



Research Paper

## The Narrative of Haikus in Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*: A Layer or the Core

**Eshaq Bezdooode**

PhD student in English Literature, University of Kurdistan (Corresponding Author)

([ibezdude@gmail.com](mailto:ibezdude@gmail.com))

**Zakarya Bezdooode**

Associate Professor of English Literature, University of Kurdistan.

([z.bezdodeh@uok.ac.ir](mailto:z.bezdodeh@uok.ac.ir))



10.22034/lda.2024.141998.1024

**Received:**

August, 24,  
2024

**Accepted:**

November, 08,  
2024

**Available  
online:**

November, 08,  
2024

**Keywords:**

Narrative,  
haiku,  
representation,  
author,  
Bakhtin,  
alterity,  
voices.

**Abstract**

The present study is an attempt to investigate the narrative devices along with the use of haiku in Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* in order to shed light on the artistic aspects of the narrative. A travel narrative style is imitated to have a paternal story of war recollected. The recollection is provided under the name *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* as an imitation in the style and an allusion to Basho's classical Japanese work the basic feature of which is the inclusion of haikus. These haikus act like captions which are represented; however, they are open to be recollected. The use of haikus along with the narrative techniques employed in the text set the scene for the author to have his representation as well while it is not easily noticeable. Alterity in a way defined by Bakhtin strengthens the argument by giving space to voice(s) to be heard. It is the nature of haiku that paves the way for the author to investigate beyond what is said.



## مقاله پژوهشی

### روایت هایکوها در جاده باریک به اعماق شمال ریچارد فلانگان: لایه‌ای از روایت یا کنه آن

اسحاق بز دوده (نویسنده مسؤول)

دانشجوی دکتری زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی دانشگاه کردستان.

(ibezdude@gmail.com)

ذکر یا بز دوده

دانشیار زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی دانشگاه کردستان (z.bezdodeh@uok.ac.ir)



10.22034/lda.2024.141998.1024

#### چکیده

این مقاله تلاشی است برای بررسی ابزارهای روایت در امتداد هایکوها در رمان *جاده باریک به اعماق شمال* ریچارد فلانگان تا جنبه‌های هنری روایت را روشن نماید. سبکی از سفرنامه نویسی برای بازگویی خاطرات پدری از جنگ مورد تقلید قرار می‌گیرد. این بازگویی تحت عنوان *جاده باریک به اعماق شمال* نوشته می‌شود تا هم تقلیدی از شیوه‌ی نوشتن و هم تلمیحی به اثر ادبیات کلاسیک ژاپن به قلم باشو باشد که ویژگی اصلی آن بهره‌گیری از هایکوها می‌باشد. این هایکوها همچون عکس‌نوشته‌هایی بازنمایی می‌شوند که امکان بازگو شدن را دارند. استفاده از هایکوها و دیگر فنون روایت بستری را برای نویسنده فراهم می‌کنند تا بازنمایی‌ای شخصی خود، که به آسانی دیده نمی‌شود، را نیز ارائه دهد. دگربودگی به شیوه‌ای که باختین آن را تعریف می‌کند این ادعا را قوت می‌بخشد چرا فضا برای چند صدایی مهیا می‌شود. این طبیعت هایکو است که راه برای بررسی فراتر از سطح اولیه را فراهم می‌کند.

استناد: بز دوده، اسحاق و ذکر یا بز دوده. (۱۴۰۳). «روایت هایکوها در جاده باریک به اعماق شمال ریچارد فلانگان: لایه‌ای از روایت یا کنه آن».

آن، نشریه تحلیل گفتمان ادبی، ۲ (۱)، ۵۰-۲۷.

#### تاریخ دریافت:

۱۴۰۳/۰۶/۰۳

#### تاریخ پذیرش:

۱۴۰۳/۰۸/۱۸

#### تاریخ انتشار:

۱۴۰۳/۰۸/۱۸

#### واژه‌های کلیدی:

روایت، هایکو، بازنمایی، نویسنده، باختین، دگربودگی، چند صدایی.

## 1. Introduction

The life story of Dorrigo Evans presented under a classical title is a mere representation of the protagonist's life from the early childhood to his death bed and people he meets on the way to the deep north. All the five chapters of the novel are attempts of the author to provide space enough for the characters to be known through the objective representation of an extra-diegetic narrator. Love and War are the events experienced by Dorrigo Evans by the company of the beloveds and comrades. Failure is the outcome of a triangular love ending in a mismatch. The war for Dorrigo is seen in the POW camps in the process of building the railway.

*The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is the life story of Dorrigo Evans unfolded in two timelines: the experience in a Japanese POW camp to build Thai-Burma railway and his life before and after the war (World War II). Before the war, the major event in his life is the complicated love affair he has with his uncle's young wife, Amy, that haunts his life and makes love a dominant motif all through the novel which cannot be ignored. During the war he is a prisoner who becomes a leading figure with failures in saving fellow captives from the brutality they are experiencing in the camp. After the war he goes back home while he is celebrated as a war hero and is mentally haunted by the love and war experiences of his. The mixture of these preoccupying and complicated feelings of love, guilt and survival are the preoccupations of the protagonist upon which the storyline moves forward not necessarily on a straight line but by having shifts every now and then.

