

The Slavery of Mystical Creature on The Golem and The Jinni

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Abstract. The Golem is an artificial creature that made from clay and water with incantations and spells by a man (rabbi), It made to serve its creator. It well known as a creature of Jewish Mythology. The object of this research is The Golem, Chava on the novel with tittle “The Golem and The Jinni” by Helene Wecker. In this novel the character of Golem described as a good creature and has intimate relationship with the Jinni. Actually it is different as the others stories of Golem that always described as an evil creature who can destroy or kill the creator. The purpose of this research is to describe narratively the slavery of mystical creature, especially Golem and how Golem can survive and get along with human. Chava hardly refuse the orders from her master to kill human and do bad things even she was threaten got killed by her master. Due to this research found there was a friction role of Golem, in the past it is made to protect the master or the group from the harm thing or enemy while in this novel it is made to be a wife and she had a feeling and look as well as human. She could make a relationship with both human and the other creature such as Jinni. This research hopefully can be used as a source of cultural studies and narrative approach.

1. Introduction

Have you ever heard about “Golem”? Some people knew golem as a creature made from the clay and water. However in Jewish tradition, the golem is most widely known as an artificial creature created by magic, often to serve its creator [1]. Golem as a Jewish creature mythology and it’s humanoid made from clay and water with incantations and spell by a man (some of them are Rabbi). Golem will follow the orders from its master such as protect the master from the threatening enemy. Because it lack of control, it can be dangerous and may destroy it master [2].

However the word "golem" appears in the Bible only once (Psalms139:16). In Hebrew, "golem" stands for "shapeless mass." The Talmud uses the word as "unformed" or "imperfect" [1]. Do you know in Talmudic legend Adam as the first man in the word is known as a golem. Because they believe for the first 12 hours of his existence, Adam is a body without soul (Sanhedrin 38b). But some mystics believe the creation of golem has a symbolic meaning such as a spiritual experience following a religious rite [1].

The most well-known story of the golem is connected to Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the Maharal of Prague (1513-1609). It was said that he created a golem out of clay to protect the Jewish community from Blood Libel and to help out doing physical labor, since golems are very strong.

Another version says it was close to Easter, in the spring of 1580 and a Jew-hating priest was trying to incite the Christians against the Jews. So the golem protected the community during the Easter season. Both versions recall the golem running amok and threatening innocent lives, so Rabbi Loew removed the Divine Name, rendering the golem lifeless. A separate account has the golem going mad and running away [1].

In medieval traditions golem became alive by having Hebrew “EMETH”, means truth. Its inscribed on its forehead – it is truth that drives it on. But this does not mean it understand the truth – far from it [2, 3]. Many stories and legends about Golem, but most of them described Golem is a monster or evil creature. In the novel *The Golem and The Jinni* by Helene Wecker, Golem is described as a good creature and help others. However, in this novel Golem has a normal life look like human and she has intimate relationship with Jinni. Actually, it contradicting with most legend that Golem did not have a soul and did not understand the truth. Because based the origin myth the name of golem, is used in the Talmud, where it means “unshaped matter” or “unfinished creation” [4]. Where the master has a power to make Golem a slave and threatening her to do bad thing. This research aim to describe narratively the slavery of mystical creature especially Golem (Chava) and how she can struggle from it. Besides that, this research also analysed the differences of Golem in the past (the origin of Golem and its role for people) and in the novel itself. However, in the novel Golem seem more humanist and had a strong feeling of love until she could marry with a human and socialize with human and had close relationship with the other creature Jinni.

2. Method

Narrative method is applied in this research. The first issue in assessing existing narrative theories is that they are intended to support the analysis of existing narrative rather than the generation of new narrative. [CITATION Lou04 \l 1033] The narrative paradigm insists that human communication should be viewed as historical as well as situational as stories competing with other stories constituted by good reasons [6]. Film maker Brian De Palma argued that: People don’t see the world before their eyes until it’s put in a narrative mode [7].

When transposed to Virtual Environments, the Aristotelian approach to narrative presents two main constraints. Firstly, its plot oriented structure makes the integration of the type of user interaction presented in VR difficult. Secondly, Aristotelian and Neo-Aristotelian theories strongly suggest an authorial narrative model as shown in the Figure 1 below [5].

