reading process must take place, but it is how a narrative is formed and “we can define [it] more closely as the study of how narratives make meaning, and what the basic mechanisms and procedures are which are common to all acts of story-telling” (Barry 222–223). To get a firmer grasp on the definition of narratology, however, dealing with the definition of a ‘narrative’ marks the first step. The term narrative, therefore, is “derived from ‘narrate’ ... [which is] closely bound up with the speech act of narrating and hence also with the figure of a narrator” (Fludernik 2). Not surprisingly though, whatsoever is narrated by a narrator appeals to the field of narratological studies and in Fludernik’s words “one could define everything narrated by a narrator as narrative” (2). In the present study, researchers mainly deal with the issue of narration itself, not the instances of narration. Although narratology is how a work expresses itself in terms of form and meaning, reading the instances of various narrations is not the determiner of the definition of narratology.

Tzvetan Todorov was the first figure, but not the only influential figure, who led the world to the present form of narratology. Actually, “The epoch regarded today as the classical phase of narratology developed as a strand within structuralism in France and includes the work of Claude Bremond, Algirdas Julien Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette” (10). On the one hand, what we mainly perceive of narratology today is because of contributions of Tzvetan Todorov; his most significant contribution to narratology was categorizing it into three major classes. On the other hand, the very institutional shape of narratives today, is greatly indebted to the appearance of such figures like Kristeva, Barthes, and Genette whose works and theories have defined narratology in terms of controversies, problems, questions, and developments internal to it as a discipline. In other words, Genette and Barthes are the pioneers of narratology project that has provided researchers with numerous ways to develop narratology (Puckett 223-224).

The first category of narratology, the traditional theory of narratology, which is not a thoroughly new one and begins in the era of Aristotle, argues that a narrative is a sequence of events and theorists’ focal point is the narrative itself – independent of the medium used. It does not matter what we deal with is whether a play, poem, novel, short story, movie, hand-drawn animation or even a picture on a poster; all that tells a story is a narrative. That is the perception of what a narrative is, according to the human experience. This category comprises figures like Vladimir Propp who introduces *Morphology of the folktale* or structuralist figures like Claude Lévi-Strauss and the works of early Roland Barthes.

The second form of narration is characterized by the works of figures such as Gérard Genette, Mike Bal, and Seymour Chatman. They considered narrative a discourse, which implies what its cultural context dictates. In this respect, a narrative is the projection of dominant discourse in its narrative context. For the second group critics, narration should be analyzed analytically, and Aristotelian logic in narration is not accounted for anymore.

The last strand, which is a contemporary trend, trespasses the definition of the second category and argues that a narrative is defined concerning the audience. This theory was backed by later Roland Barthes who introduced the readerly and writerly texts and death of the author and birth of the reader theories. Furthermore, Umberto Eco and Jean Francois Lyotard are placed within the same category.

In general, everything that is called narratology must be found within the realm of these three categories, and there are affinities found between all three categories. Among the very affinities, there are a number of key terms and concepts that all the narratologists have coined and employed. The analysis among them all which is actually the “most important and widely applied [typology]” (Fludernik 10), is the Genettian analysis in which he proposes three major areas in the formation of a narrative. However, what this study mainly deals with is just an element in one of the very areas in Genettian narrative typology – frequency in narration as a subdivision of Narrative Tense.

4. Practical Reading and Discussion

4.1. Reading Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*

Frankenstein is selected as the first narrative to discuss in this work since it comes first in the chronological order among the three case studies. The main subject of this narrative as Victor Frankenstein argues is “the cause of generation and life” (Shelley 41) that he claims to have discovered by which he creates the monster who becomes the reason for Frankenstein family demise. Although he promises to reveal the secret of the very generation to readers by the end of the narrative, this never realizes. Since the work is a combination of history and letters, we might better call it an epistolary history and ever since everything narrated throughout the entire work is already happened and the narrative mainly discusses past events.

