

A LINGUISTIC-STYLISTIC EXAMINATION OF DISCOURSE ENACTMENT AND EXPLORATION OF CANONICAL BACKLASH IN LIMAN'S *HEART OF A WOMAN*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on a Linguistic-stylistic examination of Discourse enactment and exploration of canonical backlash in Liman's Heart of a Woman. The thrust of the work is to justify that, every artistic write-up like Liman's Heart of a Woman is situated within the realm of canon formation or what is called corpus-form. However, not every text bears the author's intended or inclined meaning of text. The paper also uses an eclectic theoretical foundation of Newmark, and Coulthard and Montgomery's (1981) Discourse Analysis Models. The two theoretical contents serve and provide complementary analytic responsibilities. In their commitment to language/linguistic or textual study, text/discourse is seen as a product of form and function. The findings, from the analysis, revealed that most of the discourse formation and text features are meant for so many reasons, like gendercentricism of women, gender-class defence, linguistic orientations of women discourse, character role negotiation, and portrayal of betrayal of men. From these thematic displays, there is also conclusion that the Liman's Heart of a Woman depicts women/feminism suppression of gender dominance through linguistic choices and stylistic exhibition.

Keywords: *Linguistic-Stylistics, Discourse Analysis, Canonical formation, Gender Representation, Meaning Designation*

Introduction

Of all the two dimensional (linguistic and literary) writings on feminism, there are varied theoretical claims occupying numerous potential possibilities. For instance, the literary focuses greatly on the literary aspects deployed primarily to bring to sight how the plot, character, characterization, thematic flow, defamiliarized content and other associated indexes designate the unfolding layers of the text development. These textual elements are different and function differently and represent different structural and functional tendencies. However, they (elements) relate to one another in a systematic network of execution and representation. The

latter- the linguistic is the most famous and represents canonical chagrin in depicting the artistic commitment, while the former controls the ideological tradition of the artistic works. There is no way the former and the latter can form and represent the same artistic realities, however, in the long run they tend to ameliorate common utility, i.e. how the text is crafted, how the ideas are neatly marshalled, and how the basic rubrics relate or integrate and how the ideas make basic intrinsic and extrinsic impact and so on.

As regards to Liman's *Heart of a woman*, the text is set off in the core midst of what Lacan calls modern classic society. In this phenomenological tag of women society, the text rallies upon issues like modesty, chastity, responsibility, belonging, etiquette and communication. This multi-layered virtues of women celebrate and emancipate them from the hitherto first-wave with the representation of self and others. The women are no more seen as domestic servant but as instrument of exhibiting authorial voices of gendercentricism. Most of the questions raised bear debating fact, e.g. do women really panic with men? What is the sociological, political and economic setback on them from the subjugation (if at all there is). Are there being ill/properly represented etcetera? These questions bring people to the shores of furtherance in artistic efforts. Since the discovery of the canon formation and formal discourse of feminism, a plethora a literary and linguistic voices have been flourishing for the sake of normative discoveries. Though, this double-discourse scholars tag themselves into the pro and contra of feminist literary traditions. The writings about women disclose that notion that every writing about women at the onset of feminism popularization brings the unfolding content of gender emancipation or what is called liberal feminism. In such writings (though many theoretical claims clarified the misrepresentation) women gender is identifies as a form of confrontational actor agonising splits. Eagleton (1983:317) supports the first wave of feminism by describing women as a social, political and biological phenomenon. If women are seen through these lens, then they deserve the entrenched natural privileges. At this juncture, any form of gender subversion or protagonist impulses are seen alien and turn into cultural or social taboos.

Literature Review

Text, Texture and Discourse Craftiness

Various works on theatre art, drama and dramaturgy have insightfully stressed into how text is viewed, coalesced literary production, put orthography and later metamorphosed visually. This orthography-visual relationship brings what text linguists call *from paper to screen*. What is important in this regard is seeing the drama work as a textual fabric through which texture is attained.