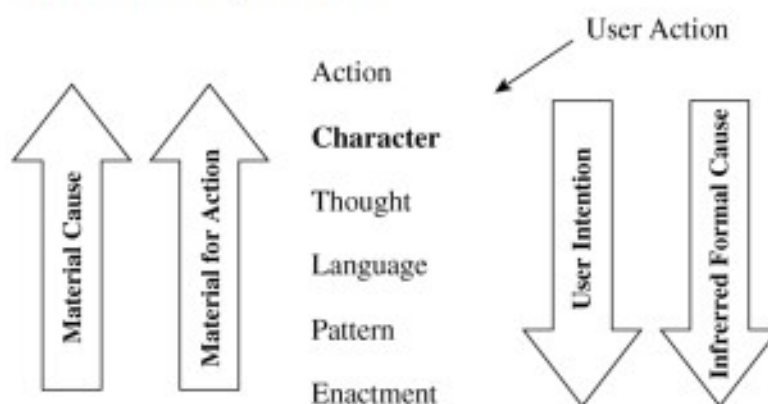


Figure 1. A neo-Aristotelian theory [8]

Russian Formalist and French structuralists recognised that we should not study the literary text itself but its ‘literariness’ (Jakobson, 1967), literary theory being the study of the nature of literature. We should then be interested in the different elements of the narrative such as its organisation, plot or character as showed on Figure 2 below [5].

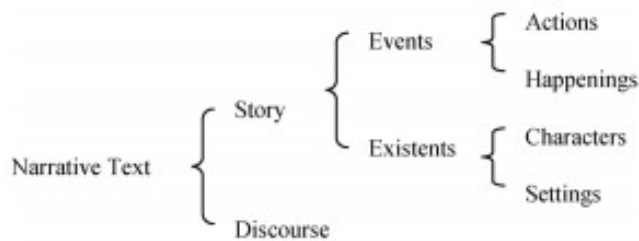


Figure 2. A simple representation of the structuralist theory

The first one deals with the functionality of doing, the other with the functionality of being. The distributive class of function is separated into two sub-classes of narrative units: the cardinal functions (core, articulation of the story) and the catalysis functions (to fill in the ‘blanks’ in the narrative space). [CITATION Lou04 \l 1033].

3. Results and Discussion

The story began in 1899 when Otto Rotfeld, the only son of a well-to-do was an arrogant, feckless sort of man, with no good sense to speak of, He inherited furniture business from his parents. Even was is rich, he felt lonely and tried to find a wife. He was thirty three years old and never had a serious relationship with woman. He wanted a wife and brought her to America. So he thought to visit old Yehudah Schaalman. he was a disgraced rabbi who’d been driven out of his congregation; that he’d been possessed by a dybbuk and given supernatural powers; and even that he was over a hundred years old and slept with demon-women Schaalman liked to dabble in the more dangerous of the Kabbalistic arts, and he was willing to offer his services for a price. Rotfeld asked Schaalman to make a Golem and she will become his wife. For some price He agreed to make it. Schaalman, succeeded create Chava, a beautiful Golem to be Rotfeld’s wife. Rotfeld had smuggled her aboard in a crate and hidden her among the luggage in the steamship, the ship was the Baltika, crossing from Danzig to New York. The conflict began when Rotfeld suddenly got heart attack in the steamship and died while before he died he already woke the Golem and became alive. The Golem life without master and she confused what to do. For sometimes the Golem life by herself until she met with Jinni, Ahmad. They bound with intimate relationship and get along. They forced to live in a state that isn’t quite natural to either of them.

In this novel we can assumed that Golem used differently from the other story or old legend, usually it used to protect his master or group with meticulous power to destroy the enemy, it could not feel anything like love, emphaty look like robot. But the author described Chava look like a human, she was pretty girl, has good attitude, has empathy, love, can feel happy, sad and other thing like human. Even she got married with Michele (human).

3.1. Golem look like Human

The Golem like a human, even she is made from clay and water, alive by magical spell but she almost perfect as a human has empathy, could feel sad, love and try her best in working to cope with human in daily life. As a quotation in the novel below:

“Slowly the Golem grew more accustomed to the bakery and its rhythms. Her turns at the register were no longer so frightening. She was beginning to learn which customers bought the same thing every day, and which of them appreciated it when she made up their order in advance. She smiled at all of them, even when she didn’t feel like it. Led by a hundred little prompts, she very carefully tried to give each of them exactly what they wanted from her. And when she was successful, they would step away from the register with a lighter heart, glad that at least one thing, this one simple errand, had gone right that day”. (p.505) [9].

