

STYLISTIC STUDY IN AHDAF SOUEIF'S *IN THE EYE OF THE SUN*

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Abstract

In this paper, I'd like to highlight some stylistic aspects in Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun*. The stylistic aspects which would be discussed in this novel are: planes of articulation, planes of information, the forms of speech presentation, polyphony, politeness phenomena, and conversational moves. Stylistic analysis will be applied to the novel's three major themes; the first theme treats the successful marriage that has healthy sexuality regulated by mutual admiration, mutual understanding, reason, and logic to avoid marital malaise. The second theme traces the failure of the pre-material and extra-marital relations which give sexual satisfaction but fail to give true love, social and religious security. The third theme tackles the cultural conflict which encapsulates the uncontrollable sexual relations of Asya, the heroin of the novel who is torn between two different cultures and exposed to opposite social forces.

Keywords:: Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun* , conversational moves , forms of speech presentation , planes of articulation, planes of information, , politeness phenomena, polyphony, stylistics.

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to analyze the stylistic aspects in relation to the literary connotations of the text in *In the Eye of the Sun*, thus the importance of this paper springs from its contribution to the field of stylistics by showing that it is possible to link stylistic features with specific dramatic situations in different cultures and different social backgrounds and by also showing that stylistics has credibility and reliability in embodying the meanings expressed in literary texts.

In the Eye of the Sun is a remarkable novel which tells the story of Asia Al-Ulama, her life in Egypt as well as in England, and her attitude towards the Eastern Islamic Egyptian society and her attitude towards the Western English Culture. Ahdaf Souief tells this story in an impressive style which conveys the meanings and the expressions in multiple manners and aspects. Using the stylistic method in analyzing the novel's meanings, we need to look at the following insightful definition by ADEKUNLE (2008:3) who states that:

Stylistics can simply be defined as the scientific study of the styles of a language in various contexts such as letter writing, advertisement,

literature, music, etc. Since stylistics operates on a solid scientific basis, its investigations are often reliable, universal and experimental.

Various stylistic aspects are used by the writers to guarantee that the ultimate message of any literary work will be conveyed to the readers in expressive attractive ways, therefore I am going to highlight some of these stylistic aspects that appear in Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun* through many dramatic situations and how they really give special flavor to the narrative text. This paper begins by highlighting 'planes of articulation' as the first stylistic aspect which provides a cohesive scheme of the setting of the novel, moves to discuss the other stylistic aspects: planes of information, the forms of speech presentation, polyphony, politeness phenomena, and conversational moves.

1. Planes of Articulation

The first stylistic aspect is planes of articulation. This stylistic aspect will be discussed in relation to the setting of the novel.

Walter Nash (1982:112-113) defines the plane of articulation as, "the scheme of cohesion and design in the text, described under some headings like 'setting and perspective'. To describe the setting is to establish the ground upon which eminent stylistic features are mapped and to provide for the prose text something roughly equivalent to the stanzaic or sectional scheme of a poem".

In the light of the above mentioned, the setting of this novel provides a scheme of cohesion for both time and place. The events in this novel take place mainly in Cairo and London from 1967-1980.

The setting in this novel is mobile in time and place. Souief divided *In the Eye of the Sun* into ten chapters and an Epilogue. The events inside every chapter are given specific time to begin and end with and they are arranged in a flashback technique in Asya's memory. The novel begins with 1979 then shifts to 1967 and continues from 1967 to reach 1979. The time in Epilogue moves towards new events until 1980.

The place in this novel shapes and identifies the local color. Cairo identifies the Egyptian color and London the British one. The local color shapes the life of people in terms of their daily works, habits, traditions, customs, Islamic religion and eastern and their relation to western cultures.

When Asya is in Cairo, a big deal of Egyptian life is shown in details describing their exact interactions in family, home and Cairo University. Moreover, the names of popular districts in Cairo are described in the novel like Zamellak, Heliposes, and Al- Halima.

In the political reports, the names of the cities –where the political events took place – are mentioned like Amman, Irbid, Khan Younis...etc. Other places in the novel are Italy and New York; Italy where Asya receives a scholarship from the Italian institute 1969, New York where she goes with her lover to visit some of his friends, and to spend the days of the new year there in 28 December 1977.

2. Planes of Information

Secondly, the plane of information in *In the Eye of the Sun* will be discussed under the terms of characters, symbolism and literary deviation. This idea is applicable to Walter Nash (1982:113) who points out, "the second level of structure is a plane of information....and involves the superimposition on the articulatory plane of elements of characterization, symbolism, etc."

Characters form an important role in the structure of the plane of information. The major characters in this novel are Asya, Saif and Gerald.

Asya is the heroine of the novel. She is an intelligent and ambitious woman who lives in a Bourgeois life; her father is a professor and pursued the position of the Minister of Education for a time and her mother is a Doctor teaching at Cairo University. Being raised by highly educated parents helps Asya to feel a little bit free from the restrictions of Muslim Egyptian society. In Cairo University, she studies English Literature, she joins the friendship of Saif whom she falls in love with and gets married to. Asya pursues graduate study in England where she makes a sexual relation with an Englishman; GerladStone.