Throughout this narrative, there are a good number of repeating frequencies and the very first instance of such frequency shows up right before Victor's departure for Ingolstadt. Since Victor's journey was once postponed for his mother's death and readers know his plans for travelling to Ingolstadt, the second mention of his journey is a repeating frequency instance. Moreover, some other instances of the same frequency type could be referred to and to name a few, let us focus upon some of them as follows: for instance, while working on his creation, Victor remembers his father's words, and another one appears when the matter of the picture found in Justine's pocket resurfaces. There are also other examples including the monster remembering his fate and how he “had suffered the night before from the barbarous villagers” (86) when he found the hut,

Victor's remembrance of his promise to the monster to create a female for him, Victor remembering the monster's promise of vanishing and quitting the neighborhood of man, Victor being reminded of the fiend's threat that he will be with him at his wedding night at different occasions in the narrative until the moment of crisis – his wife's death, the monster's confession of murdering Victor's family and friends to Walton, and finally the monster's disappearance from the neighborhood of man as he had promised to do so – among which the threat about the wedding night is of high significance to fulfilling this study's objective.

So far, we have observed that Genettian repeating frequency plays a crucial role in reminding readers and characters of certain events, creating themes like revenge and promise, and more importantly creating suspense through employment of mystery as a device. To be more specific on this issue, a closer look at the phrase "I shall be with you on your wedding-night" (133) that is repeated two times in Chapter XIX, and three times in Chapter XXI – with the second mention of it quoted by Victor himself as "*to be with me on my wedding-night*" (149), foreshadows an integral alteration in the narrative orientation. That is to say, when the monster promises – or better to say threatens – Victor to be with him on his wedding night, every and each reader, not necessarily sagacious ones, could feel like something unfortunate is about to occur on Victor's wedding night, which is true and realizes in the murder of Elizabeth.

The significance of such repetition of a phrase in this narrative is in its ability to change the course of the narrative. Although the monster had already impacted Victor's life by haunting him and murdering his family members and friends, the murder of his wife at his wedding night seems to be the final blow, after which the narrative undergoes a significant shift; the alteration is in form of a change in the role of the hunter and the prey, indeed. To explain further, before the very final blow – that is Elizabeth's murder and consequently Alphonse Frankenstein's death after hearing the news – it is the monster that chases and haunts Victor all the time; however, after the disaster, it is Victor who becomes the chaser and looks everywhere for the monster to avenge him.

This great shift in the course of narration is actually brought about by the employment of repeating frequency. Through this frequency type, readers get prepared to observe a crucial moment in the work. Without using nN/1S frequency, the author would not have been able to deliver such an anticipating effect. This frequency type actually serves as a turning point that marks an upcoming event that is about to change equations in the work. In addition to providing prior narration, this repetition of a single phrase creates an atmosphere of suspense and serves as an element of emphasis in the work. Every time readers confront the very same phrase, they most probably think that something is about to happen. However, as Victor himself and some readers believe, it must be something related to him, rather than others on the wedding night. It is even uncertain whether the fiend's threat is going to realize before the wedding, while the

wedding ceremony is on, or even after it is over. What is more, such questions are all contemplated about by readers since the narrator intentionally uses nN/1S to occupy readers' minds with thoughts regarding an upcoming crucial occurrence. Readers actually know something is about to happen on the wedding night because they have already been given a piece of predictive narration about the monster's presence at the wedding night. However, what they are not aware of, which builds up suspense in the work, is the mystery of what and when it is due to happen, not whether it happens or not – it is only a matter of time.

4.2. Reading George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*

This narrative is a history of rise and fall of Tullivers and mainly focuses upon its two heroes Tom and Maggie and their unfortunate destiny. The work employs many Genettian devices in various occasions, among which different types of frequencies are quite noticeable. Although there are many instances of different types of frequency including singulative and iterative frequencies spotted in the work, what appeals to the present study is none other than nN/1S frequencies and their function in *The Mill on the Floss*. Therefore, the only type of frequency type that we will discuss regarding this narrative is nN/1S or repeating frequency type. It shall be mentioned that this narrative is packed with instances of nN/1S frequency that a few of them will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The very first instance of nN/1S frequency is provided as soon as Tom arrives home from Lady-day and Maggie reveals to him the fact that all his rabbits are dead. This piece of news given to Tom serves as a repeating frequency since readers are already acquainted with the news of rabbits' death out of Luke's mouth that is told to Maggie. Therefore, at the time the news is given to Tom, it is the second time readers confront it in the narrative. There are many other major and minor instances of nN/1S frequency in this narrative, namely Mr. Tulliver's account of Maggie's haircut to Mr. Deane, Mr. Tullivers' decision on Tom's education being announced to aunts and uncles, Mr. and Mrs. Glegg's discussion regarding what happened at Tullivers' and how Mr. Tulliver drove them "out o' the house" (Eliot 134), and the account of Mr. Pullet talking to Mr. Glegg about Tullivers debt told to Mr. Tulliver by his wife, which are all provided by the narrator at least twice, and thus shall be considered instances of the same nN/1S frequency type.