The role that poetry plays in the novel is the one to be scrutinized as it starts the narrative in the very first page and the reader finds out about its special form and how it moves the narration forward as the story goes on. Thus, the travel narrative is once more reproduced in the classical Japanese style with intervening haikus. However, the process through which the events are represented, the narration, is significant as well for the techniques which are being used to leave remarkable and desired impacts on the process of the storytelling. Different facets of focalization, FID, and Bakhtinian polyphony are among the key

features of the narration used by the author to arrive at a destination that is to be argued in the following parts.

Being bilinear, the story is the narration of both love and war, two pictures to be framed simultaneously. This nature makes the reader investigate the source of the inspiration for these two highlighted events. Dorrigo's volunteer work, in helping the POWs makes him a hero to whom a big hand is given while he is back to Australia and delivers a speech. On the other side, there are the Japanese officers who are guilty of war crime, but proud of what they have done. The interesting point is that the chain to connect these two is not only the road, but also poetry:

He found several shelves full of old editions of classical writers and began vaguely browsing, hoping to find a cheap edition of Vergil's *Aeneid*, which he had only read in borrowed copy. It wasn't really the great poem of antiquity that Dorrigo Evans wanted though, but the aura he felt around such books – an aura that both radiated outwards and took him inwards to another world that said to him that he was not alone. (Flanagan, 2013: 62-3)

The excerpt well clarifies the role poetry plays on the mentality of the protagonist, since it is not the only instance and there are several other parts which are indicative of such an effect. One highly significant poem for him is Tennyson's "Ulysses" in which he finds different answers for different situations.

On the other side the Japanese are searching their needs in their classical verse form, haiku:

They recited to each other more of their favorite haiku, and they were deeply moved not so much by the poetry as by their sensitivity to poetry; not in knowing the poem but in knowing the poem demonstrated the higher side of themselves and the Japanese spirit – that Japanese spirit that was soon to daily travel along their railway all the way to Burma, the Japanese spirit that from Burma would find its way to India, the Japanese spirit that would from there conquer the world. (Flanagan, 2013: 126)

The haikus that the Japanese officers recite are the classical ones by the classical Japanese figures, signifying the invoking nature that is worth to be shared. Thus, in both sides of the narrative there is poetry present. For the love significance there

might not be too many questions; however, how poetry inspires cruelty and violence among the characters would be a point worthwhile to be inspected.

All the twists and turns during the course of the time from the 13<sup>th</sup> century Japanese court to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries when it found its way into the community, formed a verse form that not only became popular in Japan, but also found its way into the western literature. This verse form had its process of completion through different eras and different literary trends and movements and arrived at the modern destination while it was called haiku, a poem of seventeen syllables with its own special structural and stylistic characteristics.

It is not only the haiku that is to be considered meticulously, but also the narration. The process through which the events are delivered is tried to be as objective as possible. This objectivity eventuates in the fulfillment of having a place left for the author to be expressed. The objectivity of the narrative is due to two main characteristics: first, different focalizers who perceive the events through their own senses and present them from different dimensions, and second, multiple voices which are taking the advantage of being heard. The differentiation of the narrator and the focalizer is not the only point which helps the reader to grip on what goes on; the facets, the sources of the perception, are the other points which let the reader see and/or feel the events in all of the possible ways.

In narratives the words are the only means to reach the end, which is telling a story. Previously the words were considered as the soul of the events recollected in the story and that was why the only aspect regarding the process of telling was narration. The contemporary theorists found more aspects and justified them. Beyond the narration which was the words written and the story told, critics tried to find the source of the words uttered; perceptually, psychologically and ideologically, because "the phenomena that compose the fictive universe are never presented to us themselves but from certain perspectives." (Lothe, 1998: 39).

The modern and postmodern offspring of the earlier novels provided the opportunity for the characters to talk and to be heard.

This was the base upon which Bakhtin drew his famous distinction and talked about 'polyphonic novels.' When it comes to this point then Bakhtin talks about "Galilean perception of language:"

...Galileo perceived the universe as comprising a plurality of worlds. Similarly, the polyphonic novel, unlike monological genres, acknowledges and embraces a plurality of discourses and the ideologies and world-views associated with them (MacHale, 2003: 166).

This plurality was not the one in heteroglossia; it was, on the contrary, a base appropriate enough to provide space for ideologies and worldviews to talk. While heteroglossia is "the plurality of discourse," polyphony is "the plurality of voices" as MacHale differentiates them. Bakhtinian polyphony, FID, and focalization as the signs of plurality in a narrative, all serve the same aim which is adding multidimensionality to the text. The opportunity provided is a hide-out for the author to leave traces every once in a while, and make a cognizant reader curious to trace him/ her. The use of a special technique is not the end of the other one. The narrative is a combination and it is therefore impossible to be conducted or considered as separate entities. The reflection on each dimension of the narration is a good help to come across a better understanding of the core of the process, an attempt that does not signify a separation, but helps the investigation of the narrative more palpable and muter.