Saif is a remarkable character in the novel; he is of brilliant mind too. He has done MA in history, and he goes to London to do PhD with Asya. He starts doing his Ph.D, but he doesn't finish it. Saif loves Asya too much in the earliest period of their relation. He still wants to be with her even after the failure of their sexual life. He decides to leave his job and be with her in London. But he leaves her again in London for a long time to go to his work in Beirut and Damascus. Leaving Asya alone in London paves the way for her to make a sexual relation with

Gerald.

Concerning Asya and Saif marital relation, both of them are confused and full of paradoxes. They think they love each other, but actually they love an image of the other. Both have their paradoxes and inner contradiction. The sexual maladjustment between them is kept deliberately vague in the narrative. It indicates the ambivalence

of their feelings towards each other. The relationship collapses at both the emotional and the sexual level. As a point of reference, both have extra-marital relationship: Asya with insecurely possessive Gerlad and Saif with a number of superficial women. In these shallow, destructive relationships, both of them find fleeting sexual satisfaction, but no meaningful emotional reward.

The third major character in the novel is Gerlad: Asya's lover. He is a "sexual imperialist" as Asya thought of him. His main concern is to find who will fill his bed every night.

Gerald doesn't love Asya, though he claims so. He thinks of her as an object which will give him sexual pleasure only not as a real beloved. See the following extract (2) on the next page:

'No. Gerald shakes his head...look at you, baby. Look at you. I never want you to get dressed when we're married. Be like this for me babe: naked and perfumed, your hair falling over your shoulders, wearing only your jewels-'...'an odalisque you want?' She smiles.

'A concubine. A female slave.' P.562.Extract (2)

Gerlad develops inside his psyche an obsession which makes him beg Asya all of the time to stay with him and cut her relation with Saif. He never calls Asya by her name, but only as a "babe"-so, he doesn't recognize Asya's true personality. He does not recognize her full identity as a married woman. He recognizes her only as a 'babe' female who satisfies his sexual desire. It is also emblematic that Saif does the same; never calls her by her name but only as "princess". It is worth quoting Amin Malak (2000:149) who describes Gerald to be possessive lover: "In one significant instance,

Asya, after the emotional and sexual estrangement from her Egyptian husband, dabbles in an extramarital affair with an insecurely possessive English man who never calls her by her real name and constantly addresses her as "baby", or "man". He adds(2000,162) the same note about Saif, "Asya's husband, Saif, does the same thing, except that his two "pet names"—"princess" and "sweetie"—sound more elegant."

Symbolism –within the plane of information-is shown in several social and sexual aspects in the novel. I choose two symbols to discuss one is sexual, the other is social.

The sexual symbol is related to the Arabic name of Asya's husband "Saif Madi". This Arabic name has an important symbolic meaning in the novel. In this regard, Amin Malak (2000, 149) points out, "Saif Madi, whose sexual paralysis, it seems, is due to his phobia of causing her pain during intercourse. (An ironic signifier of the husband's phallic failure, the name Saif Madi in

Arabic means a "piercing sword"."

Saif's "sword" is obviously dysfunctional, at least as far as Asya, his wife is concerned. This dysfunctionality symbolizes the larger issue of their marital malaise. In other words, Saif promises Asya happiness but lets her down eventually.

The social symbol in the novel is related to the last scene in it. Asya-in the end of the novel-sits on a rock in Akhmeem looking at an idol (a stone woman thought to be a princess from the time of Rmeses the second). This idol (princess) is a symbol of Asya herself who is called "princess" by Saif during all her life with him.

This scene is at the newly discovered excavation site. It refers to the essence of her pharonic heritage. This idol, which has been excavated, is of a princess or a queen, i.e., a woman. Accordingly, Soueif seems to suggest that Asya has done her own excavation of her own psyche. Concerning the symbolic meaning of this scene, Amin Malak (2000, 147) states that, "back in Egypt, Asya reconnects symbolically with her two civilisational inspirations: Islamic and ancient Pharonic, without necessarily disowning her acquired western values and experiences. Accordingly, for the modern Arab and Muslim woman, Soueif suggests, the task is not to deny conflicts or paradoxes, but to accept, comprehend, and even, when possible, fuse them".

The last point in the plane of information is literary deviation which is not based on the linguistic level, but it is on the level of Arabic Literature. On other words, it is a literary deviation which has been presented throughout the novel by the use of candid and erotic discussion of sexual issues in the life of an Egyptian woman by an Egyptian writer.

This sexual dramatization on the part of an Arab Muslim woman writer is something quite daring. Sonallah Ibrahim (1994, viii), the Egyptian novelist, described Soueif in an interview with the French newspaper-Le Monde-as the only Egyptian novelist who has dared to treat the topic of sexuality with such courage and clarity. This notion connects as well with Edward Said's praise for the book's

"chronicling sexual politics"(1992, 19): "one of the most extraordinary chroniclers of sexual politics now writing".

In Boston Globe (1) (1993:B43), there is an interesting description of this literary deviation of Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun*:

Like Anna Karenina, Madam Bovary, and especially Middlemarch, this novel glories in the 19th-century arts of description, characterization and episodic detail. Like Leo Tolstoy, Flaubert and George Eliot, Soueif exposes her heroine's inner life to searing scrutiny. Unlike other Arab Muslim women writers, Soueif deals with Asya's sexuality and the complex sexual and emotional dynamics with the men in her life, in candid, even blunt terms.

