

أساليب التخاطب المؤدب ومفهوم الهيمنة في مسرحية " من الذي يخاف من فيرجينيا وولف"

د. ماهر بن موسى

كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية - جامعة الشارقة
الشارقة - الإمارات العربية المتحدة

ملخص

تطبق هذه الدراسة نموذج التخاطب المؤدب الذي طوره براون و ليفنسون وذلك لتحديد أساليب الأدب في التخاطب التي تستعملها شخصيات المسرحية. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد كيفية استخدام نموذج تحليل الخطاب في تحليل اللغة الأدبية المستعملة في المسرحية. وباختصار تحاول الدراسة الإجابة عن الأسئلة الآتية:

1. ما هي أساليب الخطاب المؤدب السلبية التي يستخدمها المشاركون في المسرحية؟
2. ما هي الصيغ اللغوية المستعملة في تحقيق هذه الأساليب؟
3. كيف تساعد هذه الأساليب في فهم تطور العلاقات بين شخصيات المسرحية؟
4. كيف تكشف هذه الأساليب عن درجة الهيمنة بين شخصيات القصة؟

وخلصت الدراسة إلى الإقرار بوجود نظام معقد ودقيق يحكم العلاقة بين اللغة والعلاقات الاجتماعية ومفهوم السلطة.

Women's Quest for Identity in Tennessee Williams

Dr. Ghanim J. Samarraï,
College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences -
University of Sharjah
Sharjah - U A E

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Abstract

American woman's struggle for a better representation of her identity has never been easy. Her claim to an independent self, even after the patriarchal system in the Northern American society gave way to a more liberal gender representation early in the twentieth century, remained subjected to her relationship with man. However, in the decades that followed, echoes of woman's yearning for recognition were heard in the writings of many American dramatists, such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams. This study aims at analyzing how Tennessee Williams demonstrates in his plays the means by which his female protagonists realize an inner power that helps them achieve an identity of their own. The study focuses its analysis on the role assigned to Hannah Jelkes, the major female character in The Night of the Iguana

Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many American authors realized that in their spaces, cultural practices – including literature and the language of this literature – remained relatively gendered as masculine. Women, as Charlotte Perkins Gilman observed, were relegated to the place of prepositions as “[woman] has held always the place of a preposition in relation to man. She has been considered above him or below him, before him, behind him, beside him, a wholly relative existence ...but never by any chance ... herself” (Gilman, 2008: 6). This derogatory stand, those authors noticed, continued well into the twentieth century. They also noticed that even some women authors were hesitant in their writings, or in the heads of their female characters, to voice their sex's suffering conspicuously and straightforwardly. Some female writers often endorsed characters that were submissive and silent, or else confined within stereotyped sets of conceptions.

Later in the twentieth century, a number of authors committed themselves to revising the dominant discourse and began a conscious and daring endeavour aimed to emphasize female characters who articulated a strong yearning for identity. Nevertheless, this transformation was never smooth or easy because “it is no easy matter to deny or reverse a given idea ... [that] has been held in the human mind for many generations.” (Ibid).

The positive change only materialized over a long, arduous course of strife that I may classify into four stages: The first was the deployment of a maternal voice in which, in most cases, the concept of motherhood, sisterhood, or wifehood was the most important transcendental signifier around which social and cultural practices were carried out. The dominant discourse in this stage was preoccupied with the assumption that “women would be happy insofar as they served others and made them happy” (Cott, 1977: 71) and that they were “passive, submissive responders” since “submission was perhaps the most feminine virtue expected of women” (Welter, 1966:158). The second phase witnessed the revision of the male-centred discourse through endorsing a feminine voice. In spite of the fact that female characters in some writings failed to demonstrate a feminine voice outside the constricting roles with which women were inscribed, many other writers

unambiguously presented female protagonists who could make themselves heard outside the umbrella of the conventional patriarchal tones (Cutter, 1999: 88).

