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Re-writing as a postmodern Technique in Coetzee's Foe behind Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe

A B S T R A C T

Rewriting is a technique used by the writer to retell something old, in a new form. It is a postmodern technique. In this sense, rewriting is built on a readymade text that carries its own thoughts and ideology but by using this technique, the writer exposes his own perspective rather than adopting the writer's vision of the original text. Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is an aspiration for many writers. It helps them create their own texts depending on the idea that Defoe has presented. This paper hypothesizes that J.M. Coetzee's Foe as a novel that has been built on Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe in which Coetzee rewrites the old novel into a new one, nevertheless, he has presented his vision as he intertextualizes the old novel in his. To validate this hypothesis, the paper used the postmodern theory as a guide and tries to apply its features on Coetzee's Foe. The paper starts with an introduction to the selected novels, the theory of postmodernism and its features will be the methodology that is followed. The paper concludes the findings at the end.

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اعادة الكتابة كأسلوب ما بعد الحداثة في رواية فو للكاتب كوتزي على خلفية رواية روبنسن كروسو
لدانييل ديفو

انتصار رشيد خليل قسم اللغة الانكليزية ، كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية ، جامعة تكريت،

الخلاصة

ان اعادة الكتابة هو اسلوب يستخدم من قبل الكاتب لأعادة سرد شيء قديم الى شكل جديد. انه اسلوب ما بعد الحداثة. في هذا السياق، يبنى اسلوب اعادة الكتابة على قراءة النص الذي يحمل افكار وايديولوجية الكاتب الخاصة به، لكن عن طريق استخدام هذا الاسلوب، يكشف الكاتب رؤيته الخاصة اكثر من مسألة تبني رؤية كاتب النص الاصلي، تعتبر رواية

روبنسون كروسو الهام للعديد من الكتاب. انها تساعدهم على خلق نصوصهم الخاصة بالاعتماد على الفكرة التي قدمها ديفو لهم. يفترض هذا البحث ان رواية "فو" التي كتبت من قبل ج. م. كوتزي بنيت على رواية دانييل ديفو "روبنسون كروسو"، ولكن على الرغم من ذلك، فقد قدم كوتزي رؤيته الخاصة بالتناسل مع الرواية القديمة لأثبات هذه الفرضية، سيتم استخدام نظرية ما بعد الحداثة كدليل لتطبيق خصائصها على رواية كوتزي. يبدأ البحث بمقدمة للروايات المختارة، اما نظرية ما بعد الحداثة وخصائصها فسوف تكون الطريقة المتبعة للتحليل، بعد ذلك سيتم مناقشة تطبيق النظرية. و سيكون الاستنتاج في نهاية البحث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دانييل ديفو، فو، ج.م. كوتزي نظرية التناسل، ما بعد الحداثة، اعادة الكتابة، روبنسون كروسو. ولكون قياس العكس له ارتباط بموضوع العكس، لذا انني بحثته في هذا البحث، ورأيت ان الجمهور القائلين به يستدلون بشواهد من القرآن الكريم تدل على ان القرآن استدل بقياس العكس، واستدلوا بسنه رسول الله - ﷺ - مع ايرادهم كثيرا من الادلة العقلية الدالة على حجتيه وصحته ثم ذكرت بعض الفروع الفقهية التي انبنت على قياس العكس موضحاً اركان القياس الاصولي فيه.

Introduction

Trotter says that "All writingsif not All readings....is a re-writing". (quoted in Moraru, 2001, xii) Though this statement does not come in accordance with the opinion of some critics, but it does not deny the fact that there are many rewritten texts. To rewrite something which is already there, is a phenomenon that has been approached by many critics. They considered it as being unable to create a new and an original text. However, this is not the case. When a postmodern writer chooses to rewrite a certain text, it means that he/she has another perspective that differs from the original text. It is a historical and literary fact that the postmodern writers rewrote the works of the early centuries in different vision highly influenced by the theories of the postmodern era like emancipation, feminism, psychoanalysis and post-colonization. A representative of such a case Coetzee's Foe who has wined Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003.