In the Eye of the Sun provides a sympathetic look from within at Egyptian Muslim culture and family life: at the interactions of Egyptians at home with each other, and with Westerners on

European soil.

Many extracts from the novel show how Soueif deals with sexual issues by using "candid and blunt terms", one famous extract in the novel is about Saif-upon discovering Asya's relation with Gerald- he spends most of his time asking Asya many questions about her sexual relation with Gerlad and imagining that relation. Saif is miserable to discover that his wife has betrayed him and she is more or less a whore now.

3. The Forms of Speech Presentation

The third stylistic aspect in this novel is the forms of speech presentation. Various kinds of speech presentation are used in this novel such as: Direct speech (DS), indirect Speech (IS), Free Indirect Speech (FIS), Free Indirect Thought (FIT) and Direct Thought (DT).

The major part of the narrative technique represents Asya's consciousness and her point of view, how she views her own life, how she deals with her problems and how she thinks of herself, of Saif, of her study and of her future, except the lines in italics which they represent Saif's point of view.

The following extract (4) shows how Asya's consciousness is there to describe what she is thinking and doing. Free indirect speech along with free indirect thought is used to represent her consciousness:

She loved the time she spends in his room, browsing through his book shelves: Camus and Saint-Exupery, Sartre....Hemingway and Le Carre and Playboy. And he refers to articles and jokes in them-but not to the picture. She doesn't even know if he looks at the pictures-well, of course he looks, don't be ridiculous-but she doesn't know for sure. She never looks at them either-when he's around. But she sneaks

glances at the centre folds whenever he's out of the room and then is smitten with misery because they are so beautiful.p.158 Extract (4)

In this novel, the lines which are printed in italics represent Saif's consciousness. The following extract (5) shows Saif's point of view, and how he thinks of Asya when she asks him to make love to her before marriage:

-This extract is printed in italics in the novel-

"She frightened me. She frightened me with her candour, her optimism, her faith. She didn't even know she possessed these things. She took it all as given, she truly thought that you could shape life as you pleased; that if you wanted sth you would get it, that if you did certain things, others would necessarily follow. She was so open, so vulnerable. She knew nothing. Nothing at all. I thought of Adriana with her reconstructed face. I thought of Danielle waiting for Shazli in her miserable room above the rue de La Huchette and meanwhile making do with me. I thought of Didi.... I thought of my mother-and Asya .I said to her once-lightly, 'Les choses sont centre nous', and she stared at me with those fantastic black eyes and asked, 'Quelles' "choses"?. P.140 Extract (5)

As I mentioned earlier, the forms of speech presentation are of various kinds in this novel. The narrative device of direct speech (DS) is used throughout the novel in the conversations between the characters. The nature of the characters emerges in their speeches during the long events in the novel.

The following extract (6) represents the narrative device of direct speech in a conversation between Asya and Saif. This conversation shows how Saif blames Asya for her sexual relation with Gerlad in a harsh way:

'Five years', he says, 'five years. The pain is too much for you to take, you feel sick if I so much as put my hand on your tits, you sneeze if I come near you-then you go and open your legs to some ... stranger-'

'This isn't fair, 'cries Asya,' for years I begged you- I begged you to make it happen-and you wouldn't. And I knew it was going wrong-it was all going wrong-'

'So you go and ... some bastrd, you actually ... some bastrd.'p.623

'Saif, I sat there and loved you and wrote you letters, I lived there...' 'Except, of course, when you were being ... by him.

Don't make me laugh'.

'Why do you go like this? Why do you go on? Don't you want to understand-'

I understand .Of course I understand. I understand the whole ... low, vile, disgusting-'

'You don't .You're seeing only one bit of it. You insist on seeing only one bit of it. You don't know what it felt like.'

'I sure don't; he says. 'I sure don't, but we can fix that-' 'Saif-'

'You can invite him back and he can ... me too. Then I'll really know what it felt like.' P.633

Extract (6)

Another form of speech presentation is indirect speech. The two narrative devices (DS and IS) are described by Short (1982:183) who points out, "In FDS and DS we are told what the character said in the words that he used. In IS we are told what the character said, but in the narrator's words FIS is a hybrid between the two."

The following extract (7) presents a conversation between Asya and her mother: Dr Lateefa. In this conversation direct speech (DS) and Indirect Speech (IS) are used together:

'...what did he say to you when you spoke alone? 'Asya asks 'oh'- Lateefa's back is to Asya as she looks into the mirror and dabs at her face with the powder-puff-'nothing much'.

'But what did he say, Mummy? What did he actually say?....'.... Mummy? What did he say to you?' 'He said some bad things about you, but-' 'What did he say?'

Asya, dear, why?'

'I have to know, mummy, please. Exactly.'

All right then'. Lateefa puts down her powder-puff.' He said," Dr Lateefa, your daughter is a whore. She wasn't-" '

'He said that to you?' 'Yes'.

