

WOMAN PORTRAYAL IN EARNEST HEMINGWAY'S "CAT IN THE RAIN": A FEMINIST STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

There is always a male hegemony in the treatment of a woman at the social level and also at the literary one. Feminist stylistics indicates that since literature reflects both cultures and shapes it, the literary works can either eliminate the oppression of women or perpetuate it. This paper tackles Earnest Hemingway's short story "Cat in the rain" through a feminist stylistic approach. It aims to investigate the linguistic sexism features that portray woman image in American culture. The methodology involves the application of Sara Mills' (1995) feminist stylistic approach which is appropriate to any literary text. Feminist stylistics involves the employment of the transitivity analysis to reveal the hidden ideologies of woman image. The conclusions indicate that the story represents a social influence view and portray woman as inactive and dependent on the man. The paper provides some recommendations for further studies to be carried out in the fields of feminist stylistics and linguistic sexism.

KEYWORDS: *American Culture, Feminist Stylistic, Fiction, Linguistic Sexism, Transitivity*

INTRODUCTION

Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics implying both literary criticism and linguistics (Saadia, 2015:1539). Simply, it stands for the analysis of literary texts through the application of linguistic tools. Being described as "a dynamic discipline", stylistics is processing with the passage of time to be "updated by the theories of discourse, society, and culture" (Ibid.). It has developed three main fields of study, including feminist stylistics, discourse stylistics and cognitive stylistics in addition to language learning.

Feminist views focused on the point that women are treated obsessively and in a different manner from men. Therefore, feminist criticism always discusses the discrimination of women in the literary works. O'Connor (2016) states that there are two waves of feminism: the first one focused on the criticism of male novelist representing female characters; while the second wave involved three aspects:

- The focus on female writers and their place in the literary works.
- The examination of female characters in literary works by both male and female writers (and this is the focus of study in the current paper)
- The consideration of female literary tradition. (Ibid.)

Generally speaking, it is said that literary texts are to some extent affected by the authors' gender and even their linguistic tools are used in some way that reflects their ideologies or perspectives accordingly. This view has been presented by modern feminist stylisticians who state that men and women differ even in their ways of thinking and presenting of reality (Ufot, 2012: 2462). Accordingly, feminist criticism and feminist stylistics imply the point that understanding of literature written by men can be through the experience of reading as a woman (Hangalay, 2014). Moreover, since literature reflects the culture and shapes its perspectives, feminist stylistics focus on the point that literary works, whether by the male or the female can either eliminate the oppression of women or perpetuate it (Ibid.) Many studies have tackled both men and women's writings about women characterization and representations through their works (Lange, 2008; Leavy, 2000, Lewis, 2011; Machab, 2011; Shah *et al.*, 2014). Accordingly, this study tackles women's portrayal in American culture presented by Earnest Hemingway's short story "Cat in the Rain" through the application of the feminist stylistic approach. Only a few studies tackled Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain" (Hashemi & Ahmadi, 2010, Kikuchi, 2007; You, 2009) through either the stylistic analysis or the cross-cultural analysis.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

This paper aims to carry out a feminist stylistic analysis of Hemingway's short story "Cat in the Rain". It also aims to identify the linguistic devices used to portray women in American culture from a male author's perspective. Further, the study intends to manifest the relationship between language and literature through the application of the transitivity approach to identify the textual elements which imply social and cultural interpretations.

GENDER AND LINGUISTIC SEXISM

Romaine (1999:2) considers gender as an inherently communicative process that is constructed through language. Language and gender studies have occupied a good position in the academic field when it has begun to develop in Western cultures in the mid-1970s (Blauenfeldt, 2014:4). Two different eras represented the relationship between language and gender. The first era was basically at the beginning of the 1900s focusing on how men and women speak including analysis of their voice and amount, while the second era focused on linguistic sexism providing evidence on how men and women are characterized in language (McConnel-Ginet, 1998; Weatheal, 2002 as cited in Demberg, 2014:1). What concerns us in this paper is linguistic sexism which is defined as "a wide range of verbal practices, including not only how women are labeled and referred to, but also how language strategies in mixed-sex interaction may serve to silence or deprecate women as interactants" (Atkinson, 1993: 403).