Foe is a novel talk about Susan Barton, a mother, who has lost her daughter. She has been in a long quest her in the new world thinking that her daughter has been taken there. To Lisbon, she is set floating via mutiny on the ship that she travels on. She has met Crusoe as well as Friday as she comes onto land. Now, Crusoe is self-satisfied and has forgotten his past life. In the present time, he is living in the island with the tongueless, Friday. Their residence in the island is near to its end, thus Barton does not live with them more than one year with its end the three persons were saved though Crusoe does not continue living to reach England. He died throughout the voyage. When she reaches England, Barton tries to put her experience on the paper altogether with Friday. However, she cannot express herself in an accepted style that has a popular appeal. Daniel Foe is the novelist she tries to persuade to re-write her tale in a form of a novel. Nevertheless, he does not agree. He finds that her written experiences are not interesting. He prefers to tell a story of a mother who has many sever experiences among them is the episode of the residence on the island as she was trying to find her lost daughter. She tries to retell Crusoe's experience rather than her, but all in vain. By that time, Foe becomes Barton's lover who is lost in his own thoughts because of the debt. He has no more time or enthusiasm to put in writing Barton's story. Her tale is interweaved with the homecoming of her supposed missed daughter to close the novel.

Intertextual zing the characters of Defoe's novel, Crusoe and Friday, does not prevent Coetzee from creating new characters that have their own merit. By rewriting the old

text, he adds two very vital authors; Foe and Susan Barton. The first character has a name that be an echo and an illusion for Daniel Defoe's name. On the other hand, the second character is a white female who intrudes the masculine world of Crusoe. These two characters show how Coetzee differs from Defoe in that the later has presented a new portrayal of women rather than that which Defoe presented for the fallen female in his two other novels, Moll Flanders and Roxana. In this regard, Coetzee be a feminist writer who has undersexualized, revised and rewrote these two books as he has done with Robinson Crusoe. In her narration of the truth, Susan Barton says:

'The island was Crusoe's (yet by what right? by the law of islands? is there such a law?), but I lived there too, I was no bird of passage, no gannet or albatross, to circle the island once and dip a wing and then fly on over the boundless ocean. Return to me the substance I have lost, Mr. Foe: that is my entreaty. For though my story gives the truth, it does not give the substance of the truth". (Coetzee, 2010: 157)

Moraru redefines postmodernism in general, and postmodern rewriting, as "a culturally innovative and politically enabling phenomenon". (Moraru, 2001: 232) Consequently, the novel fundamentally about representing, being, and writing. It is a tale of difference and otherness. The numerous authors of the tale presents are an acknowledgment to the postmodernist suggestion that all are equally treated either legitimate or illegitimate. Therefore, Susan Barton who tries throughout the long line of the story to tell her incredible venture on the abandoned land, suffers from her being helpless

regarding capturing and expressing the essence of truth in her tale. She asks Mr. Foe, the novelist, to compose her story .

Hypothesis and Questions

The paper hypothesizes that Foe as a novel written by Coetzee, is built on Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, in which the novelist rewrites the old novel into new one, nevertheless, he has presented his vision though he intertextual the old novel in his by using rewriting technique. Therefore, there are questions to be asked and answered throughout the paper to validate the being put hypothesis. These questions are; why does the writer rewrite an old text? What are the things that the writer focuses on when rewriting a text? Does the background of the writer influence the perception of a text and make the writer thinks of rewriting text? What supposed to happen to the reader when reads a rewritten text?

Methodology

The paper follows the postmodern theory and its characteristics as a methodology that guides the discussion. Postmodernism is not just a matter of thoughts and ideology that only appear in fiction or arts. It is, in fact, a style of living. Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism is a famous book written by Fredric Jameson in which he well describes the relation between Capitalism and postmodernism. He assures that when any one gives a vision of postmodernism, he/she also argues a "political stance on the nature of multinational capitalism today." (Jemson, 1991: 55)

Thus Coetzee does do that when he rewrites his novel, *Foe*. He has put his political vision in the new text that differs totally from that of Defoe's.