'I'm sorry, mummy, I'm really sorry.'

Asya covers her face with her hands. Lateefa says nothing.

'Would you-please-go on?' Says Asya through her hands.

She'll pick up any man she likes the look of and I can't live with that."

Asya raises her face. 'Is that all?' She asks. 'Did you want more?'

'What did you say? You weren't horrible to him, were you?'

Lateefa looks at her daughter.

'He also promised not to tell anyone about this whole story-' 'Did you ask him for that?'

'No. He volunteered. He said. 'I want you to know that I will never tell anyone what has happened. I don't want to ruin her life. She can say what she pleases.' '

'Because I don't care', says Asya. 'He must say whatever is least hurtful to him. And I shan't say anything.' (P.669-670) Extract (7).

The other forms of speech presentation in this novel are free Indirect Speech and free indirect thought. Ronald Carter (1982:72) defines the narrative device of free indirect speech (FIS) as: "As the term indicates, free indirect speech finds itself somewhere between direct and indirect speech. In literary terms this puts it between an author's reproduction of a character's actual dialogue or speech and a reported account of what a character has said. With a free indirect speech, or FIS, a kind of fusion takes place between authorial and character viewpoint in which the shape and texture of the character's voice can be preserved without any loss of the narrator's objective interpretation of events."

Short (1982:183-184) spots the differences between Free Indirect Speech and Free Indirect Thought:

DS is the norm for the presentation of speech, the use of FIS is usually perceived by readers as indicating narrational intervention. It is thus often used for distancing, irony, or both....

The categorization of the presentation of character THOUGHT is essentially the same as that for speech presentation except for one important difference, namely that the norm for thought presentation is not DT but IT, because it is semantically implausible to suggest that we can directly observe the thoughts of others. This difference is important because it explains the difference in effect obtained when the free indirect category is used for speech and thought. Because FIT, in opposition to FIS, is a movement from the norm towards the character end of the continuum, it is perceived by readers as closeness with that character, the direct observation of the articulation of his thoughts. It is for this reason that FIT is so commonly used in stream-of-consciousness writing, it apparently allows us to observe a character's unconscious thoughts as they appear.

The following extract (8) shows how Free Indirect Speech is used along with Free Indirect Thought, and other forms of speech presentation. The sentences in this extract are numbered to specify the forms of speech according to the numbers:

"Why is English the language of your enemy?' Asya had asked (1)

She knew the answer, but she wanted to hear her speak, to engage her in dialogue, to ask

whether she didn't think there was a commonality of human experience beyond politics, beyond forms.(2)

The veiled head shook once silently and was still. (3) 'I'm sorry?' 'Said Asya, and nothing happened. (4)

'Are you all right?' She had asked, (5) and another-an unveiled- girl had spoken up. (6)

'She cannot speak, 'she had said, 'because the voice of a woman is 'awra' '. (7)

'How is she going to participate in seminars then?'Asya had asked. (8)The class was silent (9).'Why did she not go to al-Azhaar? or the Girls' College? Then at least she would have been able to answer her teachers....'(10).

That should be safe enough to start with, she had thought the voice of woman is 'awra'(11).Of course, she'd always known that theoretically, but she'd never come across anyone for whom it was a living truth.

(12) So as far as this girl-and the other who thought like her were concerned she was doing a sort of porno-spread up here on the podium for the world to seek (13).... A class holding people who were sitting and scrutinizing her and thinking she was doing something shameful by merely being there-something worse than shameful; something for which the fires of hell were being stocked in readiness (14).What if they knew-what if they had looked through the window of the cottage

and seen a blonde, blue-eyed man kneeling his head between her thighs. (15) P.754 Extract (8).

The numbered sentences will be classified according to the forms of speech presentation in the following table.

No. of the sentence Form of Speech Presentation

1	DS
2	FIT
3	Narrative Report(NR)
4	DS
5	DS
6	NR
7	DR
8	DR
9	NR
10	DS
11	FDT
12	FIS
13	FIT
14	FIT
15	FIS

In Extract (8)

4. Polyphony

The fourth stylistic aspect, which I'd like to discuss in *In the Eye of the Sun*, is polyphony. In *In the Eye of the Sun* is a polyphonic novel; it shows how the multiple voices of Egyptians at home, university and street interact with each other. It shows also how some of the Egyptian voices interact with Westerners in London in Italy. Every character in the novel is distinguished by the views s/he expresses.

Bakhtin (1973) in Fowler (1989:79) explains more about the polyphonic novel." In the polyphonic novel The characters (or the hero) are more librated: they achieve voices, and points of view, which challenge the validity of the authorial position. The musical metaphor of polyphony refers to the co-presence of independent but interconnected voices."

In *In the Eye of the Sun*, all of the characters are free in their views. The following glimpses about some major characters show how the novel has multiple voices with different and independent views.

Deena 'Asya's sister' achieves an individual point of view in the novel through her own particular opinions. She never responds to her parent's desires. She gets married to the person whom she loves, to Muhsin Nur-el-Din who belonged to a left-wing organization- a liberal intellectual organization. Deena is loyal to her husband. She is still in love with him after three years of marriage. She keeps her marriage a solid and successful one even after her husband was sentenced to five years in citadel jail.