## 2. Review of Literature

Richard Flanagan as a prosperous contemporary Australian novelist is a modern novelist whose works are too recent to have many things written about them; however, there are several pieces devoted to his artistic works. One of his works which has been universally noticed is *The Unknown Terrorist* that is to be classified in non-American post 9/11 literature. A part of *From Solidarity to Schism: 9/11 and After in Fiction Outside* has been devoted to *The Unknown Terrorist*, the aim of which is to represent the impact of 9/11 on the literature of the other countries. *Plotting Justice; Narrative Ethics and Literary Culture After 9/11* is the other which tries to have an eye on the works of non-American English writers and how their works have been affected by it. Almost all that is done about *The Narrow Road to the Deep*

*North* is more of reviews in the press or personal blogs. In most of these reviews the role that haiku plays has been noticed; however, not investigated.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis of this study is a combination and comparison of two sides that run parallel to each other, narrative and haiku. The theories of narrative in contemporary narratology are the base upon which the role of the poetry is to be scrutinized and better understood. Haiku, as the mainstream of poetry, in Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is a source of perception for the characters and the (implied) author as well. To investigate these two layers, a meticulous understanding of haiku: structure and themes, and narrative: theories of contemporary theoreticians including Gerard Genette, James Phelan, Seymour Chatman, Wayne Booth and Rimmon Kenan, is the necessity.

### 4. A Layer or the Core

#### 4.1 The Sixth Haiku

Journey as a dominant motif in the novel, is the conjunction which leads Flanagan to desire the same title as a classical work of art, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. The road is the best place to meet variety, especially if it is deep into whereabouts. The destination of the trip is the recognition which is to be grasped individually, since an idiosyncratic recognition is the one to be admired. The author is the first perceiver of the scene and is, therefore, the first to comment on it. This is where Flanagan uses haiku and recollects his own variation. Not only the whole work, but also each chapter is a journey both literally and metaphorically, a journey that is initiated from light in the church and ended in a sort of darkness; for chapter one it is the dark night in a hotel room. The very beginning of the story is Dorigo Evans, the protagonist, remembering nothing but the light, a light which becomes blurred later on.

1<sup>st</sup>

A bee

Staggers out

Of the peony

The haiku which starts the narrative is meticulously chosen by Flanagan as the image it provides the audience with is the one to be considered carefully. The metaphor of life that is noticed in the word 'peony' becomes more noticeable through the first chapter. The image of the peony in particular and flower imagery, in general, are dominant in the haiku, to signify the life and to be the season word of the haiku which strengthens the metaphor even more. The season of this haiku is spring which its resemblances have made it a nice metaphor for the youth. This imagery is dominant in haikus for instance:

Scattered the peony  
One beside another pile  
Petals two or three

The richness of the flowers has a magic touch to keep our attentions. Yet here, viewing its large petals piled one upon another rather than lying one above the other, we can feel their movement, a scene of weight exquisite enough to give the living texture of the petals... (Yasuda, 2001: 8).

This way there would be no doubt that the peony is the life, and therefore, the bee is the man living a life. This is not the only lead, but the events of the following chapter confirm the idea as well. When the life is traced in the image, then one is to be there to live the life. The bee is easily identifiable with the protagonist. Delving into the haiku and finding what it signifies, one can claim that the author is expressing himself through the verse. Now one may ask of the traces that the author has left behind in the haiku; the first point is using a haiku in a different place from its original one, which means using the verse for a personal context that results in having a personal representation. However, the part that the author has used more is the diction or the choice of the words in the verse.

## 2<sup>nd</sup>

From that woman  
On the beach, dusk pours out  
Across the evening waves

From the second chapter the details of the events, briefly brought up in the first chapter, are mentioned. The first petal as the



initiating haiku suggests Dorrigo's love story and his encounter with Amy. The other petal is the war experience which is neck and neck with the love story of Dorry's life. The snapshot of this chapter, the haiku, beautifully sets the scene for the reader to face 'that woman on the beach'; however, the turn in the chapter is totally unpredictable in the first few pages.

The contrast or the gap is the first lead to read between the lines and search for the clues of the presence of the author, the scenery of love accompanied by the drudgery of the POWs the head of whom is Dorrigo. Interestingly enough, the haiku is more like an affirmation of what goes on in the chapter. A sensation of love felt deep in the heart of Dorrigo affects the other petals and acts like the only matter of his life:

And when he looked up again he realized why the swarm had moved. The woman with the red flower had walked over to where he stood and now, striped in shadow and light, was standing in front of him (Flanagan, 2013: 65).

This is exactly where the narrative content of the haiku becomes the point to be noticed. The first part of chapter two provides the reader with another scenery that has a woman in its center:

Ella... And with her came a world that seemed to Dorrigo secure, timeless, confident, unchanging; a world darkwood living rooms and clubs, crystal decanters of sherry and single malt, the cloying, slightly intoxicating, slightly claustrophobic smell of polished must (Flanagan, 2013: 64).