The concept of text, here, means the interdependence between the woven materials and language. This interdependence makes text a product of a systems formation. Sinclair (1991:102) puts it this way-the distinction between language and text is mostly of a dimension abstraction. Language thus is an abstraction system; it is realised in text which is a collection of instances. This view according to him is sufficiently inadequate because the text does not end with anything like text but 'generate' words string from grammars and through which text is seen as an entity of combinatorial meanings.

Leech and Short (1981:209) describes text as a linear pattern of sound waves; it is a linear sequences of visible marks on paper; when read out it becomes a linear pattern of sound waves.

According to this textual definition, there is nothing odd in talking about the linguistic properties of texts. Text in this regards, goes beyond what is attributed above. It can be of important based on above to see text on its linearity, principle of end-focus and genre discourse. A distinction is eminently known on linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and hearer, as an interpersonal activity whose form is determined by its social purpose. (Leech and Short 1981:209).

Genre and Feminist Writing

One legitimate channel of text study is through what is called *genre*. As a French word, Genre means 'kind', from the Latin genus, meaning 'type' or 'specifies'. This genre platform can be seen precisely as a set of expectations which enable reader to 'naturalise' texts since their convention control readers' expectations of what is plausible or natural to human experience in discourse of various kinds. Furniss and Bath (1996:270), put that, genre is a product of both the structuralists and functionalists. As a structuralist entity, emphasis is made on 'versimilitude'. In this instance, a text as a product of artistic commitment goes beyond singularity of source. There is insistence that the point of origin of all meanings of text lies not in the speaking individual but, in the linguistic, literary and cultural system. This attributed layers support Todorov, who argues that genre can be defined not only on term of their structure but also in terms of their function. To him, the concept of function is largely indebted to modern speech act theory which investigates the different things we use language for: praising, narrating, describing, cursing, offering, seducing, bewitching etc. All discourse, and all genres are specialised or conventionalised forms of these function, appropriate to a particular occasion-context. Because of the structural and functional appearance of feminist writing, we can deduce that such a writing can be labelled as an index of genre.

Feminism: a Theory and Practice

The women's movement of the 1960s was not of course the start of feminism. As attested by Barry (1995:121), the writing was a renewal of an old tradition of thought and action already possessing its classic books which had diagnosed the problem of women's inequality in society, and (in some cases) proposed solution. Feminism as a concept is one of the branches or movements of the Sociological and Marxist theories. The former sees the feminism as the interrelationship between literature and society (Bressler 1994 in Terab 2009:79). The belief of liberal feminists in the existence of psychological and biological difference between sexes but do not consider these as hindrances to equality between the sexes. The social inequality that popularise feminism is not confines to one or two societies rather it is global phenomenon taking different forms depending on the socio-economic peculiarities of the society concerned. (Lminea 2009:117 in Bashir 2009).

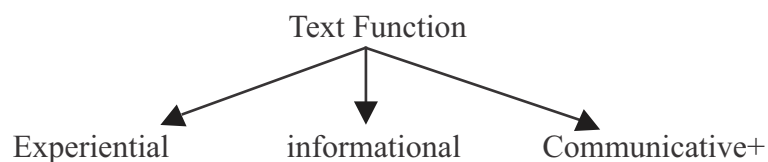
At whatever context a work is made on gender class, women (gynotexts) gynocritics, it says exclusively about the history, style theme, genre and structures of writing of women, the psychodynamics of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual or collective female career and the evolution or laws of the female literary tradition. The traditions of the textcraft see language as a supreme tool.