More examples include, the repeating frequency regarding the advice Mr. Tulliver had given Tom before he went to school about being nice to his sister since he himself had always been good to his own sister, Tom's thinking that Maggie always believes she is better than him that at first glance seems like 1N/nS frequency, but since it gets repeated over and over through the narrative, it turns out to become an instance of nN/1S, and likewise Maggie's ceaseless thoughts about Tom being "always so harsh"

(247) on her, Maggie's promise to Philip about kissing him whenever she sees him again that is reminded to her when he says "don't you remember – and you promised to kiss me when you met me again" (351), Maggie's unraveling of her relationship with Philip to Tom and their frequent visits at the Red Deeps, Maggie's promise to Tom about not talking to Philip in private, Tom's discussion with his uncle Deane about his father's "dying wish" (416) to get back the old mill, and finally visits of Philip and Maggie in the Red Deeps and their meetings before that in King's Lorton revealed to Mr. Wakem that are all further instances of repeating frequency to readers.

Furthermore, there is an instance of repeating frequency in this work that is quite prolific and in many ways resembles the repeated phrase in *Frankenstein*. This instance of repeating frequency is related to what Mr. Tulliver frequently repeats in a number of occasions before his death. As Mr. Tulliver says, "This world's been too many for me" (276), readers of this study might feel like a sort of affinity with this phrase since they have already observed a similar phrase in *Frankenstein* regarding the monster's threatening of Victor about being with him at his wedding night, which is repeated through the work for a number of times up to the wedding night. Very similarly, the same notion of repeating a single phrase is observed in this narrative and out of Mr. Tulliver's mouth. The very phrase appears for the first time twice in Book III, Chapter VIII, twice in Book III, Chapter IX, then one time in Book V, Chapter VI, and finally twice in Book V, Chapter VII. The point that shall be mentioned regarding this repetition is that the last time Mr. Tulliver utters the very phrase, he is unable to deliver it fully and passes away while trying to utter his last words. That is to say, this repeated phrase is one of the final words this unfortunate dying man speaks out – though partially – in the narrative that stands for its significance in emphasizing the cruelty of the world to him and his family. Mr. Tulliver's final words in the latter part of Book V, Chapter VII are as follows:

No, my wench. I don't forgive him. What's forgiving to do? I can't love a raskill ... Does God forgive raskills? – but if He does, He won't be hard wi' me ... This world's – too many – honest man – puzzling – (376).

Eventually, before moving further, let us point out the fact that unlike hermeneutics – which is a content-based approach that deals with interpretations of texts – and reader-response criticism, which is an experience-based approach, Genettian narratological schemata is completely structure-based and it deals with formal structures of narratives to generate its desirable effect. The last point to mention regarding Genettian nN/1S frequency is about an occasion that the narrator directly addresses the audience in the beginning of Book II, where she/he diversely provides a repeating frequency to readers in person by putting the following line: "Tom, as you have observed, was never an exception among boys for ease of address" (142), and another time in the end of Book III, Chapter II, where the completing analepsis about the account of Mr. Tulliver's loss of property is given and then as the narrator puts, "And the next morning Maggie went, as

we have seen” (211) to fetch Tom; and again in Book III, Chapter VII, where the narrator directly addresses readers regarding Mr. Wakem by saying, “You have never seen Mr. Wakem before, are possibly wondering whether he was really as eminent a rascal” (261). In such instances, the narrator, quite directly, addresses readers and reminds them of the fact that they already know about the matter since it has already been narrated to them. Therefore, here, a repeating frequency that is mostly given through characters’ conversations and relationships is provided via direct addressing of readers.