The two narrative contents provided to be the source of the invocation of the haiku make the distinction a challenge to go through. The protagonist's preoccupation with the woman is to be deciphered. The rest of the chapter is full of leads to indicate 'the woman' with whom Dorrigo is mesmerized, since the beach and the woman that have invoked Issa are manifested in the following pages through Flanagan's frame:

The day was growing hot, they were sweating, and both were grateful for the relief of that empty beach and ocean, its noise, its purpose, its solitude. After changing in a discreet distance from each other in the dunes, they ran into the sea together (Flanagan, 2013: 132-3).

It is an instance of the intrusion of the author without breaking the boundaries of the extradiegetic narrator with a bird-eye viewpoint. There may be a doubt of the nature of the intrusion, but it becomes obvious when the author takes the side of Amy's love by bringing up a snapshot of her as the woman who Dorrigo is always thinking about.

### 3<sup>rd</sup>

A world of dew  
And within every dewdrop  
A world of struggle

The very first haiku of this chapter, at the beginning, and the other two within the chapter are better to be thematically investigated, in order to strengthen the main argument of having the haikus for the purpose of intrusion.

Regardless of the structural characteristics, each haiku had to have a season word, *kigo*, to highlight the role of nature as a moving scene to be represented. A turn that occurs in this chapter of Flanagan's novel is being invoked by human beings and violence, contrary to the nature of haiku. The initial haiku, like the rest of the chapters, has only a source to be related to and that is the author. When the narrative develops, the source of the inspiration becomes clear and one can come to this conclusion by going through the first pages of the chapter. The dew originally used by Issa is the natural manifestation of spring in early morning. Flanagan starts as if the same scenery has invoked him. "A drop dripped. Tiny, whispered Darky Gardiner. The noise of the mansoonal rain flogging the canvas roof of the long, A-formed shelter – bamboo-strutted and open-walled – meant Darky Gardiner could hardly hear himself." (Flanagan, 2013: 177). The rain drops of the monsoon act like the shot to remind him of the dew in Issa's image. However, this is the continuation that clarifies the main source. For Flanagan each man is a world in itself with natural and innate conflicts:

Darky Gardiner loathed Tiny, thought him a fool and would do everything to keep him alive. Because courage, survival, love – all these things didn't live in one man. They lived in

them all or they died and everyman with them; they had come to believe that to abandon one man was to abandon themselves (Flanagan, 2013: 186).

These dew drops are the POWs and jailors all accused of inner struggles, the way the author tries to indicate this struggle may not be clear enough through this paragraph, but the details provided for each character's life in different parts of the novel make the claim sound logical. The boldest instances can be Dorigo and Amy, as two main figures, whose lives are highly affected by their inner struggles, especially the matter of love. When it comes to jailors and officers, they have faced their own struggles as well.

#### 4<sup>th</sup>

This world of dew  
Is only a world of dew –  
And yet.

'This' connects the line of the narrative that Flanagan has designed for himself as an escape from the objective extradiegetic narration. The world he explains in the previous chapter is meticulously connected to the one in the present chapter. 'This world of dew' is the characters who are each a world as explained above. The dew is living its life after the war. Now the war is over and the Japanese have lost the challenge. This is what goes on in chapter four the beginning of which is Nakamura and his position after war as a war criminal trying to escape execution. The remarkable commentary made by the author in this haiku is the matter of combination and continuation. Two key words: 'this' and 'yet' connect and continue the narrative respectively. 'The world of the struggle' still goes on, since Flanagan finds it within the dew and nothing outside.

The war has ended and all the people involved have gone back to where they had been before; however, there seems to be no progress in lessening the conflict. The haphazard process of life is going on 'and within every dewdrop a world of struggle' (Flanagan, 2013: 175). Flanagan's attempt in indicating this inner conflict becomes more successful by having an objective representation of each character's life; from the Korean guards through Japanese

officers to POWs. When light is shed upon different dimensions of each person's life, the struggle becomes meaningful and the reader finds out that the beginning or the ending of the war is not so significant a point in lowering the conflicts people are living with. Besides, the word yet moves the narrative forward as it leaves a vacancy for the conflict (the narrative) to go on.

### 5<sup>th</sup>

In this world  
We walk on the roof of hell  
Gazing at flowers

...on his return noticed growing at the side of the muddy trail, in the midst of overwhelming darkness, a crimson flower. He lent down and shone his lantern on the small miracle. He stood, bowed in the cascading rain, for a long time. Then he straightened back up and continued on his way (Flanagan, 2013: 447-8).

Chapter five, the deathbed of Dorrigo and Nakamura, is the final judgment of 'this world' as 'the roof of the hell.' Flanagan's commentary is coming to its end and the final word is expressed. The place in the hell the characters consider as their own is confirmed by Flanagan by growing flowers at the roof of hell that can be indicative of nothing but the hell itself.