The sex-gender issue has been of interest in the field of feminist literary criticism specifically in the last forty years. Nneka (2012:1) considers sexist language as "any language that is supposed to include all people, but, unintentionally (or not) excludes a gender – this can be either males or females". The issue of sexism is controversial. Some linguists believe that sexist language implies the identification of the features of a sexist society; while others believe that it influences the society to be sexist (He, 2010:332). A further point of view states that sexism stands for attitudes that force one sex to the exaltation of the other (Lei, 2006:87; Nneka, 2012:4). Moreover, language is formulated from cultural values and hence reflecting the sexist culture which differs from one culture to another (Cameron, 2005:12; Kudus (2008: 18). Mills' (1995) model of feminist stylistics is considered the first skills-enabling approach that provides a tool-kit to analyze texts which focus on the ways gender is exemplified and represented.

FEMINIST STYLISTIC

When dealing with literary text, stylistic analysis is being carried out and when focusing on feminism aspects in the literary texts a feminist stylistic approach is adopted. This approach can be applicable to any text that involves gender differences.

The most recent work in feminist stylistics is related to Sara Mills (1995) which is adapted from stylistics and critical discourse analysis approaches to provide a gender perspective on the critical analysis of literary texts (Wales, 2011: 158). Wales (2011: 158) says that, " it looks at issues of sexism, power and IDEOLOGY, of agency and FOCALIZATION, etc. in textual practices, and addresses also relations between IMPLIED READER and their 'real' socially and historically situated counterparts".

Mills (1995:1), feminist stylistic takes into account the study of the way in which cultural and social points of views, metaphor, and transitivity are controlled by matters of gender. Mills (1995:4) points out that feminist stylistic intends to fulfill its goals through the application of the linguistic theories to provide a rationale for the feminist textual analysis. Further, to add more specification to feminism in her approach, Mills' (1995) model included a tool-kit with questions in feminist stylistics from other feminist linguistics including Cameron (1985) and Coates (1989). The tool-kit can be applied through different approaches and one of which is a transitivity approach (Mills, 1995:15). In fact, various studies were conducted to manifest the interplay between language and literature through the feminist stylistic approach (Blaine, 1990; Denopra, 2012; Kang & Wu, 2015; Page, 2010; Ufot, 2012; Shah *et al.*, 2014; Yang, 2007).

TRANSITIVITY APPROACH AND WOMEN PORTRAYAL

For Halliday's (1994: 23) Systematic Functional Grammar, the context of a situation can be realized through: mode (message), field (the expression of the worldview) and tenor (the relationship between the interlocutors). He (Ibid.) classified them into metafunctions including:

- Textual, which links language to the features of the situation in which it is used;
- (b) Ideational, which is basically concerned with the expression of "content" or the speaker's experience or the inner world of his own consciousness,
- (c) Interpersonal which is concerned with social relations.

(Ibid.: 23).

Haig (2011) expounds that the ideational function is accumulated through two types of metafunction: experiential and logical. The experiential one stands for the presentation of life experience in a grammatical system of configuration which involves a process, participant and circumstance. Cunanan (2011:72) indicates that the ideational function is concerned with the transmission of ideas and this can be achieved through transitivity.

Transitivity performs its function through representing processes and experiences, including actions, events, relation, etc. (Halliday, 1994; Shah *et al.*, 2014: 93). Nguyen (2012:86) clearly demonstrates that the transitivity analysis is used to reveal hidden meanings and ideologies. Transitivity structure is characterized through "agent+ process+ goal configuration that represents the function of the language expressing the speaker's experience of the external world or his own internal world" (Cunanan, 2011:72). The approach involves three types of processes including: processes (event, actions); participants (actors) and circumstances (when, where and how the action took place) (O'Donnell, 2007 :3). Ryder (2006) precisely presents Halliday's meaning of transitivity indicating that it is concerned with how entities and actions in a situation are used in the language. He (*ibid.*) sets certain functions for transitivity choices in stylistics including:

- Making different points of views,
- Setting up text subwords,
- Differentiating the components of the narrative structure,
- 4.Distinguishing text genres and subgenres from each other,
- 5.Representing characters in the work as powerful and responsible or vice versa.

(*Ibid.*)

For Ryder, it is basically the last function which justifies the use of the transitivity analysis in the fields of feminist analysis. According to Shah *et al.* (2012: 93), there are three sets of transitivity choices of processes represented by clauses, including material (actions occur according to the actor's will), mental (processes of perception, cognition) and relational processes (*Ibid.*).