Very similarly and explicitly again, the narrator reminds readers of the fact that as they “have seen, [Mrs. Tulliver] was not without influence over her husband” (167) to provide another direct addressing and a repeating frequency. Finally, there is one noticeable instance of such direct addressing of readers provided by the narrator in Book VI, Chapter II, however, this time the narrator only addresses male readers by putting “Gentlemen, you are aware, are apt to impart these imprudent confidences to ladies concerning their unfavorable opinion of sister fair ones” (398).

In general, nN/1S frequency is provided in *The Mill on the Floss* to create themes and motifs, remind readers of certain events, criticize the world and its cruelty through Mr. Tulliver’s repeated phrase that the world has been too many for him, and finally direct addressing of readers when the narrator decides to do so.

4.3. Reading Charles Dickens’ *Hard Times*

Hard Times as one of the canonical works of British literature, touches upon a number of significant issues in life and employment of nN/1S frequency apparently assets its narrator to produce his desirable effect. This narrative elaborates on a number of issues including upbringing of children and educating them, abandonment, expectation, blind marriage, difficulty of working class life in an industrialized society, and so on. There are many ways by which the narrator emphasizes the importance of such issues in this narrative including the use of a variety of Genettian frequency types including singulative, repeating, and iterative frequencies to different proportions. However, toiling to try to qualitatively discuss the frequency of their employment in this narrative is futile since all of them are used more or less in the work, thus what we will discuss is the rate at which repeating frequencies (nN/1S) are used here.

One of the most common types of frequencies used in the entire narrative is repeating frequency (nN/1S). Interestingly enough, readers confront two types of repeating frequencies that shall be discussed here. The very first type is the ordinary type that is very commonly observed in many other works, as well. Many examples of this type lie in the work and to name a few of them out of many, we could mention Mr. Bounderby’s account of Mr. Jupe’s deserting his daughter to Sissy that is a repeating frequency to readers as they already know about it when it is told to her, and Sissy’s habit of reading to her father about “the Fairies ... and the Dwarf, and the Hunchback, and the Genies” (43) that is considered a nN/1S frequency type since it habitually happens.

The second type of repeating frequency, however, is of a special familiar type. It is rather significant since it does remind readers of the study of two similar phrases they have been provided in two other previously discussed narratives: the monster's threat of being with Victor at his wedding night in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, and what Mr. Tulliver's utters as this world being too many for him in *The Mill on the Floss*. Quite similarly, in the end of Book I, Chapter III, Mr. Gradgrind repeats the words "What would Mr. Bounderby say?" (Dickens 12) for two times to insist how much he cares about what Mr. Bounderby is about to say when he hears about Louisa and Tom's peeping at the circus. That is to say, through the repetition of a single phrase, the narrator implies the importance of Mr. Bounderby to Mr. Gradgrind; this is actually a significant event to show how highly Mr. Gradgrind thinks of Mr. Bounderby. Therefore, through the very repetition, the emphasis is delivered, which stands as a repeating frequency to provide emphasis instance.

Then not quite later in Book I, Chapter XI, the line "to be fed with turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon" (63) entailing the ultimate objective of everyone in Coketown according to Mr. Bounderby that also bears one of the theme of the narrative is repeated twice. Moreover, the same phrase is repeated once in Book I, Chapter XV, once in Book II, Chapter II, and one last time in Book III, Chapter III. Although what readers are given here is not comparable to the two phrases in Shelly and Eliot's works in terms of narrative proceedings, it is similar to them in terms of form.

In another similar instance the following line "red house with black outside shutters, green inside blinds, a black street door, up two white steps" (62) is repeated once in Book II, Chapter I, and once in Book II, Chapter II to describe Coketown buildings including Mr. Bounderby's mansion and Bank. The same phrase actually reappears three times in the entire narrative. The significance of such a repetition lies in its emphasis on the wholesomeness of the appearance of the town – especially those buildings possessed by Mr. Bounderby.