A year before Nakamura's death, Tomokawa pays him a visit and reminds him of the memories of war while Nakamura is trying to think of the good deeds. This is when Tomokawa looks like a turtle spurting fire and as soon as he changes the conversation, he looks human again. A year later when he dies, Mrs. Nakamura writes to the Tomokawas and expresses her husband's death with a commentary that "[his family] knew he was a kind man who could not bear to see even animals suffer. He knew he was a blessed and lucky man who had led a good life." (Flanagan, 2013: 395). These lines seem nonsensical for the reader due to the detailed extradiegetic narrative; still the author finds it incomplete and adds the snapshot at first not to leave the reader helpless in moving forward. The letter ends in Nakamura's death poem:

Winter ice  
Melts into clean water –  
Clear is my heart

Comparing with Issa's haiku at the beginning, one can easily grasp the gap and the way Flanagan has tried to be heard through the gaps.

The only lie that Ella has told Dorry becomes clear in this chapter to have another flower stem from hell, a lie that ruins Dorry's life. When Dorrigo is at war he receives a letter, which is six months old, informing him of the explosion in the King of Cornwall hotel that has been a tragedy, since the residents have all died who are not the concern for Dorrigo except for Amy who he cares about:

The letter was six months old. It ran to several pages. Ella wrote that although nothing had been heard from Dorrigo or, for that matter, from his unit for over a year, she knew he was alive. The letter talked of her life, of Melbourne in all its mundane detail. All this he could believe. But unlike other men, who pored over every sentence of their letters and cards from home, only one detail registered with Dorrigo Evans. Enclosed with the letter was a newspaper cutting headed ADELAIDE HOTEL TRAGEDY. (Flanagan, 2013: 445-6).

Ella who had no sign of the hell so far and was a flower stemming from somewhere else was finally recognized as no exception; although only a single fault, it resulted in a catastrophe.

Coming to the end of the novel the reader feels the necessity to go back to the haikus he has read in the first pages of the chapters. This is when the narrative that the author tries to recollect becomes noticeable.

## 6<sup>th</sup>

A bee staggers out of the peony. From that woman on the beach, dusk pours out across the evening waves. A world of dew and within every dewdrop a world of struggle; this world of dew is only a world of dew and yet, in this world we walk on the roof of hell gazing at flowers.

When all the haikus are connected and considered as a whole, the sixth chapter is written which is the pure narrative of Flanagan expressing himself in the story that he could not enter. Haiku has reached its apex and has fulfilled its aim by having a 21<sup>st</sup> century work of art inspired. The verses remind Flanagan of the war experience his father has gone through, contrary to the nature of early haikus, still probable due to the vocation it bears to inspire.

The use of haiku for Flanagan as a means of intrusion is observed if the narrative is meticulously investigated, since the art of storytelling does not allow the author to enter and express himself whenever he wants. Therefore, the art of the author is to come to life after death and represent his interpretations in a layer idiosyncratically designed. Flanagan's use of haiku is delivering a distinctive layer of the narrative, a wise and artful choice. The matter of combination and evocation are the key features in the haikus paving the way for Flanagan to meet the opportunity of a careful intrusion.

It is true that haiku was a verse form derived to be recited separately, but the travel books like *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Basho were written in an order which was slightly different. The journey starts and it is toward a destination, which in early days were shrines. On the way to the temple the traveler and his companies move toward maturity in their quest-like movement. The writer of the travel book is the one who stays to the end of the journey and finishes writing the book. On the way there is scenery both natural and religious that invoke the writer to capture them in the form of short verses; however, these verses were written after the scene and the itinerary were totally composed as a caption posted before a photo. The case with Flanagan's novel is vice versa. The haiku starts the event which has not been seen by the reader, thus the haiku becomes the center itself. The replacement of the verse is for the purpose of putting it in the center. All the narrative has been narrated for the haikus which have been formed in the mind of the author as the result of listening to a real-life story. The father's war story has formed the base of a puzzle that is to be completed bottom up. The process has started the same way as the old instances of the genre; but as it is to be composed, a

backformation occurs, since the path has been paved mentally. Using the verses is an attempt by Flanagan to share the representation he has received in the very first listening to the story. The representation of the event is not a mere one and has the right to add commentary to the incidents which have happened.

#### **4.2 Towards My Narrative**

The narrative which is originally a paternal experience, is artistically blended with other different dimensions and sources to form a story event worthwhile to be represented. The first chapter begins the line of the events while Dorigo, as the focalizer, is posing a mature question: "why at the beginning of things is there always light?" The question is formed in Dorigo's mind when considering his earlier memories in a church hall:

Dorigo Evans' earliest memories were of sun flooding a church hall in which he sat with his mother and grandmother. A wooden church hall. Blinding light and him toddling back and forth, in and out of its transcendent welcome, into the arms of women. Women who loved him. Like entering the sea and returning to the beach. Over and over (Flanagan, 2013: 1).

This very first paragraph highlights the borders, not only between the narrator and the focalizer, but also among different facets of the focalization.

