

Depiction of Women as Unfair Creatures in John Donne's "Go and Catch a Falling Star": Utilizing Norman Fairclough's Model as a Research Tool in the Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This research paper aims to study Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model for a critical discourse analysis of John Donne's poem "Go and Catch a Falling Star." Rooted in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and building upon Fairclough's critique of Critical Linguistics, the study explores the hidden ideologies and societal attitudes embedded in the text. The poem, published in 1633, presents a satirical examination of women's perceived infidelity, and Fairclough's model serves as a tool to unravel the complexities of its linguistic features, discursive practices, and socio-cultural implications. The analysis reveals anti-feministic undertones within the broader context, where societal norms and power dynamics played a crucial role in shaping discourse. By examining the poem through the three dimensions of Fairclough's model—text, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice—the research contributes to a deep understanding of how language choices perpetuate certain perceptions of women and contribute to broader societal narratives during this historical period.

INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis originated in twentieth century, its foundation was established by 'Critical Linguistics' in 1970s. Critical Linguistics was based on Halliday's functional linguistics. The main aim of CL is to separate ideologies integrated in a discourse and show the patterns in which these ideologies and text are working together as a system of linguistics characteristics. Discourse analysis not only as a tool to identify anomalies in texts or characteristics of texts that might cause reading difficulties, but also as a very important source to help students become active readers (Suprayetno, 2020).

There are strong connections between linguistics and social structures. Linguistics or discourse is responsible for construction and deconstruction of social structures because language is an integral part of social process. Systemic Functional Linguistics started to focus on the way in which social and personal processes are encoded within different texts. Halliday has contribution in DA as he gave concept of mode, tenor and field as meta functions of language.

Fairclough raised two issues in the work of Critical Linguistics. Firstly, CL believed that audience and readers interpret the text same as analyst and secondly, that early analysis of CL is mainly focusing on clauses with little attention to higher properties of a text. He highlighted the

limitations of CL and also praised them for laying the foundation of CDA. Van Dijk has also contributions in CDA as he claims that discourse is not simply an isolated text but it is a complex communicative event which is integrated in social context. Van Dijk analysis of media discourse not only focuses on structural and semantic analysis but on higher properties of text such as coherence, themes, headlines and whole schematic and rhetorical dimensions of text.

Critical Discourse Analysis is an attempt to unveil the hidden ideologies in the text (Widdowson, 1998). The concept of ideology is very important in CDA because all discourses are based on some ideologies. According to Hodge and Kress (1993), Ideology contains an organized representation of reality. Many linguists illustrate the same fact that how different ideologies are emerged in a text. There are some stereotypes like ‘females who jobs are not pure, blacks people has not fully developed mind, all Chinese have same face etc.,’ that lead social hegemonies. Texts are not free of context, they are bind with some context and ideology and language plays vital role in binding ideology in any text or discourse. Text plays a crucial role in manifesting, distinguishing, changing and even reproducing ideologies. According to Fairclough, the word ‘Critical’ is added in discourse analysis in order to be focused on main issue, ideology or basic hidden agenda behind the text or discourse. By ‘hidden agenda’ Fairclough’s mean that, in a society people have different ideologies regarding various things, they talk about them in an opaque and invisible way. It can be said that a d\text or discourse reflects and produces the ideology that can be analyzed and viewed with the help of CDA tools ‘Frameworks’. CDA analysis the words of speakers to get intended meanings behind their literal meanings and as soon as intention is interpreted the hidden agenda becomes visible. In short, CDA snatches the mask and tell how words are a tool to become a racist, moralist, liberal, terrorist, feminist etc.

The primary aim of this research is to employ Norman Fairclough’s three-part model in conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis of John Donne’s poem, “Go and Catch a Falling Star,” with a specific focus on the depiction of women within the text. Through this analysis, the research seeks to unravel the intricate connections and patterns within the different parts of the poem, aiming to reveal its concealed meanings. The central objective is to critically examine the poem’s implicit lessons, emphasizing the impact of simple language in shaping societal mindsets. By utilizing Fairclough’s model, which involves three nested stages, the research aims to navigate the complexity inherent in the analysis, offering insights into how the discourse perpetuates certain perceptions of women and contributes to broader societal narratives. Ultimately, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural implications embedded in Donne’s poetic work.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be best described as a shared perspective on conducting linguistics, semiotics, or discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993b:131). CDA is rooted in the belief that semiosis is an indispensable element in all material social processes (Williams, 1977). Uggla (2011) endeavors to underscore stereotypical images and colonial discourses within Tourism Discourse, utilizing Fairclough’s three-stage Model of Critical Discourse Analysis. Her study is conducted at the Gambian Beach (Uggla, 2011).