The material process is subdivided into material action, intention and material action supervision. The first form includes the actor will to do something while the other indicates that the processes are done intentionally. So, transitivity is mainly concerned with who acts (the agent) and who is being acted upon (the one affected by others actions) (Halliday, 1994 as Shah *et al.*, 2012:93).

EARNEST HEMINGWAY AND “CAT IN THE RAIN”

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was born in Oak Park, Illinois. When he was seventeen, he started his career as a writer in a newspaper office in Kansas City. At the age of twenty, he became a member of the group of expatriate Americans in Paris. During this time he published a couple of successful works including "*The Sun Also Rises*" (1926) and "*A Farewell to Arms*" (1929). Later, he published other important and outstanding novels such as "*For Whom the Bell Tolls*" (1940) and "*The Old Man and The Sea*" (1952) (wikipedia, n.d.). World War I formulated a good background for almost of his works. Hashemi and Ahmadi (2010: 104) state that Hemingway's works resemble "a futile search for truth in a world governed by change" and accordingly his characters "maintain a sense of self-control and detachment, and go about their solitary existence".

As far as literary text is concerned, fiction is a genre involving imaginary as well as imaginative prose narratives including specifically novels and short stories. Specifically, this paper deals with a short story written by Earnest Hemingway to be the sample of the study. Hemingway's short stories were published in *"In Our Times"* and one of his finest works is *"Cat in the Rain"* (1925). This story was written while he was living in France (academic. luzerne.edu, n.d.).

"Cat in the Rain" is about an American couple on holiday in Italy. In the hotel are only the two Americans and their room facing the sea with a public garden? The scenery includes a war monument and Italians come to see it. In a rainy day, the woman is looking through the window and sees a cat under the table. Particularly, the story is centered on the woman who looks at a cat and becomes totally obsessed and wants to have it. She decides to go outside and get the cat. With the negligence of the husband, she adores the hospitality of the hotel-keeper and his willingness to help her. When she does not find the cat, she returns back so sad asking her husband many things as if she should grow her hair, have a bun at her neck, a cat, a table with her own silver and new clothes. The husband neglects all she wants and instead asks her to find a book to read, but she keeps asking for at least the cat. Finally, the maid comes bringing a cat at the hotel-keeper's request. (academic. luzerne.edu, n.d.; Hashemi & Ahmadi, 2010:104). Only a few studies tackled this literary work in analysis and interpretation, including" Hashemi and Ahmadi, 2010; Kikuchi, 2007 and You, 2009.

METHODOLOGY

The current paper is descriptive in nature and it is conducted through a qualitative content analysis approach. The feminist stylistic approach suggested by Mills is adopted for the analysis of Earnest Hemingway's *"Cat in the Rain"*. According to Mills (1995), the feminist stylistic approach is carried out through the method of transitivity analysis. This paper employs the transitivity analysis on selective texts of *"Cat in the Rain"* in order to identify the processes, participants and circumstances used in the literary text adopted for the study.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

One of the most important aspects of a good research paper is the selection of the appropriate sample of the study. For the current study, the researcher selected Earnest Hemingway's *"Cat in the Rain"*. The selection of this short story is related to different reasons, including: first, the personal interest of the researcher in women issues in different cultures; Second, the importance of applying the feminist stylistic approach to literary text revealing anti-feminist views to eliminate women discrimination.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The transitivity analysis has been carried out through coding some selective extracts from the short story. Transitivity analysis has involved the identification and interpretation of processes, participants, and circumstances. Finally, a discussion is given to clarify how a woman is portrayed in the text and how the text draws the reader's attention towards the ideological perspectives found in the story.

Extract (1): *"The American wife stood at the window looking out. Outside right under their window, a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables.*

In an extract (1), "the American wife" is the actor representing the woman, her identity and marital status, the verb "stood" is a material process action verb; yet in this context of situation, it shows the woman as passive standing only in her position; and the circumstance "at the window" followed by the material verb "looking out" stand for the place through which the woman can see what happens outside her room and how people have different life from her own. Then, another sentence begins with the circumstance "outside right under their window", the goal is "a cat", the material verb "was crouched" and the circumstance "under one of the dripping green table". In this sentence, the focus is being given to the place through providing details for the exact directions and further the use of the personal pronoun "their" before the spatial location "window" referring to the couples inside the room.