Mukhtar al-Ulma 'Asya's father' is the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and an ex-Minister of culture. Kareem, Asya's brother, graduated from engineering and took a job with a multinational out on an oil company in the Gulf.

Mukhtar al-Ulma and Kareem represent some of the Eastern Muslim men who are librated from the Muslim social restrictions through their studies in western countries or through their interactions with western people. Therefore, Mukhtar doesn't prevent his daughter Asya from behaving freely. For example, he approves that Asya has male friends at Cairo University. He wouldn't mind if some of her male friends visit Asya at home. But, of course, he will never approve that Asya has a sexual relation with a man. So, Mukhtar gives good social freedom to his daughter to a certain degree, but Asya misinterprets this social freedom.

Chrissie, Asya's intimate friend is the daughter of Sidki al-Tarabusi and Muneera al- Tarabulsi. Chrissie's real name is Cariama, but she was born in England and they came to call her by this name. Chrissie's father who has acquired a good professional reputation is the post of Minister of Health.

As a point of comparison, Sidki al-Tarabulsi doesn't give his daughter 'Chrissie' that social freedom which Mukhtar gives to his daughter Asya. Sidki doesn't approve that his daughter would speak with a male friend at university. He punishes his daughter by preventing her from going to university when he knows that she has talked to a Youngman.

Chrissie was engaged to Issam who was a general in the army (a Reserve Engineer officer).In May 1967, he was ordered with the Battalion into the Sinai. Then he was killed by the Israeli force there. She studied English Literature at Cairo University. She shares there the friendship of

Asya, Mimi, Noora and Bassam. After graduating, she gets married to Fua'd el-Sinnari. At first, her marriage is successful, but later it turns to be unsuccessful. Fua'd has married on top of her a daughter of a bus driver. Chrissie is shocked to have such a servant to be her dorra (co-wife). She thinks of divorce, but she changes her mind and accepts the situation.

Taha 'Chrissie's brother' is at university preparing to get a PhD. He is in love with a Christian girl, but his father doesn't allow him to marry her.

Dr. Lateefa 'Asya's mother' is a typical example of the character who gathers between academic professionalism, since she is a professor teaching English Literature at Cairo University, and outstanding social status as a wife and mother. She lets her daughter feel all the time that she belongs to bourgeois class.

Moreover, she represents how an Egyptian woman was able to pursue graduate studies at that time in Egypt which makes her encourage her daughter 'Asya' to pursue graduate studies in England. She doesn't mind to see her daughter living alone in London, but she was shocked when she saw her daughter involved in a sexual relation

with a stranger. Therefore, she asks Asya to get rid of this man, to fix her relation with Saif and to finish her PhD.

Another important dimension in the polyphonic novel is the Dialogue. But there is a stronger meaning which Bakhtin seems to have in mind for 'dialogic' and that is 'dialectical'."

The dialectical device is used in many scenes in *In the Eye of the Sun* to represent a dialogue of Asya's ideas within different types of speech forms to reflect her consciousness.

The following extract (9) shows a dialectical speech in Asya's consciousness, in which Asya questions her marital status and her sexual relation with Gerald:....You've committed adultery, you've done it, Could she have looked into those clear grey eyes and said, 'But he's going away anyway in three weeks-can't I enjoy him for those three weeks and then let him go forever? And if my body is alive and OK and I'm not frightened anymore, might it not happen that Saif senses it, and if he loves me again on bed-if that- barrier between us is burst, might not everything else come flooding through so that we can talk to each other, explore things together, have babies together, love each other truly, at last?

'You know what Dorothea would think? Her mouth frothing over with toothpaste. Asya nods at herself in the mirror: she would think these were the arguments of a whore. She shrugs and rinses out her mouth. You are only stoned to death if you are a muhasanah*, is she truly a muhasanah? and besides, the door of repentance is always open." P.541 Extract (9)

*Muhasanah: A woman who is fortified through having her desires satisfied in marriage from the sin of adultery.

Accordingly, the dialectical speech in Asya's consciousness shows her regret about her relation with Gerald, who pursues her and considers himself to be her victim and she is the responsible. She thinks of Saif, of her parents, of her relatives and of her Egyptian Muslim society; what

would they think of her when they know that she has a sexual relation with a foreigner, what they would think of her when they know that she is committing adultery.

Asya reaches a sexual fulfillment outside marriage, but she is in struggle between her sexual desires and her Islamic religion. She lives sad moments of regret, and self-torture; She reminds herself of the Islamic punishment for committing adultery. Her punishment would be stoning to death because she is 'Muhasanah'. Asya keeps asking herself whether she is really 'Muhasanah' or not. She thinks that she is married and that's true, but she has not her desires satisfied in that marriage, so is she stoned to death? This question dominates her consciousness and makes her thinking about repentance.

5. Politeness phenomena

Politeness phenomenon is the fifth stylistic aspect which is to be discussed in this novel under the terms of Negative politeness and Face Threatening acts (FTA). I have chosen two extracts from *In the Eye of the Sun*, one extract represents Negative politeness, and the other shows Face Threatening Acts.