Theoretical/Analytical Approach to the Data

This work as a matter of its nature, outlook and its conceptual feature is set out to use an eclectic

theoretical foundation of Newmark, and Coulthard and Montgomery *Discourse Analysis Models*. The two theoretical contents are important but different in analytical orientations and foundations. However, they serve and provide complementary analytic responsibilities. In their commitment to language/linguistic or textual study, text/discourse is seen as a product of form and function. If feminist or feminism works are targeted towards information about the world on the artistic effort that tells us the gender subjugation and deployment of artistic defensive mechanism. It is in light of this, these theories inform us that the functions of language are the various purposes it deserves in communicative, actions like conveying information, expressing emotion, building social relationships, persuading other and establishing cultural identity. All these can be real and attainable through the Jacobson communicative tenets.

The orientation of the Newmark model of language meaning portrays the tendency of text or discourse bear function. And through this model, we can access the theory of text function, as presented thus:



Each of these functions is targeted in meaning in varying degrees depending upon the genre, purpose and nature of the text. In the feminist tradition, the expressive/emotive function of the language bears the hub of the text development through this expressive function, the language can appear to have represented all the functions but they altogether work on commonplace target. i.e. expressiveness of communication. Short (1988) clarifies that the function of the language towards text is recognised in two-directed ways-the inter/intratextual/linguistic relations. Short voice is similar with that of Widdowson, who further disclosed that *not only these* intratextual relations but also the extra textual relations that exist among the language items occurring in a text and the code from which they derive.

To achieve that according to deBeaugrande and Dressler (1981) any text must a combinatory network of several elements from different text-notion. Hence a text is defined as a language or linguistic structure processing a cluster of seven characteristics, i.e. cohesion, coherence, acceptability, intentionality, informationality, contextuality inter and intratextuality. The lack of these textual or discourse qualities automatically mars and inhibit the textual integrity and render it textually atypical.

Having noted the formal and functional theoretical possibilities of Newmark's linguistic function toward textual scrutiny, it is pertinent thus to situate it with the Coulthard and Montgomery (1981) outlook. In this, the text and the language are closely related entities and which bear interrelated manifestation or what textlinguistics call *textual nesting*. Thus, the textual orientation of this model includes what is called rank scale. The scale comprises elements working together in effecting communication. The scale is thus represented as;

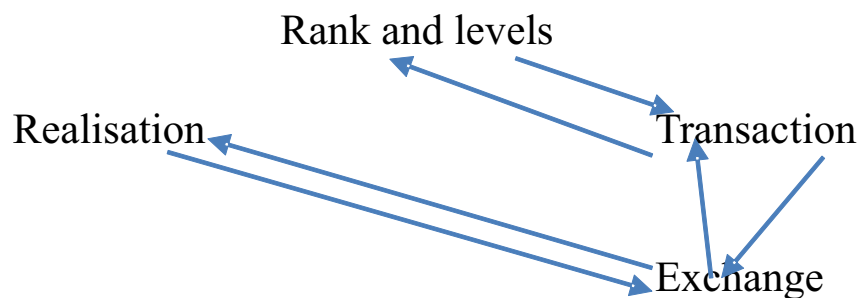


Figure 2: Feed-forward/Feedback Network of Text Transaction

Every linguistic property in text making is fulfilled by its categorical or category description and in that the analytical units are set out. According to Coulthard, these units are related in a 'consist of' relationship with smaller units combining with other units of the same size to form larger units. This categorical entities are made to realise both syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, and through them the tendency of meaning realisation is gainfully met.

The realization of meaning is made when the more marginal role the acts appeared to play in the development of discourse. This realisation is not haphazard but a product of systemic development, selection and feedback. A text meaning can be realised as suggested by Coulthard and Montgomery with the situational ones mediating between the discourse and grammatical ones.

Any act of discourse chart marks up identifying grammatical categories situational categories and discourse categories. Such grammatical or discourse particles find their discourse reference in how salient they relate and interwoven so-select and represent or what is called TRANSACTION.

Presentation, Description and Analysis of the Data

Looking at the taxonomies of the theoretical orientation of the functional categories of speech act, it is conveniently viable to address the Liman's Heart of a Woman. The whole range of the data is diagrammatically grouped into seven (7) groups or what is contextually called as voices A-G.