The next stage went beyond this representation. It highlighted the formulation of a new gender relationship in the literary discourse through re-centering the masculine-focused constructs around feminine characters. However, this was not enough; the major breakthrough came in the fourth stage with the development of a persuasive feminine voice that could be heard against the “overpowering authoritative” voice of the dominant culture (Bauer, 1988:141). Many writers, especially after the middle of the twentieth century, aimed at investigating undisclosed feminine languages that contest, challenge and destabilize the boundaries of patriarchal language. But the main focus of this project, as Baumeister and Muraven suggest, vouched for the effectiveness of the socio-cultural context for the women's endeavour towards self-definition (1996: 415). Hence is the modern literature's employment of lives of women in contexts of social practices dominated by men.

In this context comes the current study. In its examination of the way in which Tennessee Williams has contributed to constructing a feminine voice, this paper aims at showing that the writer actualizes women protagonists' quest for self-expression according to a certain pattern. In a number of his plays he reveals a strategy based upon developing a feminine voice that can work from within the borders of patriarchal discourses to undermine them. He presents several models of a woman who can, to use terms borrowed from Jane Kroger, “voice intense desire to break free – free of her family, town and many of the socio-cultural conditions that constrain them” (2003: 44).

In this paper, I am more concerned with exploring one of the various mediums women characters are set to employ, i.e. their attempt to achieve self-definition through their sufferings and the inner strength these sufferings give birth to.

Transcending Gender Roles

It was common in modern American drama to find some women protagonists achieve the self, primarily, through maternity, but strong patriarchal conventions were also common, especially in assigning other women characters roles that never escape hellish experiences specific to them. In view of this and based upon his understanding that suffering is a means for salvation and development of the self, Tennessee Williams seized the opportunity in his plays, especially in *The Night of the Iguana*, to encourage more active mechanisms by which feminine quest for self-definition could be promoted. He strongly believed that suffering and pain could play a significant role in the formation of one's identity (1973: 84), an attitude which reminds us of John Keats, who stated, in a letter he wrote to his brother in 1819, that pains and troubles help the self attain the sense of identity. In this letter, Keats theorizes the necessity of pains and troubles in life when he writes:

Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways! Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, it is the Minds Bible, it is the Minds experience, it is the teat from which the Mind or intelligence sucks its identity--As various as the Lives of Men are--so various become their Souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the sparks of his own essence--" (Keats, 2008rpt: 189).

With such perspective in mind, possibly, Williams allowed his women protagonists undergo suffering in their lives to give them the opportunity to develop in themselves the traits necessary for self-construction and self-realization. They should struggle, he thought, to move beyond the patterns imposed on them by man, and consequently appear at the end self-reliant and fully aware of their individuality, of their gender roles, and of their position in the man-woman relationships. Suffering, to him, was purgatory, hence constructive.

This is obvious in the way Williams sketched his female characters in *The*

Night of the Iguana. In it, he highlights the depth of the human suffering and the birth of creative arts from this suffering. This, it seems, stems from his views on art, expressed in an interview given to Lincoln Barnett, through which he clearly articulates the amendatory and therapeutic roles art plays in human life:

Every artist has a basic premise pervading his whole life, and that premise can provide the impulse to everything he creates. For me the dominating premise has been the need for understanding and tenderness and fortitude among individuals trapped by circumstances (1948: 117).

For those trapped by circumstances, Tennessee, however, set to consider a grander system of salvation than mere understanding and tenderness and fortitude; a system of, what John Keats calls, spirit creation, although through suffering "in a thousand diverse ways" (Keats, 2008rpt: 189).

Inner Strength and Suffering

In *The Night of the Iguana* suffering and the art it inspires gives the female protagonist an insight into life and its deeper meanings. Hannah Jelkes, an orphan and "a New England spinster" (*The Night of the Iguana*, p. 83) and her poet-grandfather are gypsy-artists who have, together, been moving from place to place, practising their respective arts, that is, sketching and poetry, for over a quarter of a century. "Hannah . . . was brought up to be a wonderful wife and mother," observes Nonno, but, as he regretfully recalls, ". . . I'm a selfish old man, so I've kept her all to myself" (p. 79). Hannah, on her part remembers:

I was young once . . . but I was one of those people who can be young without really having youth, and not to have your youth when you are young is naturally very disturbing. (p. 110)