Kamalu and Tamunobelega (2013) delve into the construction of ideologies and identities within literary genres. They apply the mood analysis technique of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), while this paper specifically examines the dimensions of SFL in conjunction with Fairclough’s Model in Critical Discourse Analysis (Kamalu and Tamunobelega, 2013).

Zahoor (2015) investigates emotional, psychological, political, and social changes in various scenarios, ranging from the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki to the incident of 9/11 at the World Trade Center (Zahoor, 2015).

Noor et al. (2015) analyze the Interpersonal Meta functions of “The Last Address of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).” They scrutinize the clauses of the Holy Prophet’s Last Address and elucidate their functions (Noor et al., 2015).

Sabir and Kanwal (2018) applied Fairclough’s model to analyze Robert Frost’s poem “Fire and Ice,” uncovering nuanced language choices that illuminate power dynamics and societal ideologies within the poetic composition. Their research expands the utility of Fairclough’s framework into the realm of poetry, providing insights into the intricate interplay between language, literature, and social context (Sabir & Kanwal, 2018).

Hassan et al. (2019) used Fairclough’s framework to study Anning’s speech in the Australian Senate. They found that Anning used certain words and expressions to make his speech clear and emphasize his opinion. The study also showed that the speech could affect how people get along and their basic rights, especially after an attack on a mosque in New Zealand (Hassan et al., 2019).

The majority of these studies concentrate on applying a single aspect of SFL, while others explore the application of Fairclough’s Model to different types of discourses. This particular research aims to scrutinize the genre of poetry, an area often overlooked by many researchers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Norman Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model serves as the theoretical framework for this study, providing a comprehensive and nuanced approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The model consists of three interconnected dimensions—text, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice - each playing a pivotal role in understanding the complexities of language use and its impact on societal structures.

1) Textual Dimension (Description):

The first dimension focuses on the analysis of the linguistic features within the text. It involves a meticulous examination of language choices, syntactic structures, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies employed in the discourse. This dimension unveils how language constructs meaning and reflects the power dynamics inherent in the communication process.

2) Discursive Practice Dimension (Interpretation):

The second dimension explores how language is used in practice, emphasizing the contextual and situational aspects of discourse. It delves into the ways in which language contributes to the construction of social reality and power relations. Discursive practice involves examining patterns of communication, including how speakers position themselves and others, and the strategies employed to influence perceptions.

3) Sociocultural Practice Dimension (Explanation):

The third dimension widens the analytical scope to the broader sociocultural context. It investigates how language is shaped by and, in turn, shapes societal structures, ideologies, and power relations. By examining the sociocultural practices embedded in discourse, this dimension unveils implicit norms, values, and ideologies, providing insight into the cultural underpinnings that influence language use.

Integration of Dimensions:

Fairclough’s model recognizes the interdependence of these three dimensions, highlighting that the analysis of a text is incomplete without considering the broader sociocultural and discursive

contexts. This integrative approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how language operates as a social practice, shaping and being shaped by the cultural and institutional contexts in which it occurs.

Application in Research:

In this study, Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model will be systematically applied to analyze the poem "Go and Catch a Falling Star" by John Donne. The theoretical framework guides the exploration of linguistic elements, discursive patterns, and sociocultural influences within the poetic discourse, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the construction and interpretation of meaning.

METHOD

The present research adopts a qualitative research approach, as the nature of the study does not require quantitative data measurement. In contrast, a quantitative method is employed to gather information pertaining to the culture, norms, values, attitudes, and opinions of a specific societal group. The study conducts a meticulous examination of linguistic elements, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies present in the poem "Go and Catch a Falling Star," aiming to understand their connections to broader sociocultural contexts. Guided by Fairclough's model, the investigation unfolds across three interconnected dimensions: text, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. This methodology ensures a thorough exploration of the linguistic and societal intricacies woven into John Donne's poetic discourse.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis

1. Introduction of the poet John Donne (1572-1632)

John Donne, a prominent figure in English literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, was not only a poet but also a cleric, lawyer, and charismatic speaker. Born in 1572 into a Roman Catholic family during a time of religious turbulence in England, Donne navigated the shifting allegiances between Protestantism and Catholicism. His early works reflect a passionate and witty exploration of themes like love and sexuality, often infused with metaphysical conceits that transcended the conventional boundaries of poetry. As he matured, Donne's poetry evolved to grapple with profound religious and philosophical inquiries, reflecting his own spiritual journey. Known for his intellectual depth and linguistic ingenuity, Donne's impact on English poetry endured through the ages, influencing generations of poets and readers.