Postmodernism in Practice

As fragmentation is one of the features of postmodernism, it is seen by Jameson as a sign that people are lost in the age of globalization in which there is no more one center for things. To talk about originality, it is a very hard task in postmodern era, to find a hundred-percentage authentic thing. It is a fact that everything is a combination of many things. There is nothing can stand alone, even the text itself. Jameson claims that postmodernism is not about creativity, however, it is an indication of an empty globe where any logic of history has been vanished and altered with just a flow of similes. This is, of course, comes in accordance with what Guy Debord mentions in his significant book, *The Society of Spectacle* which he wrote in 1967. Debord concludes that nothing is true any longer in the society of postmodern age. He declares that:

The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation. (Debord, 1967, thesis 1)

In his book, *Simulacra and Simulation* which was written in 1981, Jean Baudrillard held a same outlook about postmodernism. Baudrillard's focus was on the 20th-century background. He argues that media and consumer culture had created a sort of a Matrix-style scenario. In such a scenario, there's no more original things. All that seems genuine is just an imitation. Baudrillard claims that the binary opposition of

real/unreal has had a negative consequence. Accordingly, people who are bombard with images have lost touch with their reality. They oversight these "simulacra," for reality. Everything may seem real but it's no longer real—thus, he calls this state a state of hyper-reality. (Baudrillard, 1994: 60) According to Baudrillard's insight which puts things negatively, there is still a positive thing inside it, that is art and literature are created by rewriting present texts and ideas. In this sense rewriting is one of the postmodern techniques that uses the above-mentioned features and more else, to establish the postmodern philosophy in the new texts .

Another postmodern feature is intertextuality. It is the feature that appears in almost every postmodern product. It means that the fragmented thing is accumulated with other things to shape a new one that have other characteristics that reflect the new creator's vision. Thus, altogether with fragmentation and pastiche—which another postmodern feature—produce the postmodern artefact. Parody is another feature which help understand postmodern ideology in the sense that it helps the writer expose his/her own viewpoint which contradicts the existing one by using an old vision in a new form. Feminism, in its turn is one of the important postmodern features that appears in postmodern product to show the right of women in living equally with men in a world that needs them both.

Discussion

Rewriting is the art of analyzing text using another. No textual work is a lone island; one can be interpreted using another piece of literary work. In this essay, I have sought to analyse the two novels using parody, revision and allusion as the major figures of speech. As approached by Coetzee, the major issue the author has with the original text of Daniel Defoe is postcolonial issues. Coetzee detests the imperialism and hegemony of countries to the less powerful countries and in similitude, to the weaker parties like the female gender. There is much discussed on the place of the female gender, the place of silence, sex orientation, and other themes in the text: Foe, by J. M. Coetzee, in relation to Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe .

Intertextuality which is built on the concept of rewriting the old text is a postmodern critical literary criticism tool that was officially coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s. She suggested that any text can be interpreted using another text since works of art do not exist from nothingness. There must be interactions with other texts which may use parody, translation, use of similar sources to write a piece of literature, quotations, allusion, plagiarism among other forms. Allen Graham says (75), intertextuality structures are meant to cause some special effects in the original text, or at least make the piece of literature to serve a purpose .

Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is the reference text Coetzee uses to develop his story of Robinson Crusoe. In the latter novel, the character spends twenty-eight years on the island in solitude after a shipwreck. To begin with, Coetzee uses allusion in framing story of the lone islander to shape the image of post-colonization. There are

strained relationships evidenced by the cultural conflicts between the colonizing party and the one being colonized. According to Bishop Scott (147), the European culture is at the center, and the racial others are the periphery. In the book Robinson Crusoe, the natives of the island were cannibals. Crusoe saves the escapees on the island, even if it means killing the natives and teaches them English, and later, proselyting them into Christianity. The concept is so clear in how the postcolonial systems work. Allusion made to the realities of colonialism in the texts is clearly observable .