In this rare acknowledgement on Hannah's part, she reveals her painful experience, her own personal crisis, but she finds a meaning in this 'disturbed' life through the art of painting and quick-sketching of people's faces. She

is, in fact, one of those people who can “translate their disappointment into creative work” (Storr, 1970: 97) and can, despite high degrees of suffering in her life, “acquire new structures of self by finding new routes towards inner completeness. (Kohut, 1984: 44)

One of these routes is her art, which has been originally inspired by the suffering of the dying men in the House of Dying in Shanghai. Although she ran away from that house at the beginning, she later returned and shared with those men the anguish of their suffering. She found that they “looked up with their last dim life left in them as clear as the stars in the Southern Cross” (p. 111) and observed that, while they were waiting for their deaths, they seemed to accept life. From this she has learnt that suffering and art can help her discover a new meaning in life, articulating Tennessee Williams's belief in the ameliorative and therapeutic roles art can play in human life.

Considering the implications of this experience, Hannah has developed a means via which she can empathize with people in need. In her encounter with the defrocked priest, Dr. T. Lawrence Shannon, she points out that his problem is the oldest one in the world – “the need to believe in something or in someone – almost any one – almost anything ... something” (p. 308). In her attempt to help him solve his problem, she recalls her personal crisis, and tells him:

I never cracked up, I couldn't afford to. Of course, I nearly did once. . . . But I was lucky. My work, this occupational therapy that I gave myself--painting and doing quick character sketches--made me look out of myself, not in, and gradually, at the far end of the tunnel that I was struggling out of I began to see this faint, very faint grey light—the light of the world outside me--and I kept climbing towards it. I had to (pp. 110-11).

Her art, an ‘occupational therapy’, enables her to see a faint light at the end of the dark tunnel which her life has become. Besides, her growth as a person has equipped her with a spirit to believe in “Broken gates between people so they can reach each other” (p. 108) and this is clear in the conversation she had with Shannon on a verandah outside their separate cubicles.

Having been through a crack-up earlier and having beaten the “blue-devil” (p. 109) as Hannah calls her own crisis, she is able to help Shannon. She beats the “blue-devil” by her own endurance, sometimes even by outside ministrations, such as drinking poppy-seed tea and rum-coco, and sometime by taking just a “few deep breaths” (ibid.). As a consequence, she has become strong enough to give the blue-devil the slip and keep going herself. Her journey through the unlighted side of her nature has brought to her the knowledge that “Everything . . . has a shadowy side to it except the Sun itself” (p. 110). It also brings into focus the spiritual power which enables her to be self-reliant and to actualize herself through what Ralph Waldo Emerson calls “spiritual energies buried within the self” (Spiller and Williams, 1972: 229).

Her spiritual power is, more and more, evolved to further glow outwards. During her ‘therapeutic’ talk with Shannon at night, her words have become indistinct to him because he has been swayed by her sheer spirituality, by her “remarkable-looking – ethereal” image (Williams's description of Hannah in the stage directions, p. 38). Similarly, when Shannon is informed, later in the play, by the ladies that he has been fired by Blake Tours for seducing a young lady, Charlotte, Hannah doesn't come out. She stands inside and appears “softly lighted, so that she looks, again, like a medieval sculpture of a saint” (Ibid.). After the ladies have gone, Shannon turns around to meet Hannah's “grave, compassionate gaze ... her softly luminous figure is seen as through a mist” (p. 99, stage directions).

Williams himself hints at Hannah's inspirational discourse that gives her a distinct identity. In Shannon's reference to her as “Miss Thin-standing-up-Female-Buddha” (p. 105), Williams is, in fact, determined to imply, through his protagonist's oriental image, that Hannah understands, like Buddha, that one must become free from human desires in order to overcome suffering. With her inspiration and with her personal distinction, Shannon shows signs of change: under her influence, he performs a little act of grace by freeing the iguana, so that ‘one of God's creatures could scramble home safe and free.’