Repeating the same phrase over again to emphasize certain information and provide insight into the work's theme is certainly what this 1N/nS does. The repetition of this phrase runs deep in life expectations of the working class and simply every individual in Coketown – of course from Mr. Bounderby's point of view. That is to say, as Mr. Bounderby suggests, people in Coketown want to attain wealth and fame, just as he has done. However, to an unfortunate honest character like Stephen who has different expectations of his life, being fed upon turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon is of no importance and of no use. To him, a simple life with his beloved Rachael and finding a way to get rid of his unnamed drunkard wife – who seems to be his greatest pain – is enough. Although it seems like this phrase does not correspond to Stephen and his

expectations from life, Mr. Bounderby's repeated sentence sounds right regarding other people in the town since that is apparently what the working class always dreams of. In this manner, one could be "reminded of the amazing scope of Dickens' linguistic repertoire. There is abundant idiolectal variations in the speeches of Dickensian characters". Dickens characters actually provide "variegated array of idiolects" (SØRENSEN 131), which in particular shows each character in their specific mindset and peculiar habits.

Unlike reader-response criticism whose focus is mainly upon reader's experience, using the close reading technique in the light of Genettian narratology shifts the focus to the very structure of narratives. Moreover, according to John F. Lincks, "potential revelations of a close reading of *Hard Times*" can help readers "gain a sound overview of the novel, based on an awareness of the coherence, the tone, the structure, the themes, and the harmony between themes and techniques" (218). Such a harmony could be observed in the very motif of being fed upon turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon is a recurring symbol of wealth and working class ultimate objective in life. People who feed upon such expensive food in a time when most of inhabitants in the town cannot afford it are definitely among the richest and the wealthiest – if not powerful – individuals in such a society. Therefore, this recurring phrase also stands as a very crucial symbol in the work – aristocracy. Eventually, through a close reading of this narrative, one could figure out the way the narrator employs a structural element like that of repeating frequency to create one of the motifs of the work.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, disregarding all socio-historical backgrounds of authors and different styles and techniques of writing they take up, there is one analogous trend that could be found in all the three selected works of British literature. In general, there are numerous narratological elements according to Genettian schemata that could be traced down and analyzed and there is no doubt that such narratological devices correspond to all the works if applied meticulously. These works have certainly benefitted the chance of employing narratological devices in creating their narratives since all the three narratives are quite rich in their use of these devices. However, that commonly found feature among every single one of these works that is a matter of interest to the present study is none other than nN/1S frequency type.

As the provided close reading revealed, the three selected case studies, Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, and Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* correspond perfectly to Genettian nN/1S frequency. That is to say, scrutiny of the works shows the great extent to which they employ Genettian frequency. nN/1S frequency accounts mostly for the events characters are already acquainted with through their repetition when being narrated to other characters in the work.

What is more, Genettian nN/1S frequency is a promising formal device for creating themes, providing motifs, emphasize certain events and information, remind characters and readers of certain occurrences, and address readers directly in the hands of authors to enable them to generate their desirable effect. Therefore, readers can make sure that where there is a repetition, there is something significant the author intends to let them know. That is to say, repetitions are not just provided to linger narration – which they actually manage doing to some extent – but to stress the importance of certain events or information; narrators actually use repeating frequency as a means of providing signals to readers to guide them through the path they have paved.



References

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester University Press, 2002. Print.
- Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. London J.M. Dent, 1920. PDF.
- Eliot, George. *The Mill on the Floss*. New York: A. L. Burt, 1905. Print.
- Fludernik, Monika. *An Introduction to Narratology*. Routledge, 2009. Print.
- Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983. Print.
- Lincks, John F. "The Close Reading of 'Hard Times.'" *The English Journal*, vol. 58, no. 2, 1969, pp. 212–18.
- Miller, J. Hillis (Joseph Hillis). *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels*. Cambridge, Mass, 1982. PDF.
- Neary, John M. "'Ah: Runs': Updike, Rabbit, and Repetition." *Religion & Literature*, Vol. 21. No.1, 1989, pp. 89–110. Print.
- Preston, John. "Review of Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels." *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 16, 1986, pp. 319–320. Print.
- Puckett, Kent. *Narrative Theory*. Cambridge University Press, 2016. Print.
- Scholes, Robert. "Review of Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 38, No.1, 1983, pp. 97–101. Print.
- Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Boston and Cambridge, Sever, Francis, & Co., 1869. PDF.
- Simon, Richard Keller. "John Kennedy Toole and Walker Percy: Fiction and Repetition in A Confederacy of Dunces." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. 36, No 1, 1994, pp. 99–116. Print.
- SØRENSEN, KNUD. "NARRATIVE AND SPEECH-RENDERING IN DICKENS." *Dickens Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1989, pp. 131–41.