The following extract (10) represents some strategies of Negative politeness: hedge, giving deference, and apology which are discussed thoroughly below the extract.

She waits until it is one minute past eleven, then knocks. 'Come in!'

She opens the door. A room with modern furniture. Teak effect. But then, she was silly to expect anything else here. To expect deep leather armchairs, an enormous nineteenth-century desk, books piled up on the floor.... The professor is at the far end of the room and now comes forward to greet her. A tall, big man with green eyes and a lot of grey hair short at the back and long in front. They shake hands and he retreats behind his desk. Asya sits in a chair facing him. 'Did you have – a good journey?' He asks, glancing up then quickly down again at the papers he is arranging on his desk.

'Yes, thank you, 'Asya says. 'Good'.

There is silence.

'You've –sorted out your-your accommodation-and everything?' 'Oh, yes, thank you.'

Another silence.

'Well-Your-record is certainly most-very impressive. Both at Cairo University and in the – umm-Graduate Record Exam. 'He shuffles some papers in front of him. 'The council recommends you highly and your –references-are most-most friendly-'He seems almost more ill at ease than she is.

'Do you-did you have a –particular-topic in mind?'

'Well-I-I would like to do something with poetry, professor. Modern poetry.'

'Ah! Poetry-Ah!

He has a way of moving his lips soundlessly between words, biting his lower lip, looking as if he is about to say something, and then moving his lips again in silence.

'I would very much like to work on Philip Larkin', Asya says. 'Ah!'

'Or if you think that's too modern then maybe Yeats?' 'Yeats-Yes-but what linguistic aspect in particular?'

'Oh! I hadn't really thought – I don't really know. I'm sorry.'

There is a silence. Goodness, what a complete fool. Of course, she should have been prepared for that question.

'Well, perhaps-there is a list-let me see if I can find-you might find it helpful-why don't you look through these-See if they give you any ideas-then we can talk-make an appointment-'

'Yes, Yes, of course. Thank you very much. When should I ...?' She is already on her feet and heading for the door.

'Two weeks?' He smiles at her cheerily, encouragingly. 'Yes, thank you.' P.330 Extract (10).

The first point to be discussed under the term of Negative politeness in this extract (10) is the "hedge".

Brown and Levinson (1989:145) give a clear definition for this term: "In the literature, a 'hedge' is a particle word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a statement, it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected."

One of the hedges in this extract (10) is 'perhaps':

'Well, perhaps-there is a list-let me see if can...'p.330

Brown and Levinson (1989:153) define 'perhaps' as: 'this hedge is a tentativizer which seems often to indicate the presence of an implicature; it can turn a statement into a question, or a request, or an invitation, or it can suspend the hearer-based felicity condition on question that hearer knows the answer.'

In this extract (10), the professor by using "perhaps" makes an invitation or a polite request to Asya to ask her for looking at the list of suggested topics for the PhD programme.

Other hedges in this extract (10) are the facial expressions, the umms and the hesitations.

Brown and Levinson (1989:172) describe some of these prosodic and Kinesic hedges:

Perhaps most of the verbal hedges can be replaced by (or emphasized by) prosodic or kinesic means of indicating tentativeness or emphasis. The raised eyebrow, the earnest frown, the umms and ahhs and hesitations that indicate the speaker's attitude toward what he is saying, are often the most salient clue to the presence of an FTA ,even cross-culturally."

In this extract(10) the facial expressions of the professor are noticed by Asya," he has a way of moving his lips soundlessly between words, biting his lower lip, looking as if he is about to say something, and then moving his lips again in silence." P.330

The "umm" is used once, but the hesitations are used more. The professor is hesitant to express

his suggestions to Asya: "Well-your-record is certainly most-very impressive. Both at Cairo University and in the –umm-Graduate Record Exam".p.330

The second strategy of negative politeness in this extract (10) is " Give deference". Brown and Levinson (1989:178) suggest that there are two sides to the coin in the realization of deference:

One in which speaker humbles and abuses himself, and another where speaker raises hearer (pays him positive face of a particular kind, namely that which satisfies hearer's want to be treated as superior).In both cases what is conveyed is that Hearer is of higher social status than speaker.

Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1989:182) explain how the forms of address are used to give deference:

Probably all languages encode deference in generalized forms of address for strangers, unfamiliar, etc....In English, they originally had aristocratic connotations: Sir, Madam, Lady....the usage of the forms of address presupposes certain social attributes of their referents, and that they can be viewed as properly applied only to some specific human 'denotata'. In other words, they have been considered on the whole to be automatic reflexes or signals of predetermined social standing.

In this extract (10), Asya gives deference to her hearer by using the form of address "Professor". This form of address is not associated with any social standing, but it is associated with a scientific standing .

The third strategy of negative politeness in this extract (10) is "Apology". Asya uses this strategy when the professor asks her, "what linguistic aspect in particular". Asya didn't prepare for this question. Therefore, she offers her apology by saying, 'oh, I hadn't really thought-I don't really know. I'm sorry.'