Hannah's positive role with Shannon is, however, not isolated. Before she meets, and ultimately changes Shannon, she has helped many desperate people who were in need of spiritual 'therapy'. The first incident takes place in the Nantucket theatre, when she was just sixteen. A man tries to victimize her, but she saves him from the police by saying that she had been scared by the Clara Bow picture and therefore screamed (p. 116). The second experience occurs in Singapore with an Australian salesman of women's undergarments, who takes her out sailing in a sampan. In the sampan, he asks for a favour saying, "... will you take off some piece of your clothes and let me hold it, just hold it?" (p. 117) Hannah, recognizing his desperate loneliness and also his biological and emotional needs, obliges him. After she hands over to him an item of her clothing, she looks the other way while he gratifies himself. The moral that she learns from the two incidents is: "Accept whatever situation you cannot improve" (Ibid.). However, this does not impede her process of self-construction. When she recognizes others' needs, she satisfies them without getting involved herself, and like a psychotherapist, prefers to help them. Hence, instead of viewing the two men involved in her "love affairs" as depraved, Hannah sees them as human beings – creatures who need to be saved rather than condemned, or dealt with contemptuously. Hannah thus shows an exceptional understanding of human desperation. Her attitude is born out of a sense of feminine spirituality, which, according to Elinor Lenz and Barbara Myerhoff, is "a quest for self-definition [that] recognizes no division between body and spirit, [and therefore] blends sensual, earthy, erotic elements with spiritual reverence and personal mastery." (1985: 155).

Against all odds in her life, Hannah, who was brought up to be a mother and wife, has succeeded in adapting well to her new situation. She has accepted this world, the here and now, as an ultimate principal. She has shunned intimate physical relationships, and has developed quite a detached attitude towards life, an attitude that brings her in contrast with Shannon, whose physical relationships he has had with different women have only left him lonelier, and intensified the conflict between the body and the spirit within him – with the body triumphing over the spirit. Hannah reminds Shannon of his loneliness, refuting his claim of always being in the company of bus-

loads of people. The most recent of these young ladies, she tells him, "gave a demonstration of how lonely the intimate connection has always been for you" (p. 114).

On her part, she not only transcends her physical desires, but also minimizes her material needs. She and Nonno have minimal physical possessions; they have just enough for their survival. Even though initially without enough money, Hannah is not overwhelmed by financial difficulties. She is, rather, indifferent to it: as she boldly says: "I'm not proud of it or ashamed of it either," (p. 59), she really announces a stoical attitude of acceptance in order to uphold her dignity and self-respect.

Having passed through such experiences, it is obvious that Hannah proceeds stronger than ever. She understands that her own world has been constructed through the exercise of innate power. Equipped with the capacity to feel at home under all circumstances, she states:

We make a home for each other, my grandfather and I... I don't mean what other people mean when they speak of a home, because I don't regard a home as ... a place, a building ... a house ... of wood, bricks, stone. I think of a home as being a thing that two people have between them in which each can. . . well, nest – rest – live in, emotionally speaking (p. 112).

Shannon, at a moment that shows his lack of real understanding of Hannah's spiritual power, makes a suggestive remark that even a bird doesn't build a nest in a falling-down tree – as Hannah and her ageing grandfather, Nonno, who have always been on the move, have done. He goes on to add that the bird keeps the question of the relative permanence of location and the purpose of mating and propagating its species in mind. In an amazingly striking response, Hannah says that she is

a human being and when a member of that fantastic species builds a nest in the heart of another, the question of permanence isn't the first or even the last thing that's considered (p. 113).

Once again, when Shannon asks her what she will do after the death of her grandfather, she replies, "Stop or go on ... probably go on" (Ibid.) and when he asks about her lonely condition after Nonno passes away, she states: "I will know how it feels when I feel it – and don't say alone as if nobody had ever gone on alone" (Ibid.).

Hannah's replies do not constitute mere theorizing; they are in fact an embodiment of concrete attitudes she embraces. In spite of the painful reality as her grandfather dies, after completing his poem, and leaves her alone, she accepts life's finality and enters the world of her own singleness, unaided this time by her grandfather's wisdom, without much of confusion or perplexity. Her understanding of the meanings of life has enabled her to take the rough with the smooth, so she has achieved the serenity of acceptance, which is one of the aims of art; she feels spiritually fulfilled, and Hannah, thus, becomes a symbol of feminine spirituality, which has been created, as Tennessee Williams himself reveals, in earnest, through a laborious struggle to achieve cathartic purity: "In each one's life," he says, "there is a struggle to purify oneself." (Fayard, 1971: 209).