CONTENTA: Voice of Hope and Emotional Conviction

Content A is seen as a resource for instilling hope and defence of the hope. The hopes are attained through perseverance and resilience.

Saadatu in her discourse exchange with Uwale

Life is full of trial. P17

This tries not only address her life challenges but to ensure that reservation of commitments to face natural realities and without the awaiting of both internal and external

realities/intervention.

Unlike in the general implicated belief of the Hausa people whose belief is debasing the growing personalities of children, Saadatu energises the whole women society to resist from the so-called acclaimed proposition to commit to inculcating the spirit of positive mindedness and readiness to face-off with ruining beliefs.

Saadatu: *May you and your children prosper in this world and thereafter.*

Saadatu, here, not only relies on the social features of human growth and development but to the deity intervention.

In her remark, the same Saadatu, admits social and personal responsibilities of building of self and of others by ensuring the destiny trajectory

Saadatu: *Solidarity is the best way P20*

CONTENT B: Voice of Self-Defence

In Content B, the characters or plot craft-making not only meant to build hope or ensure sense of heritage but also meant to challenge the co-characters thereby igniting inflicting voices.

Uwale: *after six months of being a burden on my parent... P16*

Here, the character unveils the scene by making inimical and suppressing expression. Really, relating someone as a burden is nonetheless defamatory and traducing.

In the similar context, the verbal expressive network of character- Umma, has mad the scene furious and lambasting.

Umma: *...you daughter of a traitor. P24*

According to the systemic linguistic description of word, the word traitor is in nowhere positive. This negative-tie of the word traitor creates the impression of subjectlessness of self and this reduces 'daughter' into an inflicting bearer.

As a matter of contextual lens, Umma requests the menace of self-impose war. Through her character.

Umma: *the curse on your mother's head is also affecting you...*

Alh Bale in his attempt to ransom himself, unpleasantly horrifies and makes the scene obtuse.

Alhaji Bale: *so this nonsense is still going on? P34*

The expressive mechanics do not represent or undermine but is made to make himself a

celebrated winner.

Liman further represents the character bearing in mind the degree of respect to self. This channelling or respecthood chalice is seen in the transactionary messages.

Alhaji Bale: *so your plan is to dishonour my daughter. P34*

The character is not at all expressing or making a representational proclamation rather instilling confidence and propagating of selfhood. The statement sounds protective utility in which the message exchange decides the preparatory self-defence.

In order to solve the endless mysteries of self-bearing, Liman instruments the voice of the second visitor:

Second Visitor: *...at once loving and at once full of hate. P38*

The expressions have the utterance representing the notion of volitional but the proposition marks up the notion as defensive mechanism and as an index of self-respect language. Here, the discourse exchange is not only revealing protection or defence but a tool of self-enactment just as in:

Ummah: *you both connived against me. P22*

Uwale: *... to live the man she is being forced to marry.*

These two characters maintain the artistic role through respect of social responsibility. Through the delineated responsibility of the character of Uwale.

Uwale: *... we must never force our children to marry anyone against their will.*

CONTENT C: Voice of Artistic/Expressive Aestheticity

In content C, Liman not only presents the characters solely for artistic fulfilment but for unveiling the use of characters' role through linguistic medium and discourse enactment and exchanges in revealing sense of social humiliation and debasement.

Hajo: *father was a mean man. P45*

Hajo: *... waiting while I become a laughing stock...P45*

Not only in this linguistic-aid reference, there are other networks in which the characters are either debased or are used to debase others.

Alh Bale: *...like wayward children P14*

Uwale: *unlike her chewing gum lover. P18*

Hajiya Asabe: *...the longer a woman stays in her husband's house, the more she becomes a*

garbage dump. P22

Hajiya Asabe: .. until you come along with your basket of misery. P23

Hajo: ...I become a laughing stock among friends. P45

Umma: you disrespectful brat! P25

Alh Bale: Move away from my path you shameless bastard. P34

Going by the exchange, Liman attributed even artistic power to debase or be debased. This happened most importantly using lexical particle. In this regard, it has come to our notice of the powerfulness and powerlessness of word.