According to Brown and Levinson (1989:189), this kind of apology which Asya has made is called 'Give overwhelming reasons'. In their views, this kind of apology allows the "speaker to claim that he has compelling reasons for doing the FTA

The second aspect in politeness phenomena is the Face Threatening Acts. The extract which is to be discussed in relation to FTA is about a social situation. This social situation narrates how Chrissie informs Asya that her brother 'Taha' has seen her walking with Bassam in the street. Taha decides to tell their father "Sidiki al- Tarabulsi". Chrissie tries to convince Taha that Bassam is in love with Noora-(Asya's friend), and Bassam talks to Chrissie about his love problems with Noora.

Asya tries also to convince Taha not to tell Uncle Sidki about that, but Taha refuses and considers the whole situation a disaster for the family's reputation .Consequently, Taha tells his father. The following extract (11) shows how Sidki receives the news about his daughter, and what his reactions towards the whole situation are:

"They hear Chrissie's father roar, 'WHERE IS SHE?' and Muneera cry out, 'Sidki! Wait! Listen to me! Just listen to me!'

Chrissie has gone white and is now standing behind the dinning – room table holding on to its edge two hands.... Then Sidki al- Tarabulsi appears at the door of the dinning-room....His eyes are bloodshot and he is breathing heavily.Muneera is poised in the doorway breathing fast and whispering Chrissie's name....Sidki's hands are clenched tight on the back of a dining chair, his knuckles white.

He speaks steadily, keeping his voice even and low.

'From today, you are not going to university any more, it's over. You will stay at home and help your mother until you get married. He lifts his eyes to see Muneera, Chrissie and Asya all staring at him. His voice rises.

'Is this understood? This is my word and I've said it.' 'The girl's future, Sidki-'

'But Uncle Sidki-' 'Father, I haven't –'

When he hears his daughter address him, Sidki al-Tarabulsi reaches for the largest, heaviest ashtray and hurls it at her. It crashes into the wall behind her head. Asya has jumped sideways and now feels her heart throbbing in her throat.

Chrissie has not moved.

Muneera screams, 'Sidki!' and leaps forward to fling her arms around him.

'You're answering me, you criminal? You're opening your mouth and answering me? You say "father" to me?'

He is trying to move towards Chrissie but Muneera is holding him back. He grabs his wife's shoulders and pushes her away from him, and as she comes forward again he swings out at her. The blow from the back of his right hand catches her on the chest and she falls against the doorpost and sinks, silent and open-mouthed, to the floor, her hand to her chest....Sidki has got round the dinning-table and caught his daughter's arm in his left hand.

'You're walking in the street? With a man? You've forgotten whose daughter you are? Forgotten who your grandfathers were? You would shame me in front of people? You would drag the Tarabulsi name in the mud?'P.121 Extract (11).

Before discussing the FTAs in this extract (11), it is worth quoting Brown and Levinson (1989:66-67) who point out:

That in some important respect he does not want Hearer's wants-include:

(I) Those that show that Speaker(S) has a negative evaluation of some aspect of Hearer's (H) positive face:

(II) Those that show that S doesn't care about (or is different to) H's positive face:

(a) Expressions of violent (out-of-control) emotions....

(b) Irreverence, mention of taboo topics, including those that are inappropriate in the context....(f) Use of address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters(S may misidentify H in an offensive or embarrassing way, intentionally or

accidentally). FTAs intrinsically threaten both negative and positive way (e.g. complaints, interruptions, threats strong expressions of emotion, request....

In the light of Brown's and Levinson views, it is clear that Sidki has used many acts that threaten the positive face of Chrissie. He expresses his disapproval about his daughter's walking with a man in the street. He accuses her of 'dragging the Tarabulsi name in the mud'. He insults her by calling her 'a criminal' and not allowing her to call him 'a father'. Sidki expresses his intention of doing something violent by roaring and raising his voice: 'WHERE IS SHE?' which makes Chrissie white out of fear.

Consequently, Sidki shows that he has negative evaluation of his daughter and that makes him create dangerous threatening acts. He uses violent terms of address 'criminal' which insults Chrissie in an offensive way. Not only that, but he challenges her by preventing her from going to the university anymore.

6. Conversational Moves

The Sixth stylistic aspect in this novel is Conversational Move in a fictional discourse. It is worth quoting, Burton (1980:124) who divides the fictional discourse as, 'Transactions are made up of Exchanges, Exchanges are made up of Moves, and Moves are made up of Acts....it is important to remember that although the act is the smallest unit, it is the Move which is the minimal free interactive unit, and, although a

Move may be realized by a single Act, Acts are essentially bound units, some of which cannot be used singly".

Burton (1980:148-153) doesn't only explain the divisions of the fictional discourse, but she explains in details the seven types of the Move:

....seven types of Move: Framing, Focusing, Opening, Supporting, Challenging, Bound-opening, Re-opening.

Frames and Focuses are explicit markers of Translation boundaries, and involve Acts that are essentially attention-getting, Pre-topic items.....Opening Movesare essentially topic-carrying items which are recognizably 'new' in terms of the immediately preceding talk....

...Supporting Moves occur after all the other types of Move: Frames, Focuses, Openings, Challenges, Bound-Openings and Re-Openings....., but essentially the notion of a supporting Move involves items that concur with the initiatory Moves they are Supporting....