This is the role of the focalization that Flanagan uses in order to provide the reader with as objective an image as possible not to have incongruities with the nature he has chosen for his work, the title and the initiating haikus. The nature of haiku demands sheer illustration open to be recollected the accomplishment of which is Flanagan's aim. However, the matter of focalization is not only limited to the first lines of the first page, they are observed in the following parts as well.

The time when Dorigo is one or two, he becomes the source of the perceptions:

That must have been 1915 or 1916. He would have been one or two. Shadows came later in the form of a forearm rising up, its black outline leaping in the greasy light of a kerosene lantern. Jackie Maguire was sitting in the Evans' small dark kitchen, crying. No one cried then, except babies. Jackie

Maguire was an old man, maybe forty, perhaps older, and he was trying to brush the tears away from his pockmarked face with the back of his hand. Or was it with his fingers? Only his crying was in Dorigo Evans' memory fixed. It was a sound like something breaking. Its slowing rhythm reminded him of a rabbit's hind legs thumping the ground as it is strangled by a snare ... (Flanagan, 2013: 1-2).

The sort of the description provided in all its different facets is represented by the young Dorigo who is entering the house to treat a blood blister on his hand. The same sign of the diction and the images help us to find the focalizer. "No one cried then except babies," (Flanagan, 2013: 1) is a sentence uttered by a kid, since the domain of his experience is as limited as possible. In his world, he has never seen people crying except babies. It becomes clearer when he expresses his brother's, Tom, crying after the war. Still, this is not the only lead and the image that explains the sound of Jackie's crying is childish as well: "a rabbit's hind legs thumping the ground." (Flanagan, 2013: 2) When one notices the simile, s/he finds out that hearing such a sound and noticing it is only the result of not being happy for capturing a rabbit in a snare and being mentally so free to hear this sound distinctly. Thus, Dorigo is again the perceiver in his early childhood.

Part two of chapter one narrates the same event and the same moment, but with a great shift:

His mother swung Dorigo up unto the kitchen table where the lamplight fell strongest and, avoiding Jackie Maguire's strange gaze, lifted her son's thumb into the light. Between his sobs Jackie Maguire said a few things. His wife had the week previously taken the train with their youngest child to Launceston, and not returned (Flanagan, 2013: 3).

The perceptual facet makes us know that the moment is the same, the dark kitchen facing Jackie Maguire crying. Interestingly enough, this time the reason of Mr. Maguire's crying is clear and there is no ambiguity anymore, besides, the murmur while crying is heard as well from which there was no sign in the first description. Therefore, this way Flanagan sometimes uses the opportunity of having different focalizers in order to illustrate the turns and distinctions.



The narrative develops and the focalizer becomes the mature Dorrigo, no longer the younger Dorrigo, who faces different phases in his life. This part clarifies the role of the focalizer even more, Dorrigo's encounter with Amy, while he does not know her yet, in a bookshop and a sensation of which no one is aware of except Dorrigo himself. The feeling comes to surface when he meets Ella again after the bookshop encounter and tries to forget the experience; no one is aware of the sensation before this: "Ella was kind, he told himself ... He hated her kindness and he feared her pity, and he wanted only to escape it all forever" (Flanagan, 2013: 81). Ella, his beloved, is an obstacle to be escaped. The narrator is only representing the feeling of which he is not aware.

Further interactions and intercourses with Amy make Dorrigo compare her with Ella, a comparison that is uttered by the narrator as:

She lacked the various conformities that made Ella so admired and drew comparisons with various Hollywood stars; Amy was far too much flesh and blood for that. When he was away from her he tried remembering more of her perfect imperfections, how they aroused him and delighted him, and the more he dwelled on them, the more there were (Flanagan, 2013: 149).

The combination: 'perfect imperfection' is indicative of love, the love that the protagonist is living. Again Flanagan does not ignore his aim and thinks of more focalizer(s) to perceive. The love story of Dorry and Amy is delivered through Amy's perceptions as well although the dominance is Dorry's:

...[Amy] smelt Dorrigo everywhere, even after she took a bath. He had scented her world. She lay down on her marital bed and slept there until well after dusk, and when she awoke all she could smell was him (Flanagan, 2013: 148).

Her world is scented and she cannot help thinking of him. This is again the point with the focalizer as this is not the only opportunity for Amy to perceive and experience love and making love in the narrative, but she thinks of this differently and that is exactly why it is claimed it is Amy who says her world is scented. In another part of the narrative Amy's affection becomes clear and

it is when Keith, her husband, finds out about their relationship and talks to her in their car:

The car floor shuddered beneath Amy's feet. She tried to lose herself in its vibration but the vibration just seemed to be saying to her DORRY – DORRY – DORRY. She did not dare to look at her husband, instead staring ahead into the night (Flanagan, 2013: 152).