CONTENT D: Voice of doubtfulness, Despair and Disillusionment

In the D content, Liman is skilful in making the whole range of the discourse flow cast doubt among the characters. Here, the discourse/lexical choices are meant to suppress emotional stability, this is by betrayal and disillusionment.

Hajiya Asabe: you destiny destroyer. P1/35

Umma: ... you both betrayed me...P23

Saadatu: ... we all contributed to the tragedy. P48

Having seen the shared roles or assignment, we can situate that the women's discourse flow and content bear significant portions of disillusionment, and these are realised in their expressive and representational role exchanges.

CONTENT E: Voice of Otherness Portrayal

The feminine characters are used not only for the realisation of the plot, but for them to be instrument through discourse composition to unveiling wave of feminism, i.e. as defensive tools/medium

Uwale: ... the wicked man goes on marriage space. P17

Uwale: because of some greedy polygamous men P18

Hajiya Asabe: you wicked human being. P35

Here, the target is not only to disclose the linguistic usage rather to use the women voice through the linguistic usage to be protective.

CONTENT F:

Voice of Dramatic Negotiation and Didactics

Liman not only be confrontational or defensive in her artistic channel, rather utilizes the characters through dramatic devices in creating harmonious relation, thereby being didactic.

Uwale: ...for men to be fair. P19

Uwale, here, is instrumented to solemnise and relate to the human world how men shall behave. This widest yodelling is for adjusting to a more modest moral upbringing.

Of course, textual development can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. One of the extrinsic is by being intertextual referencing, mostly through allusion. Liman, also, uses the characters in meeting up with the above qualities through which the characters bear submissiveness rather than otherwise, as in the cases above.

Saadatu: *Allah is sufficient for you. P17*

Saadatu: *what we can do than to pray for the best. P19*

Though the lexical or phrases selection differ, however, Liman uses the differencing in being upright to making the character submissive and accept natural control of the situation. Here, they offer no threshold of rejection but paid lexical choices, discourse exchange through *topic* and *focus* which also marks up the trend of submissiveness.

Alh Bale: *I need peace in this house. P14*

Umma: *...stop myself low and married your useless husband. P233*

In the above, the characters are not only submissive to the deity but what is called circumstantial submission. It is the situation the calls the action and the action bears reciprocal affect and effect.

CONTENT G:

Voice of Discourse Fabrication and Interplay between Linguistics Skills and Literariness

In content I, Liman is sufficiently aesthetic thereby making the choices and discourse flow too refined and artistically aesthetic. This is made by proverbial aphorism.

Umma: *yet you think you can bite the fingers that fed you?*

Here, the characters Umma does not become an interrogative rather compels the discourse agents to have served as a source of the discourse initiation.

Looking at the entire plot formation, Liman has made us know through authorial voices some indifferent voice. This makes the communicative trend and the thematic content of the paly glues to reality.

Conclusion

The thrust of this work is to justify that, every artistic write-up like Liman's *Heart of a Woman* is situated within the realm of canon formation or what is called corpus-form. By canon formation, we refer to how a work of art is tagged with definite artistic and context tradition of the text, however, not every text bears the intended and inclined the text canon tradition due to some reasons. It is in this line, this examination of Liman's *Heart of a Woman* if formulated. And in it, there is deciphering of the tendencies of canon development of feminist discourse of the author through characters role exchanges. What is discovered from the analysis revealed that most of the discourses formation, exchanges and features are meant for so many reasons, like gendercentricism of women, gender-class defence, linguistic orientations of women, character role negotiation, and portrayal of betrayal of men. From these thematic displays, there is also conclusion that the Liman's *Heart of a Woman* depicts women/feminism suppression of gender dominance through linguistic choices and stylistic exhibition.

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