Extract (2): *'I'm going down and get that kitty,' the American wife said.*

I'll do it,' her husband offered from the bed.

In an extract (2), The first sentence involves the personal pronoun "I" referring to the woman, the material verbs "going down" and "get" and the goal "that kitty"; all given in the verbiage for the verbal process including "the American wife" as sayer and the verb "said". The woman is shown in this sentence as an active person who tries to do something and change the situation through getting the cat to be no more alone. In the same extract, the sentence includes the personal pronoun "I" referring to the husband, the material verb "do" and the goal "it" to be the verbiage of the verbal process "offered" followed by the circumstance "from the bed". This sentence, ironically, represents the husband's carelessness concerning his wife desires and he offers to do an action while he is still passive lying in bed.

Extract (3): *The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands.*

This extract involves many sentences which are built in the mental process. The first sentence includes "the wife" as sensors, "like" the mental verb, and "him" the phenomenon. The other sentences in the extract include the personal pronoun "she" referring to the wife and the mental verb "liked" with different phenomena: "his deadly serious way he received any compliant", "his dignity", "the way he wanted to serve her", "the way he feels about being a hotel-keeper", "heavy face and big hands". All the details given to reflect what the woman sees in a man and how he should behave. Hemingway expresses through the mental process the passivity of the woman since she likes things which she feels missing in her husband's character, but she can do nothing but only to like the hotel-keeper.

Extract (4): *...she walked along the gravel path until she was under their window.. The table was there, washed bright green in the rain, but the cat was gone. She was suddenly disappointed.*

The sentence in this extract includes the personal pronoun "she" as the actor, "walked" the material process and "along the gravel path until she was under their window" is circumstance. The circumstance "under their window" is spatial refers to a location and this clause has been used many times and in different extracts since it symbolizes the life of the woman and her relationship with her husband. Moreover, the sentence "the table was there, washed bright..." represents an existential process followed by a relational identifying sentence "washed bright green in the rain". In addition, "but" the logical connector is used to refer to what happened next through the sentence "the cat was gone". "The cat" is a goal and "was gone" is a material process. In the same extract, the sentence "she was suddenly disappointed" is a relational attributive describing how the woman felt when she could not find the cat. Despite trying to be active and change her life through the attempt to find the cat and taking care of it, she feels disappointed.

Extract (5): *....As the American girl passed the office, the padrone bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance.*

In this extract, the sentence is formed of "as" the logical connector, "the American girl" the participant as the actor of action, "passes" material verb and "the office" circumstance, "the padrone" actor, "bowed" material process, "from his desk" circumstance. After the disappointment of not finding the cat, Hemingway refers to the wife as "the American girl" instead of the "the American wife" to show that a woman is passive without the man. Again, gender influence on the portrayal of woman in the story is very apparent.

Extract (6): *'Did you get the cat?' he asked, putting the book down;*

'It was gone '.

'I wanted it so much,' she said. 'I don't know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty.

George was reading again.

'Don't you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?' she asked, looking at her profile again.

'I like it the way it is '.

'I get so tired of it,' she said. 'I get so tired of looking like a boy. '

In this extract, the husband shows little interest in what his wife is doing through the verbiage "Did you get the cat". The husband performs a material process through the verb "putting", "the book" the goal and the circumstance "down". The answer that presented through the pronoun "it" as goal refers to the cat and "was gone" material process" followed by many clauses with mental process. The personal pronoun "I" actor, "wanted" mental process, "it so much" phenomenon. Then, she wonders why she wants that cat so much. The author uses three sentences, including the mental process with the verb "want" and the phenomenon is "the cat", "it" and "that kitty" to represent the woman's desire to have the cat. Further, the extract involves other clauses reflecting some of the woman views about herself. The sentence, "Don't you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?'She asked, looking at her profile again". The verbiage of the verbal process contains many clauses in the mental process, including "think", "let" and "looking at". The mental process reflects the author inner world and his perception of how a woman should look like basically with long

hair. The personal pronoun "I" actor, referring to the husband, "like" mental process, and "this way as it is" phenomenon, implies what the husband wants and likes regardless of his wife's desires. The physical appearance of his wife is not his own concern. Again, this is another picture of how women are portrayed in the story as being powerless. The wife comments on what the husbands say using two clauses with mental process. In both, the actor is represented through the personal pronoun "I" and the mental process is "get" but the phenomenon in the first sentence is the personal pronoun "it" and it is used here to refer to "looking like a boy" in the second sentence to put more emphasis on the phenomenon. This mental process reflects part of the anti-feminist ideological perspectives since she is a female and her physical appearance is very important. She should not look like a boy because she wants to feel herself and be treated as so with care and love. The point of men discrimination of women is reflected clearly in this extract.