Based on quotation above can be seen that Golem try her best to do her work at the Bakery. She try to learn about the customers such as what they want, she smiled to them and give best services. So that she got his boss attention and he appreciate all her works. The other occasion showed that Golem could felt happy, fatigue and do a mistake but also she also do her best to fix her mistake. It can be seen on the quotation below:

“Happy with her success, the Golem tried this technique on other indecisive customers. She was right more often than not, and tried not to take her failures personally. She was coming to realize that some people, for whatever reason, would never be satisfied. She still made mistakes occasion, especially at the end of the day when a mental fatigue would set in, and her thoughts would drift. She’d reach for the wrong thing, or call someone by the wrong name, or make some other silly little error. Once in a while a customer would walk out with the wrong order, and come back to complain. She would apologize profusely, horrified by her poor performance but it was just as well, for otherwise her employers might have thought her too good to be true”. (P.506) [9].

The quotation above showed that Chava also could felt happy and fatigue look like human, and surprisingly when she do a mistake in her work she will regret it and do her best to fix it. She didn’t want to give her poor performance in front of her customers.

3.2. *The slavery of Golem*

The conflict began when Yehudah Schaalman, the creator of Golem realized that Otto to Golem already waken up. He tried to find Golem (Chava) and wanted to be her master. Schaalman look like an evil and always had bad intention. If he found Chava he would threatening her to kill her and the people around Chava and showed Michele (Chava’s husband) Chava is a Golem. Chava forced to do bad thing. Chava and Jinni, her close friend tried to find a way to prevent Schaalman as showed in the dialog between chava and Jinni below.

“Chava—”

“No, say nothing. I’ll go along with this plan, because we must do something to prevent Schaalman from finding you and using you. But don’t think for a moment that I do it gladly. You’re turning me into your jailer.

“You’re the only one with the strength to put me in the flask. It certainly weakened ibn Malik. I think it might kill someone like Saleh” (p.550)[CITATION Wec13 \l 1033].

The dialog above showed that Jinni tried to persuade Chava to follow his plan to prevent Schaalman finding Chava and using her as a slave even it would make Jinni a jailer. The only way to defeat Schaalman is changing Jinni into flash and make Ibn Malik weakened and also kill Saleh. Jinni willing to sacrifice his self for Chava also vice versa. However, this quotation in line in Weber’s conception of the role of spirits and gods in world history and moral life., culminating in the instrument developing an autonomous spirit, which fatefully makes it turn against the master, leading to personal and social destruction [10]. This dialog below showed why Chava married with Michele.

“Will Michael be all right without you?” He’d tried, and failed, not to tense at the name.

“Michael will be better off for my leaving. I hope he can forgive me someday.” She glanced across at him. “I haven’t told you why I married him.”

“Maybe I don’t want to know,” he muttered.

“I did it because you’d taken the paper from my locket. I couldn’t destroy myself. I had to live in the world, and I was terrified. So I hid behind Michael. I tried to turn him into my master. I

honestly thought it would be better that way.” The self-recrimination in her voice was painful to hear (p 601) [9].

From the quotation above we can be seen that Chava married with Michele because she want Michele be her master and one day he can destroy her, because as a golem only her master can destroy or kill her with the magic spell that written on a pieces of paper and she hid it. Chava really know that Jinny cannot do it, to destroy her because she knew that Jinny love her so much and willing to sacrifice himself.

4. Conclusion

The slavery not only happen to human but also with Golem, the mystical creature that made from clay. It has to the order from his master and only her master who can make him/her alive and also destroy him. Golem is an old folklore of Jewish, in the past it made in order to protect the Jewish from the enemy. Because of Golem is a strong creature and lack of control it even killed innocent people, so that the Rabbi as a Golem’s creator destroyed him. But in this novel Golem is described differently, she is look like human and can cope with human. She has feeling, love, emphyaty and responsibility. It is interesting enough when the Golem made a relationship with a Jinni, a creature who made from fire. They are in love and try to find a way to cut the slavery from Golem’creature, Schaalman (the evil Rabbi).

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