Coetzee heavily employs parody to reconstruct Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe using the castaway Susan Barton (Tisha Turk : 58). In this story, complex factors like history, the authority of the text, its representation and credibility are presented. Coetzee brings to light how the western culture is trying to gain a universal grip, as the center, and the rest as the periphery. It is clear from the literary work of Coetzee that he viewed Defoe as voicing the western imperialism to new territories. Defoe has succeeded greatly in creating a realist account which can be viewed as a historical memoir of what happened to someone in the past. Jan Watt says, "the editor believes the thing to be a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it" (Jan Watt ,1957: 259)

Coetzee's work is further seen as a parodist version since there is little improvement of the life of the lone islander in his literary work from the one noted in Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. Considerable time is spent by Crusoe to level the hills of the island into terraces. He has no desire to leave the island at all. There are however

discrepancies created by the narrator of Coetzee—Susan Barton as she recounts the story (David Attwell,1993: 222). The rationale given for the irreconcilable differences between the new tale and the original account is that the lone islander must have forgotten many things due to the long lapse of time .

Parody further reveals how the reception of Robinson Crusoe to Europe and the rest of the world is symbolic of greatness. He is seen as the homo 'economics' because he successfully builds an economic empire using the tools salvaged from the shipwreck. This 18th-century perception of Europe being the epitome of civilization to the brutes is misplaced in this era. Use of parody by Coetzee brings down the defenses of the hegemonic forces of imperial practices and centrality models. Critics of post-colonization such as Lewis Nkosi have come to treat the ideology of Robinson Crusoe's works as racist, and oppressive (Helen Tiffin , 1987:125) .

The "true" story of Robinson Crusoe and the symbolic one of Coetzee are related using these relational characters: Crusoe with Crusoe, Friday is used comparatively with Friday, Robinson Crusoe with Foe, and finally Defoe with Foe. The narrator Susan in Foe, helps the reader of both the works of Coetzee and Daniel Defoe decipher the connection between history and truth (Attwell : 90). All through the story, Susan is having trouble telling the truth. She tells Crusoe that it is not of much worth recalling the past; it is a useless endeavor. If at all it helps, there is paltry evidence because no records are nowhere. She says, "you are mistaken! the truth that...resides in a thousand touches which totally may seem of no importance." (Defoe: 200)

Through the help of intertextuality, the reader understands further how the concept of Otherness is developed. Daniel Defoe is an 18th-century European writer who describes the Negro Friday cautiously. Friday was the title given to those Crusoe could save from being killed, and then convert them to Christians. Friday is described with features: "the color of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny...his hair was long and black, not curled like wool" (Coetzee: 115). This is how a European will describe a black. Coetzee brings the African identity to describe the features of Friday as a "Negro with a head of fuzzy wool" (Coetzee: 116). Reading the two texts enables the readers to have a two-fold perception of the character being spoken about in the light of the author. In so doing, understanding literary works become simpler and more precise.

The theme of sexual orientation is addressed by the two authors differently but complementary to each other. Friday is the main character in Defoe's work Robinson Crusoe. In this book, Defoe describes him goodly to appeal the sexual desires of Crusoe unconsciously. He says, "he was a comely, handsome...his hair was long and black...yet he had all the sweetness and softness of a European" (Defoe: 220). He was impotent. In the setting of the story, women's love was very subjective to men. Crusoe when lonely desires to have the company of men. Friday, on the other hand, enjoy the poetic idyll alone without the company of women. Coetzee helps us understand the story better by clearing directing us into a knowledge that Friday is without a phallus (Coetzee: 102). For a man to be in this state is equivalent to being