Extract (7): *'I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel,' she said. 'I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her.'*

'And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.'

'Oh, shut up and get something to read, George said. He was reading again.'

'Anyway, I want a cat,' she said, 'I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.'

Someone knocked at the door.

'Excuse me,' she said, 'the padrone asked me to bring this for the Signora.'

The actor is represented through the personal pronoun "I" to refer to the American wife, the mental process verb is "want" and it has been used eleven times; while the phenomena included many clauses, "pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel", "to have a kitty to sit on my lap..", "to eat at a table with my own silver...", "candles", "it to be spring", "brush my hair...", "kitty" (2 times), "a cat" (2 times) and finally, "some new clothes". These clauses stand for the negligence of the wife's desires by her husband and this is represented through using the imperative form "shut up and get something to read". This sentence implies that he finds his life and happiness in the book, but for the woman the book does not make her happy and enjoy life. For her, even the season she wants spring instead of winter because she does not want the rainy weather. She does not want to be sad and lonely. Still, that women is portrayed as passive and neglected by the man of her culture, while the Pardone, who is from another culture is the one who could satisfy at least her small desires and makes her feel happy with her identity. Hemingway, despite being a male, portrays woman as powerful by the unfair means she wants, i-e wishing to have long hair, insisting on having a cat in a rainy weather, staying in a hotel but she wants a table with silver and candles. Hashmi and Ahmedi (2001) believe that Hemingway knows how to depict women with the problems and show sympathy. In addition, his stories bear deeper meanings presented through different symbols such as *the rain, the husband and the book, looking like a boy*, etc. to represent sadness and despair.

In sum, through the analysis of 8 extracts, Hemingway created a good structural linguistic balance to portray woman image in his story through focusing mainly on the material and mental processes of transitivity. For Mills (1995) they combine together to identify the participants as actors and goals; and sensor reflecting his/her inner feelings and consciousness. Shah *et al.* (2011: 92) state that transitivity choices specifically analyze both "activity and passivity of male and female characters". Accordingly, the analysis shows that Hemingway uses the material process to describe the major participants in the story: *the wife, the hotel-keeper and the cat*. The material process has been used implying the recurrent occurring of the actions. It is mainly concerned with actions and the doer of the actions and this means identifying the participants of the actions processed (Sabbachat *et al.*, 2014:78).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Earnest Hemingway builds his literary text on major participants: *the American wife, the husband, the hotel-keeper, the maid and the cat*. The analysis of this story implies that it is primarily built on the material and mental processes. This paper demonstrated the advantageous of the feminist stylistic approach in the analysis of gender in popular fiction. Practically, the systematic empirical analysis of the text can help to reveal the hidden representation of certain expressions. The feminist stylistics of "Cat in the Rain" has portrayed a woman and how she is represented by male authors. The woman is presented as passive and her life is dependent on the man since her happiness and desires are associated with what the man offers only. The woman in the story suffers from loneliness despite being married and her life lacks fun and enjoyment. In addition, the analysis shows that the physical appearance of the woman is very important to reflect the view of sexism since a woman should not be discriminated by a man. Specifically, the woman has been represented differently and in different situations as (*the American wife, the American girl, the girl and she*) but Earnest Hemingway intentionally did not give her a name. From a cultural point of view, this implies that she stands for all American women and how they are treated.

The story represents a social influence view as far as the representation of a woman is concerned. Moreover, the reflection on the woman's desires and sensations becomes the readers through making a good connection between the linguistic choices and the literary text.

The analysis revealed that "Circumstances" and specifically spatial one played a very important role in identifying how linguistic choices support anti-feminist approach. The story involves two basic circumstances "under the window" and "the bed". Both were linked together through associating what happens indoor in the bed of misuse for reading only and what happens outdoors under the window and outside the window of hopes and desires. Finally, this paper comes to the conclusion that language, sexism is very important and needs further studies to change it. In addition, more attention can be given to feminist discourse and feminist stylistics in up-to-date literature.

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