The focalizer here is Amy and it is beyond question. The sort of the feeling she has toward Dorrigo makes her feel the vibration sound as one calling Dorry's name. In this part again the author has done his best to give the narrator different sources of perception in order to enable him to have a multidimensional access to the remarkable events going on which paves the way for having so objective a narration. Through the mere presentation of the gaps, the author finds the opportunity to talk silently, especially in the cases that the ideological facet is dominant.

What has gone so far is the matter of love felt in different aspects and various forms; it would be noteworthy to start talking about the narrative of war with an after war event. In the last chapter when death overshadows the life metaphor, brought up in the first chapter, Nakamura dies and the way he leaves the scene is what his wife has included in a letter for Tomokawas. In this part the mindset is that of Mrs. Nakamura's whose description is going to be the base of Tomokawa's recognition: "a humble man to the end." (Flanagan 394) This is the gap which is artistically filled by Flanagan, as this part is not the only opportunity of the reader to know Nakamura. Based on what his wife has got, because of the limitations of her observation, Nakamura is guilty of nothing and was "a humble man to the end," a metamorphosis which is due to the change in the source of the perception ideologically.

This ending is to be scrutinized from the time we become familiar with Nakamura in the war. In the war the most significant matter to be noticed is the war itself and the violence which is explicated. The focalizer through whose mindset we observe the scene is the source of our knowledge ideologically. When Nakamura talks about the railway, which is the reason for all the disaster going on, he talks about the will of the Emperor to be fulfilled as the only justification:

Major Nakamura say prisoners lucky. They redeem honor by dying for the Emperor. ... It is true this war is cruel, Lieutenant Fukuhara translated. What war is not? But war is human beings. War what we are. War what we do. Railway might kill human beings, but I do not make human beings. I make railway. Progress does not demand freedom. Progress has no need of freedom. ... You, doctor, call it non-freedom. We call it spirit, nation, Emperor. You, doctor, call it cruelty. We call it destiny. With us, or without us. It is the future (Flanagan, 2013: 74).

The emperor, destiny and the future are the keywords in Nakamura's ideology that have affected the way he observes the incidents. The cruelty of war although confessed by him is easily justifiable as the prerequisite is already achieved. The belief in destiny enables him to think of himself as a means not a participant.

Although, sometimes a turn occurs in the ideological facet dominant in various parts, there is still insistence on the same mindset in some other parts. The comrades make up their mind to take the locomotive home as a sign of honor. Nakamura receives a letter from Tomokawa informing him of their decision to take the locomotive back to Japan. Willing to see his comrades, Nakamura accepts the invitation and joins Tomokawa, but is it really for visiting the comrades or being proud of their attempt in making the railway?

Contrary to Nakamura searching for the good deeds at the end of his life, Dorrigo Evans remembers the bad deeds of his and despite the fame he has nationally and internationally for his hard work in saving the POWs, he prefers to think about the dark side more. When he is dying he realizes the obol in the mouth of the corpses and gets what Shisui's haiku is. The contrast of Nakamura and Dorrigo in the last days of their lives is obviously due to the different ideologies they have in their lives. The impact of their beliefs and ideas is visible in the parts they are the perceivers and form differences in their lives. The shift in the focalizers and the type of the narrator Flanagan has chosen to represent the events happening are for two aims of the author to be accomplished which

are to be described as a search for the objectivity in the narration and to provide gaps in between.

#### 4.3 The Road to Bakhtinian Polyphony

The road is a particularly good place for random encounters. On the road, the spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people – representative of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages – intersect at one spatial and temporal point. People who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet; any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another (Mcquillan, 2000: 54).

*The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is the legitimate son of Bakhtin's definition of a novel; novel as a genre open enough to have the intrusion, not simply the inclusion, of different voices with the chance of an expression. Having related carnival with novels, Bakhtin modified his ideas later on and considered a place for "multiple voices" not "multiple discourses" anymore; a criterion that was claimed to be found in earlier novels as well. It was claimed that novels in no way can be monophonic

It is true that a voice is dominant, which is the protagonist's here, but this dominance is not the one that overshadows the others; on the contrary, it acts like a base comparing with which the others are heard better. The dominance of Dorrigo is observed in the first chapter, but thanks to the anachronism, not in its pejorative connotation, it is like being present in all parts of the story. The two main layers of the novel, the love and the war narrative, are both the events of Dorrigo's personal life, a personal life which is not in seclusion:

Can I tell you something? Just you?

Of course.

It is not about Miss Beatrice – and you can never tell anyone.

Of course.

You promise?

Promise!

I promise. ...

I was pregnant. ...

To Keith.

You're his wife.  
This was before. Before we were married. ...  
She halted again.  
Love him. No. I didn't. Besides.  
Besides what?  
You won't think me a bad woman?  
Why?  
Wicked? I am not wicked.  
Why? Why would I think such a thing? (Flanagan, 2013  
138-9).

