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FEMINISM DISCOURSE AS A RESISTANCE IN SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH  
A CASE STUDY OF SUDAN UNIVERSITY ENGLISH MAJORS

EISADDIG MOHAMED AWADELGEED ELBASHI



ABSTRACT

Historically, Language was studied as part of logic and philosophy. With the advent of structuralism in the late nineteenth century the study of the language has become an independent field of enquiry whose subject matter was and still phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.

The last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed the introduction of the theory of Critical discourse analysis (Hence for CDA).

Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysis takes explicit position, and thus wants to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

Some of the tenets of CDA can already be found in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second World War (Agger 1992b; Rasmussen 1996). Its current focus on language and discourse was initiated with the "critical linguistic" that emerged (mostly in the UK and Australia) at the end of 1970s (Fowler et al. 1979; see also Mey 1985). CDA also has counterparts in "critical" developments in sociolinguistics, psychology, and the social sciences, some already dating back to the early 1970s (Birnbaum 1971; Calhoun 1995; Fay 1987; Fox and Prilleltensky 1997; Hymes 1972; Ibanez and Iniguez 1997; Singh 1996; Thomas 1993; Turkel 1996; Wodak 1996). As is the case in these neighboring disciplines, CDA may be seen as a reaction against the dominant formal (often "asocial" or "uncritical") paradigms of the 1960s and 1970s.

CDA is not so much a direction, school, or specialization next to the many other "approaches" in discourse studies. Rather, it aims to offer a different "mode" or "perspective" of theorizing, analysis, and application throughout the whole field. We may find a more or less critical perspective in such diverse areas as pragmatics, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, rhetoric, stylistics, sociolinguistics, ethnography, or media analysis, among others.

Crucial for critical discourse analysts is the explicit awareness of their role in society. Continuing a tradition that rejects the possibility of a "value-free" science, they argue that science, and especially scholarly discourse, are inherently part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction. Instead of denying or ignoring such a relation between scholarship and society, they plead that such relations be studied and accounted for in their own right, and that scholarly practices be based on such insights. Theory formation, description, and explanation, also in discourse analysis, are socio-politically "situated". Reflection on the role of scholars in society and polity thus becomes an inherent part of the discourse analytical enterprise. This may mean that discourse analysts conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with dominated groups.

It focuses primarily on *social problems* and political issues, rather than on current paradigms and fashions.

Empirically adequate critical analysis of social problems is usually *multidisciplinary*.

Rather than merely *describe* discourse structures, it tries to *explain* them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure.

More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271-80) summarize the main tenets of CDA as follows:

- 1- CDA addresses social problems
- 2- Power relations are discourse
- 3- Discourse constitutes society and culture
- 4- discourse does ideological work
- 5- discourse is historical
- 6- The link between text and society is mediated
- 7- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
- 8- Discourse is a form of social action

Since CDA is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework. Within the aims mentioned above, there are many types of CDA, and these maybe theoretically and analytically quite diverse. Critical analysis of conversation is very different from an analysis of news reports in the press or of the lessons and teaching at school. Yet, given the common perspective and general aims of CDA, we may find overall conceptual and theoretical framework that are closely related. Most kinds of CDA will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of the social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts. Thus, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA will feature such notions as "power", "dominance", "hegemony", "ideology", "class", "gender", "race", "discrimination", "interests", "reproduction", "institutions", "social structure", and "social order", besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions.

Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order. Power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro-level of analysis. This means that CDA has to theoretically bridge the well-known "gap" between micro and macro approaches, which is of course a distinction that is a sociological construct in its own right (Alexander et al. 1987; Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel 1981). In everyday interaction and experience the macro- a racist speech in parliament is a discourse at the micro-level of social interaction in the specific situation of a debate, but at the same time may enact or be a constituent part of legislation or the reproduction of racism at the macro-level.

Discourse is analysed as situated interaction, as a social practice, or a type of communication in social, cultural, historical or political situation. Instead of analyzing a conversation among neighbors', we may, for example, have to do fieldwork in neighborhood.