As Supporting Moves function to facilitate the topic presented in a previous utterance, or to facilitate the contribution of a topic implied in a previous utterance, Challenging Moves function to hold up the progress of that topic or topic introduction in some way....

Bound-opening Moves occur after a preceding Opening, Bound Opening or Re-opening Move has been supported. They specifically enlarge the Discourse Framework by extending the ideational-textual aspect of the original Opening Move, employing the various types of informative and Comment Acts....

Re-Opening Moves occur after a preceding opening, Bound-Opening or Re-Opening has been challenged. They reinstate the topic that the Challenge either diverted or delayed. They are made up of optional pre- faces, as pre-heads, with compulsory Informs, Comments as heads.

The following extract (12) from the novel has been examined by using the different types of Move:

Frame: 'It isn't the Arab countries that are causing the chaos-'Asya says.

Focus: 'Well, no, it's the war'. Leon agrees.

Opening (1): 'It's Israel', she continues.

Challenging (1) 'Well, it takes two-at least-to wage war, 'Leon argues. Challenging (2) 'you can't talk about "two" as though all things were equal. Israel is fighting an expansionist war. The Arabs are fighting a defensive one.'

Challenging (3) 'I should have thought it's the other way round: all the Israeli want is to live in peace-'Supporting (1) of Challenging (2) 'On Land which isn't theirs. On Land from which people have been thrown out into refugee camps just a hundred miles down the road-'

Re-opening (1) 'Yes, but you can't change history. You have to accept the status quo and take it from there-'

Challenging (4) 'I don't agree; I mean, I don't agree that one ever has to accept the status quo. But even if I did-even if we only speak about the present: Why won't Israel accept Resolution 242? Why do they carry on bombing Lebanon?'

Opening (2) 'Because that's where the terrorists are. Do you approve of terrorism?'

Supporting (2) and Challenging (5) 'No, I don't .But terrorism wasn't invented by the Palestinians. The Israelis themselves used it long ago: in Deir Yassin, for example, and nobody's dragging their elder statesmen up –people who were involved in the Stern and Irgun- in front of a court-'

Challenging (6) 'We're talking about the present –'Supporting (3) 'Well at present, I'm ready for coffee.' Saif smiles at her and then at Leon.... (p.184). Extract (12).

In this fictional discourse between Asya (Egyptian) and Leon (English), different types of Conversation Moves are used (12).

In the Frame which is the boundary of this Transaction, Asya gives the pre-topic item which is the 'chaos' in Arab Countries'. Leon (Asya's and Saif's friend) doesn't approve of Asya's view that the Arab countries are not causing the chaos. He focuses on the war as the reason of this chaos. Asya opens her discussion by claiming that the Israelis are the reason of this chaos.

Leon gives his first Challenging Move by refusing Asya's view. She doesn't also approve of Leon's opinion, because she is an Arab and hates Israel, so she attacks Israel and defends Arabs in Challenging(2),Leon is an English person and believes of the Western thoughts of Israeli rights to live in peace and in Palestine (Challenge 3).

The conversation between Asya and Leon turns to have a harsh tone of speech quarrel. Asya supports her earlier views of attacking Israel and gives a new challenging speech by refusing the Israeli presence in Palestine and Israeli policy of throwing the Palestinian people in refugee

camps.

Leon, in Re-Opening (1), goes back to his original point in their Conversation which discussed the reason of the Chaos in Arab Countries. He re-opens this point by adding that this chaos is part of history.

Asya continues on challenging Leon by announcing her disagreement about history and questions the Israeli refusal of resolution 242. Leon answers Asya's question by directing the conversation into new topic "terrorism". She is nervous now and challenging him by giving evidence that the Israelis are the ones 'who used terrorism long ago in Deir Yassin...!'

Leon disagrees about these pieces of evidence raised by Asya, since they are related to the past. He claims that they are talking about present and the evidence should belong to the present.

Saif tries to calm both (Asya and Leon) by supporting Leon's view that they are talking about present and there is no reason to negotiate about past issues. So, he tries to stop their shrill conversation by approving of Leon's view and by asking for coffee.

As we have seen, the conversational moves facilitate the meanings of the topics that have been tackled and discussed by the characters throughout the novel using the hierarchical order of fictional discourse: transactions, exchanges, moves and acts as Burton (1980:124) classified them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the stylistic aspects which have been used by Ahdaf Souief in her novel *In the Eye of the Sun* have enriched the dramatic situations with deeper meanings and unique depiction of characters. The paper has also tried to display the triangle of Asya's life: Asya, Saif, and Gerald, through clear stylistic analysis. Asya is left alone at the end; neither Saif, nor Gerald is part of her life when she goes back to Cairo where she tries to catch up with her Islamic Egyptians traditions. Consequently, Souief varies in her use of conceptions of style to skillfully embody Asya's failure to find a fulfillment as a woman in her sexual life. Besides, to embody her failure to find a fulfillment or a distinguished status in her social life as a wife and as a mother. In sum, the stylistic description of the novel superbly decorates Asya's ceaseless search for love and identity both in marriage and outside marriage which leads her to the ultimate feeling of agony, despair and loss of self.

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