Conclusion

The appearance of transfiguring spiritual energies which women protagonists reveal in their self-evolution is a recurrent motif in *The Night of the Iguana*. The reference by Jeffrey Steele to Coleridge's perception of dawn as the emergence of a spiritual power that authenticates and orients the self (1987: 61) is symbolically signified in the play. Hannah commences her soul-awakening discourse to Shannon at night and carries on through the night into a new dawn, a new inner strength that overcomes the forces which encroach upon her or quench her quest for individuation. This strength, acquired through suffering and the art combined therewith, elevates Hannah to a spiritual level and shapes her as a realized person. She finally emerges as a strong and resourceful women protagonist who possesses within herself the ability to make it alone in the world. She holds the promise to confront issues outside the stereotyped female roles. There is, in her, a

conscious and resolute resistance to the traditional patriarchal image of woman, and, therefore, we find her capable of showing that it is possible for determined women to shake loose from the strong preconceptions about women's place in society and be on their own. They can confront the world envisioned by the male protagonists and assert their individuality by rejecting their company and/or asserting their own independence.

If William Tennessee's doctrine is correct, then Hanna's experience, although enduring the agony of loss and death, is an invaluable experience. As Keats philosophy suggests, a world of pains and troubles is essential for making a soul that is, to borrow Keats's words "destined to possess the sense of identity" and consequently transforms man into a unique personality.

Hannah, it is significant to observe, is – at the end of the day – not solitary, nor does she withdraw from her world. Rather, she has become a representative of those who can use the stabilizing influence of art on those who have lost their inner coherence: "The expression of personality through art," says Doug Talley, "has the potential to continue into the eternities" (Talley, 2005: 3) In *The Night of the Iguana*, Tennessee realizes his goal of forming Hanna by circumstances. Through suffering and art she has developed the ability to empathize with and to reach out to human beings and help them transcend human depravity, and this, in turn, helps her intuitively grasp her fully-realized identity.

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نزوع المرأة نحو تحقيق الذات في مسرحيات تينيسي ويليامز

د. غانم السامرائي
كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية - جامعة الشارقة
الشارقة - الإمارات العربية المتحدة

خلاصة البحث

إن نضال المرأة باتجاه تمثيل أفضل لشخصيتها لم يكن قط يسيراً . فسعيها لتحقيق شخصيتها المستقلة - حتى بعد أن فقد نظام التسلط العائلي في المجتمع الأمريكي شيئاً من هيمنته و حتى بعد شيوع اتجاهات إجتماعية أكثر تحرراً في أوائل القرن العشرين - بقي مرهوناً بعلاقتها بالرجل.

على أية حال ، ففي عقود لاحقة ، أصبحت الأصوات المطالبة بالإعتراف بحقوق المرأة أكثر وضوحاً ، خصوصاً في مسرحيات عدد من كبار الكتاب الأمريكيين من أمثال يوجين أونيل ، آرثر ميلر ، و تينيسي ويليامز.

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل الكيفية التي يعمل فيها ويليامز على تشجيع الشخصيات النسائية في مسرحياته على تحقيق القوة الداخلية التي تمكنهن من تحقيق هوية مستقلة خاصة بهن .

An Exploration of Yemeni Student-teachers' Self-perceptions of themselves as Writers

Dr Mohammad Abdu Al-Mekhlafi
Associate Professor
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
University of Sohar - Sohar - Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract:

This study investigates the impressions and self perceptions of a group of Yemeni student teachers about themselves as writers. A total of 208 Yemeni student teachers participated in this study during the second semester of the academic year 2006/2007. The subjects were asked to react to 38 statements of the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS) developed by Bottomley et al. (1997/1998). Analysis of the responses received indicates that the total average of the means for the whole instrument is (3.8) out of the five-point scale with (76.4%). The results show that Yemeni trainee-teachers perceive themselves with an average capability to write effectively. On the other hand, they seem to find it difficult to compare their own writing performance in relation to their peers or to assess the direct and indirect input about their writing derived from their teachers, classmates and family members. The results also indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions and views held by the female and male subjects regarding their writing.

Keywords: (Self-perception, Writing, Student teachers, Yemen)