Discourse analysis itself is not a method but rather a domain of scholarly practice, a cross-discipline distributed over all the humanities and social sciences.

CDA have many different methods of study, depending on the aims of the investigation, the nature of the data studied, the interests and the qualifications of the researcher and other parameters of the research context.

### 1.2. Statement of the problem

Literature will often reflect the cultural assumptions and attitudes of its period, and that of course includes attitudes towards women: their status, their roles, their expectations. But a literature doctored of male-orientated views would be failing in its first requirement, to present a realistic or convincing picture of the world. Moralizing, which includes political correctness, has its dangers.

Feminism has gradually become more far-ranging and subtle in its attacks on male-dominated society. Many injustices still need to be corrected, but equally necessary is a more down-to-earth, tolerant and compassionate view of fellow human beings.

Many feminists dislike theory. Sharp intellectual categories, argumentation, seeming objectivity, and the whole tradition they grow out of are just what feminists are seeking to escape. And if their reasoning seems unsystematic they can draw support from the psychoanalysis of Lacan and Julia Kristeva, from Derrida's deconstruction, and from Rorty's view that philosophy should model itself on an edifying conversation seeking rapprochement rather than no-holds-barred gladiatorial combat.

Critics, being generally male, had not generally concerned themselves with gender issues. Most of the world's great literature had been written by men. Sappho, Austen, the Brontës and Emily Dickinson apart, it was difficult to think women really had it in them to write at the highest level. Literature was literature, and critics saw no need to distinguish a specifically feminine way of writing or responding to a text.

Virginia Woolf was herself a refutation of that thesis, though her mental breakdown was perhaps brought on by the strain of balancing male self-realization with female abnegation. But in her essay *Professions for Women*, Woolf complained only that women's social obligations hindered a writing career. Their lives gave them a different perspective, but women were not fundamentally different from men in their psychological needs and outlooks.

The gathering feminist movement very much disagreed, and argued that women's writing expressed a distinctive female consciousness, which was more discursive and conjunctive than its male counterpart. Such consciousness was radically different, and had been adversely treated. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* documented the ways "Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of women is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth." Women had been made to feel that they were inferior by nature and, though men paid lip-service to equality, they would resist its implementation. Some men might be sympathetic to women's issues, but only women themselves knew what they felt and wanted.

And perhaps they always knew. The essays collected in Susan Cornillon's 1972 anthology *Images of Women in Fiction* all suggested that nineteenth and twentieth century fiction was simply untrue to women's experience. Rather than search for the essentially feminine, critics now turned to the social context of women's writing, to the ways a male-orientated society had formed or deformed individual novels, plays and poems written by women. Adventure and romance, whoever written for, seemed to stress the male competitive element, and even the submissive partner of gay literature only imitated the female stereotype.

Not all agreed, of course. Norman Mailer's *The Prisoner of Sex*: disliked the blanket criticism of Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, arguing its examples were too selective chosen.

Nonetheless, by the early eighties, feminists had advanced to a much more confrontational attack on male hegemony, advocating a complete overthrow of the biased (male) canon of literature. French feminists argued that women should write with a greater consciousness of their bodies, which would create a more honest and appropriate style of openness, fragmentation and non-linearity. Parallel studies in the visual arts stressed a feminine sensibility of soft fluid colours, an emphasis on the personal and decorative, and on forms that evoked the female genitalia.

And the problem lay deeper still, in the language itself. Words had been coined to express a male point of view, and that was indeed misogynist. Some 220 words exist in English for the sexually promiscuous woman, but only 22 for promiscuous men. And in the sexual matters that really concerned them, the vocabulary was hopelessly restricted.

Discourse was power, said Foucault, and psychoanalysts like Lacan and Kristeva stressed the liberating role that literature should play, particularly to allow the semiotic flux of the unconscious in early childhood, i.e. before the symbolic world of public discourse imposed its male-favouring rules. Poets worked on the boundaries of the two realms, and Kristeva urged them to engender political and feminist revolutions by dissolving the conventions of normal discourse.