In another section the comrades are talking about Rabbit Hendricks' sketchbook:

Burn it. Dorrigo Evans said, waving it away. ...  
We weren't sure sir.  
Why?  
It's a record, Bonox Baker said. His record. So people in the future would, well, know. Remember. That's what Rabbit wanted. That people will remember what happened here. To us.  
Remember?  
Yes, sir.  
Everything's forgotten in the end, Bonox. Better we live now. ...  
Lest we forget, we say, Bonox Baker said. Isn't that what we say, sir?  
We do, Bonox. Or incant. Perhaps it's not quite the same thing.  
So that's why it should be saved. So it's not forgotten.  
Do you know the poem, Bonox? It's by Kipling. It's not about remembering. It's about forgetting – how everything gets forgotten (Flanagan, 2013: 242-3).

On both sides of the narrative, there are other voices heard. These voices are not just heard through their perceptions, but there are dialogues which are the best objective representations in a way that Bakhtin has craved for. This provides the opportunity of having "self and other:"

Alterity for Bakhtin is the defining condition of all perception and therefore of all representation. Hence the self/ other opposition is not merely one that is operative

only at the level of individual persons, but rather one that governs the norms of perception of whole societies as well. As we shall see, one of the fundamental principles of alterity (or to use the word Bakhtin invokes more often, of dialogue), is that one can never perceive himself as finished, complete, one can only see others as already having become what they are (Holquist, 2008: 221).

The narrative of love which is a triangle with having three people affected, superficially speaking, Dorrigo, Amy and Ella, has participants enough with the chance to talk that enable the reader to have a multidimensional realization of the moments. Whenever Dorry's experience is shared, the same opportunity is given to Ella and Amy to express what they want which is the "simultaneity:"

Carnival is best conceived dialogically: i.e. as the interaction of differences in simultaneity. Carnival can be understood only in relation to a set of differences which both oppose it and, *at the same time*, enable it. A major simultaneity, then, must be the difference between official and unofficial worlds (Holquist, 2008: 222).

Dorrigo does not let Ella know about the affair he has with Amy and whatever goes on in secret; Ella finds the right to peep into the secrets and find out about the relationship and break it when it is possible by fabricating Amy's death. Amy has the right to listen to the car vibration, when she is being blamed for her affair, and listen to Dorry's name being called out; however, nobody can deny the role and the voice of the minor roles as well. There is also a mini love story included which is that of Mr. Maguire and the role Tom, Dorrigo's brother, plays in his story; the crying of a middle-aged man is reflected through two different realizations.

Being aware of such a criterion, Flanagan does not go back to the early days of the new genre and still wants to be a side if not backing any of them. His aim is fully accomplished; however, he has not used the authority or the dominance. If there is no domination, then it would be fair to have the voice of the author heard too. His presence within the narrative is nothing beyond a personal recollection like an audience. It is highly artistic to play a

role which is not noticed. This voice of the author is the one heard through the haikus initiating all the parts, which can be considered as a whole in the form of a narrative brief enough to be expanded.

## 5. Conclusion

What we intensively sought to explore in this study was an exploration of Richard Flanagan's novel, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, in the style of its narrative and the way the narrative sets the scene for the haikus to have something beyond a mere verbal mission. At the first place a background of haiku including the very origin of the verse form and the structural and thematic specialties were tried to be well explicated. The passage of the time and the way it affected haiku thematically, not too much structurally, was the second part in the background provided for haiku. The great figures in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Japanese literature made haiku well-known enough to have its fame and impact on the 21<sup>st</sup> century's works of art. The nature of haiku and its origin, a derivation of longer verse forms, were among the significant points which were fully investigated in this study to delineate a sort of objectivity in the narrative upon which the author could build the structure of an intervention through commentary.

It was the title that directed us toward the study of the haikus in the work. Basho's masterpiece was written with the same title in Japanese as a memoir of a travel with some companions. The hero of Basho's work, Basho himself, was in search of truth and wisdom that made him travel long ways to arrive at the truth of Zen Buddhism in the temples on the way. Flanagan's protagonist, on the other hand, was a modern man who began his journey while he had no choice in not doing so. The compulsion of the beginning was accompanied with a failure in his personal life and a catastrophic war experience which ended in a deathbed full of questions and dissatisfaction. Reading beyond the verbal and stylistic resemblances was the key to a better understanding of the novel.

## References

Chatman, Seymour. (1993). *Reading Narrative Fiction*. Macmillan Publishing Company.

Flanagan, Richard. (2013). *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. Vintage.

Holquist, Michael. (2008). "The Carnival of Discourse: Bakhtin and Simultaneity." *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, XII, pp. 220 – 34.

Landis Barnhill, David. (2004). *Basho's Haiku: Selected Poems by Matsuo Basho*. State University of New York Press.

Landis Barnhill, David. (2004). *Basho's Journey: The Literary Prose of Matsuo Basho*. State University of New York Press.

Lothe, Jakob. (1998). *Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Oxford University Press.

McHale, Brian. (2003). *Postmodernist Fiction*. Eastbourne.

Mcquillan, Martin. (2000). *Narrative Reader*. Routledge.

Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. (2005). *Narrative Fiction*. Routledge.

Yasuda, Kenneth. (2001). *Japanese Haiku*. Tuttle Publishing.