

**Foregrounding in Hardy's
The Mayor of Casterbridge:
A stylistic Study**

Majeed Hameed Jasim
Prof. Stylistics

Jasim Khelifah Sultan
Assis. Lect.

Dept. of English College of Education University of Basrah Basrah, Iraq

Abstract:

The present study embraces the examination of Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in terms of Gerard Genette's model. In other words, it is an attempt to investigate Genette's "foregrounding" in this novel and to find out how it is closely related to the general theme of this work. Besides, it shoulders up the task of proving that an analysis of foregrounding in fiction in general and novel in particular can be an objectively theme revealing device in the process of interpretation. The narrative text is analysed on the three levels spelt out by Genette's model, which are order, duration, and frequency respectively. Results crop up to prove Hardy's use of foregrounding on the three levels as an informative means to enlighten certain events and emphasize their significance in relation to the narrative.

1-Introduction

In its general sense, "foregrounding" is defined as a motivated deviation from linguistic or other socially accepted norms (Leech, 1970: 121). Leech and other specialists, being no exception, sees foregrounding as the breaking of the selection and combination rules of the standard language.

The term "foregrounding" is originally taken from painting. The painter can bring something into prominence making it dominate the whole picture by setting it in the foregrounding (Chapman, 1982:51). Since foregrounded features can be observed in the phonological, syntactic, and semantic levels of the code; they can be used as a model in the study of style (Leech and short, 1981:139).

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