Five years later the debate had moved on, from exclusively feminine concerns to the wider issues of gender in social and cultural contexts. Patriarchy and capitalism should be examined more closely, perhaps as

Althusser had attempted, and sophisticated models built to integrate the larger web of economics, education, division of labor, biological constraints and cultural assumptions.

Michèle Barrett demanded facts, research. How does gender stereotyping arise in various social contexts? How are the canons of literary excellence actually established? What is the practical effect on literature? Shouldn't we remember that attitudes are struck within a fictional framework, and can't be simply pulled out and convicted by a kangaroo court of feminist morals?

Feminists have argued for positive discrimination as the only way to correct centuries of bias. Nonetheless, the consensus emerging among black Americans is that positive discrimination is counter-productive. Disadvantaged minorities desperately need the odds leveled, but not patronizingly tilted in their favor.

Psychoanalysis has little scientific standing, and Lacanian theory is further disputed within the psychoanalytical community itself. Feminism does itself few favors' by relying on these supports.

A more damaging criticism is the concept of the feminine itself. Does it really exist? There are very real differences in the psychological make-up between the sexes, {8} but testing also indicates what anthropologists have long accepted: the expression of those differences is more determined by cultural factors than sexuality per se. Feminists who argue for a more understanding, fluid, and delicate attitude are not so much advocating qualities native to women but for attitudes still repressed by society. That in turn suggests society itself needs exploring rather than sex differences per se, which is indeed a view more recognized in contemporary feminist studies.

This research sets out to investigate feminist discourse in *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih. *Season of Migration to the North* tells the story of Mustafa Sa'eed, a prodigy from Sudan who goes to study first in Cairo and then in London, where he hunts women but eventually falls for one himself. After a marriage consummated by violence and a prison sentence, he returns to Sudan, moving to a small village on the Nile, where he marries again and has children. He disappears mysteriously in a flood.

This discourse can be argued as a kind of resistance to the dominant male role in society.

### 1.3. Questions of the Study

In investigating this problem, the research will try to provide answers to the following questions;

#### 1- How does the CDA theory contribute to the interpretation of the literary works?

The advent of CDA can be argued to have bridged the dichotomy between linguistic and literary works. In other words, literary and linguistic works can be carried out at the same time.

Many facts of the emerging discipline of discourse analysis have been highlighted. It was shown how discourse in general, and specific discourse genres in particular, can be analyzed at several levels of description. One of the prevailing features of this new discipline of the discourse analysis appears to be the explicit account of the fact that discourse structures, at several levels, may have multiple links with the context of communication and interaction. Discourse analysis, thus, is essentially a contribution to the study of language "in use". Besides –or even instead- of an explication of the abstract structures of text or conversations, we witness a concerted interest for the cognitive and specially the social processes, strategies, and contextualization of discourse taken as a mode of interaction in highly complex socio cultural situations.

The intuitive idea is that one of the characteristic properties of narrative discourse is that it contains action theories of several disciplines, for example, philosophy, logic, the social sciences, and linguistics (pragmatics). These theories provide a general, systematic, and explicit characterization of the structure of human acts, as distinct from non act, events, or states, of act sequences and interaction and of conditions for successful action. Thus, this research will try to figure out how components work out in the literary works indicated above.

#### 2- What linguistic symbols does feminist discourse indicate in *Season of Migration to the North*?

#### 3-How is feminist discourse manipulated in *Season of Migration to the North*?

There are a number of crucial notions in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that require special attention because they imply discourse power abuse. Manipulation is one of these notions, there is no systematic theory of the structures and processes involved in manipulation. We will examine these properties

of manipulation , and do so with in the 'triangulation' framework that explicitly links discourse, cognition and society (van Dijk, 2001). A discourse analytical approach is warranted because most manipulation, as we understand this notion, takes place through text and talk. Secondly, those being manipulated are human beings, and this typically occurs through the manipulation of their 'minds', so that a cognitive account is also able to shed light on the process of manipulation. Thirdly, manipulation is a form of talk interaction and, since it implies power and power abuse, a social approach is also important.

Language is seldom that specific- is used in many different ideological persuasions. That is ,the same discourse structures are used in persuasion, information, education and other legitimate forms of communication, as well as in various forms of dissent.