powerless in the society. The question readers are left to answer themselves is: what could have been the case Friday was a woman? What could have been the storyline ? Through the literary illumination of Coetzee, the Eurocentric and male egotism is put to light in Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. Female gender is marginalized from society. Clearly, a male slave is deemed far useful in a lonely island than a free woman. That "significance" attached to these springs from the economic participation the woman of the times took. Since the male gender historical has been on the productive commercial jobs, women are considered less useful. In Foe, this canonical account is chided, and a better approach of intellectual heritage prioritized. There is no point whatsoever in this era to elevate any gender highly than the other merely because someone is either male or female. The prophecy of Martin Luther King should always be fulfilled; men being judged by the content of their character; not by anything else. Whenever truth is lost, the voice of the people gets lost too. In the founding text of Daniel Defoe, Friday is dumb with no tongue to speak. It is sad to note that there is no one courageous enough to reveal how Friday lost a tongue (Francesca Andreoni, 2013 :187). The story of the experience of his stay on the island is in murky deep. The apparent silence or lack of tongue to speak out penitent issues is indicative of oppressive authorities which are bound to hurt anyone raising the alarm over evils done. Since Friday landed on the island in a very mysterious way, it took the intervention of Susan Barton to invent and create the missing gaps. Silence is symbolic of powerlessness in a regime that is authoritarian over its people. In the

present world, there are many governments which have literally snatched the privilege and freedom of people voicing their complaints. Before long, the governments start running on deals which are not genuine because truth has been trampled on the ground.

It has been pointed out in the narratives that a woman has a subordinate role in the settings. This has been a patriarchal attitude to the female gender for a very long time and in very many societies. The narrator lady Susan frees herself up from the shackles of tradition. She refuses to be the mistress to her boss, serves a fictitious character role in the novel *Foe*, and offer free labor to Crusoe, for being a lady. She refuses to be mistreated, in a quest for equal and rational treatment. The concept of women self-liberation does not come out quite clearly in the founding text as it has, after considering the works of Coetzee. It is logical enough to understand that in the 18th century, the debates on women equity to men and feminism has not picked yet. The world was still in a deep slumber as far the women rights were concerned .

Another striking example from the novels that help us to understand the plot and flow of the is the use of names. Names have meaning or rather, names ought to carry some meaning. Intertextuality enables us to compare the two novels and has a complementary understanding (Norma Fairclough, 1992: 101). For example, in Coetzee's *Foe*, has a connotation of an enemy. The author lifts the curtain of friendliness and shares his enmity of liberal humanists. That is why several things, the tenor of the words is antagonistic to the current and future world. He does not like

them all. All is there throughout the narration of the new novel.

Another name bearing great meaning is Susan, believed to be the hidden version of Roxana. Roxana is a heroine in the novel written by Daniel Defoe. Roxana, however, had denied motherhood and chose to be a prostitute. She does not want to give the unjust society any more girls or even any individual to get more and more suffering. The two have been disparagingly placed in the baleful light of chauvinism. The society is understood on how it was handling the contemporary women when literature was written. This vision is the old vision that Coetzee rejects and replaces.

Intertextuality allows the readers to compare and then comprehend the content written by the author (Allen Graham: 111). It is evident that Coetzee resents the imperial authority of the powerful countries. He reflects his vision throughout his works. In his writings and in all the interviews with his, he has constantly opposed the ill-use of power, even the act of being classified together with Daniel Defoe. He once remarks that if Daniel Defoe is a successful writer, he chooses to be an unsuccessful one. This shows clearly the extent to which the writer hated hegemony and abuse of power .

It is very interesting to note that, Coetzee hails from South Africa, a country that has had a long dark political history. The probable thing that could have precipitated this standpoint is the apartheid regime. There is no extent to which imperialism can be good in its least. Reading Coetzee's Foe after reading Defoe's works produces a totally different picture. This of course, answers the question of why does a writer decide to rewrite a certain text? It is the suitable time to convert the unforgettable text

to another one that fits the recent time. The ideology that created the old text changed, thus what is linked to that ideology and be a remarkable piece of literature should be changed too or at least replaced with a new one.