The general strategies of manipulative discourse appear to be largely semantic. i.e, focused on manipulating the ' content' of the text and talk.

Socially, discursive manipulation defined as a form of power abuse or domination. Focused on cognitive dimensions of manipulation by identifying what exactly the ' mind control' dimension of manipulation means. Also by focusing on the usual polarized structures of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation expressing ideological conflict. We found that manipulation involves: enhancing the power, moral superiority and credibility of the speaker(s), and discrediting dissidents, while vilifying the others, the enemy; the use of emotional appeals; and adducing seemingly irrefutable proofs of one's beliefs and reasons.

#### 1.4. Hypotheses of the Study

**H.1:** Where there is a language, there is a discourse.

**H.2:**There is a statistically significant relation between linguistics within an essay and the variety score given to that piece of writing .

**H.3:** In the same way , a better writing style results in better assessment is necessarily predicted from more concentrated CDA use .

#### 1.5 Objectives of the Study

- 1- To introduce a new interpretation of feminist discourse of Season of Migration to the North.
- 2- To integrate literary and linguistic research.

#### 1.6 : Significance of the Study

*The significance of this research stems from two considerations:* First, until recently, research is conducted either purely literary or linguistic in nature with the introduction of CDA these two research patterns have been integrated so that both can be two faces of the same point.

Second, a lot of works have been done on AL-Tayeb Salih's literary works. However, none has done from CDA perspective. Thus, this research is an attempt to bridge the gap between literature and linguistics from a CDA theory.

#### 1.7: Methodology of the Study

Season of Migration to the North will be used from begging up to the end with special focus on female . A collection of quotations of females will be studied using content Analysis to get the answer of the question what linguistic symbols does feminist discourse indicate in Season of Migration to the North? And How is feminist discourse manipulated in Season of Migration to the North? . To find out to what extend discourse is important in literary work. What is the role of female discourse in this piece of literary work?

#### Discussion

Season of Migration to the North will be used quite exclusively with special focus on female life and affairs. A collection of quotations of females will be studied using content Analysis to get the answer of the question what linguistic symbols does feminist discourse indicate in Season of Migration to the North? And How is feminist discourse manipulated in Season of Migration to the North? . To find out to what extend discourse is important in literary work. What is the role of female discourse in this piece of literary work.

Many facets of the emerging discipline of discourse analysis have been highlighted. Against the background of developments in several disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences, it was shown how discourse in general, and specific discourse genres in particular, can be analyzed at several levels of description. One of the prevailing features of this new discipline of discourse analysis appears to be the explicit account of the fact that discourse structures, at several levels, may have multiple links with the context of communication and interaction. Discourse analysis, thus, is essentially a contribution to the study of language "in use." Besides or even instead—of an explication of the abstract structures of texts or conversations, we witness a concerted interest for the cognitive and especially the social processes, strategies, and contextualization of discourse taken as a mode of interaction in highly complex sociocultural situations. One important dimension is still lacking in this account, however. Having obtained some insights into the social functions of discourse, we also might ask what the social role of discourse analysis as a discipline is. That is, what are the "external" goals of this new approach to language and communication? Or, to put it even more bluntly: What are the uses of discourse analysis? Especially for linguists, such questions may appear irrelevant. If the "internal" or academic goals, such as those of observational, descriptive, or explanatory adequacy, or maybe empirical.

Feminist Linguistics (henceforth, FL) gleans the convergence of language and gender from the feminist perspective. While language can be loosely defined as the arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a given community communicate and interact, "gender refers to the traits assigned to a sex – what maleness and femaleness stand for – within different societies and cultures" (Litosseliti, 2006, p.11). Specifically, FL, according to Litosseliti (2006, p. 23), "aims to theorize gender-related linguistic phenomena and language use, and to explicitly link these to gender inequality or discrimination, on the assumption that linguistic change is an important part of social change". FL, in essence, is emancipatory. FL research is established on the premise that men (males) and women (females) use language differently, and this demarcation informs the two major theories of gender linguistics – dominance and difference.

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