It must be noted with an exactness that the representation of the story by Coetzee in the Foe is not an entire replica of the island story of Defoe. There is some autonomy of characters in the manner that they are expected to behave. To prove that the work of Coetzee is not a mere exaggeration of the original facts, he gives Susan a big voice as opposed to the protagonists Friday in Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. In so doing, he manages to invent a character acting in a different manner from the original plot. As recorded by Tiffin (130), In many interviews, Coetzee has answered the question of who she is (Susan), not who he is (Friday). It is important for the authors to go an extra mile in inventing characters even when they are revising the work of someone. It not only shows the creativity of the specific writer; it rather awakes the urge of the readers to the reader more into the texts to taste of the new flesh that has been added.

By contrasting the two literary texts, there is a tussle that must be settled on whether the idea of Friday's silence is more harmful or good. According to Lewis MacLeod, (2006:105), the ideology of silence symbolizing weakness and powerlessness is not entirely true. In one viewpoint it may be true, but on the other side, it might not be. Silence could also mean resistance to the assimilating forces and influences. Historically, imperialists have sort of colonizing places and forcing the denizens of the

colony to speak the imperial language. When Friday refuses to speak the language, it could mean that he was resisting adoption into the new culture. Without learning the language of the imperialists, it is hard to cooperate with them since there is not communication flowing between the two parties. “as soon as the native learns of the language of the colonizer, the immediately accept to be part of the imperial team” (Attwell :315.)

Through *Foe*, Coetzee has succeeded in revising the complex narrative of Daniel Defoe in his book *Foe*. Despite the many arguments that the original import of the Defoe’s literary work was all to do with imperialism and truth, the *Foe* reveals to the root other pertinent issues in play. It is possible that some concepts poised by Coetzee might have never surfaced had he not written the piece. Friday now represents on one side: the oppressed countries and parties like women in some places by imperialists and domineering forces, and on the other side, he represents those who decided to choose to refrain from flowing in the mainstream of colonization through the opposition. Constantly Susan in her narration has sought to free the chained women. The same is to be applied to the colonial subjects and all the parties who have been victims to hegemonic influence. The book has not veered off from the main path of the original text *Robinson Crusoe*, but it has added a lot of literary value to the gender and racial debates of our day. This clarifies that the background from which the writers writes his text influences the perspective that the text has. Coetzee’s African origin is quite present in the text .

Conclusion

To conclude, from the analysis done for the two novels, Foe and Robinson Crusoe, it is true that no single textual work can be interpreted comprehensively without comparing it with other literary works. This is because no art comes from the oblivion. By comparing two or more works, the deep and wide themes recorded by authors become understood better and clearer. The most frequent figures used are parody, revision and allusion. Revisions of works like Coetzee's are done to challenge the prior interpretation and add more dimensions to the perceptions had hitherto on the text. Robinson Crusoe though three centuries old is re-birthed in Coetzee's Foe but in a new light .

In this sense the paper reaches the answers of the before mentioned questions. Why does the writer rewrite an old text? Any text which is built on an old text has a poles apart perspective and it is too difficult to convey the needed message without depending on an existed text that it has very clear idea. What are the things that the writer focuses on when rewriting a text? The paper can answer this question to show that the writer usually focuses on the issues that is mishandled in the old text because of his\her desire to correct the adopted ideology of the readers as well as the society. Does the background of the writer influence the perception of a text and make the writer thinks of rewriting text? The race, origin, as well as the education is the background that derives the motivation of J. M. Coetzee to rewrite Robinson Crusoe to correct the perspective of Daniel Defoe. What supposed to happen to the reader when

reads a rewritten text? The discussion shows that when the rewritten text is being read by the people, their thought changed because the new text clarifies the point that the old text tries to make obscure. In this sense the paper validates the hypothesis that has been put at the beginning. The new text of Coetzee is an effort to eye-open the reader as well as the society not to the new writer's intention rather than the old novelist's intention. The colonizer had to wide-spread the idea of the benefit of the colonization for both the colonizer as well as the colonized. But it is the time to change that by adopting new texts that have new vision regarding the same subjects .

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