2. Introduction of the selected text for analysis

John Donne's "Go and catch a falling star," published in 1633, presents a whimsical yet satirical exploration of the conventional theme of women's perceived infidelity. The speaker humorously directs the listener to undertake impossible tasks, emphasizing the unlikelihood of finding a faithful woman. The poem employs a steady rhyme scheme and meter, creating a light-hearted tone, but beneath the satire lies a genuine undercurrent of melancholy and cynicism towards relationships. The speaker dismisses the idea of an ideal, faithful woman even if found, asserting that her fidelity would inevitably wane. Donne's work masterfully combines wit and bitterness, challenging societal expectations and delving into the complexities of love and trust in a playful yet thought-provoking manner.

3. Text Analysis (Description)

The first dimension of Fairclough's model is textual which deals with the formal properties of a text. "Go and Catch a Falling Star" has very rich text full of poetic devices. The poet has used many poetic and literary elements like metaphors, simile, imagery, and enjambments to keep unity in texture. The line "Get with child a mandrake root" utilizes the mandrake root as a metaphorical expression, representing magical or supernatural qualities. Similarly, the line "Tell me where all past years are" employs a metaphor to convey the enigmatic nature of time and its elusive passage. The metaphorical description in "Or who cleft the devil's foot" uses the devil's foot as a symbolic representation, adding a layer of complexity to the poem. Lastly, the line "Teach me to hear mermaids singing" employs metaphor to express the desire to experience the enchanting or mythical, using mermaids singing as a symbolic representation of that desired experience. Through these metaphors, the poem explores themes of the unattainable, skepticism, and the intricacies of human nature. Rhyme scheme is ABABCCDDD and there is mostly iambic pentameter used through the poem. There are several enjambments in the poem, where the sense of one line runs into the next without a grammatical break. For example, line six and seven in first stanza, seven in second stanza and again six and seven in last stanza.

The poem maintains a smooth flow through the use of conjunctions like "or," "and," and "though," connecting ideas seamlessly within its verses. Cohesion is established by the repetition of the imperative verbs like "Go", "Get", "Teach", "Tell" at the beginning of each stanza, creating a structured and unified composition. Coherence is sustained by the consistent theme of pursuing knowledge and wisdom, intertwined with the exploration of the intricate uncertainties and complexities inherent in human relationships. The thematic progression unfolds as the speaker transitions from a fervent desire for knowledge to adopting a cautionary tone, highlighting the perceived unreliability of women in the poet's perspective.

4. Transitivity and Functional Grammar

"Go and Catch a Falling Star" exhibits a varied use of transitivity, highlighting the dynamic interplay between actions, participants, and circumstances. Transitivity, in the context of grammar, refers to the way verbs function in a sentence, including the relationships between the subject, verb, and object. In this poem, transitivity is evident in the diverse set of verbs employed by the poet. For instance, the poem opens with imperative verbs such as "Go and catch" and "Get with child," portraying tangible and material actions that the reader is urged to undertake. These material processes involve concrete, physical changes in the world, emphasizing a sense of agency and engagement with the external environment. The poem also features numerous relational processes, expressing attributes and relationships. Lines such as "Though she were true, when you met her" and "False, ere I come, to two, or three" underscore the poet's exploration of emotional and relational complexities. The use of the conditional "were" adds a layer of uncertainty, contributing to the overall theme of skepticism and doubt.

Verbal processes play a crucial role in the poem, as the speaker seeks information, instruction, and communication. Phrases like "Tell me," "Teach me," and "Let me know" underscore the importance of language in conveying the speaker's desires and uncertainties. The poet uses verbal processes to weave a conversational and introspective tone throughout the verses. Existential processes, expressing existence or presence, are also notable in lines like "No where lives a woman true, and fair" and "If thou be'st born to strange sights." These processes contribute

to the contemplative nature of the poem, inviting the reader to reflect on the elusive nature of truth and beauty. There is a line-by-line analysis following.

Table 1. Transitivity and Functional Grammar Analysis

No.	Text	Process	Participant	Circumstance(s)
1	Go and catch a falling star,	Material	Agent: You	Object: a falling star
2	Get with child a mandrake root,	Material	Agent: You	Object: with child a mandrake root
3	Tell me where all past years are,	Verbal	Speaker: You	Object: me, Object Complement: where all past years are
4	Or who cleft the devil's foot,	Verbal	Speaker: You	Subject: who, Object: the devil's foot
5	Teach me to hear mermaids singing,	Material	Agent: You	Object: me, Object Complement: to hear mermaids singing
6	Or to keep off envy's stinging,	Material	Agent: You	Object: me, Object Complement: off envy's stinging
7	And find	Verbal	Speaker: You	No explicit Object
8	What wind	Verbal	Speaker: You	No explicit Object
9	Serves to advance an honest mind.	Material	Subject: What wind	Object: to advance an honest mind
10	If thou be'st born to strange sights,	Existential	Subject: thou	Object: to strange sights
11	Things invisible to see,	Existential	Subject: Things	No explicit Object
12	Ride ten thousand days and nights,	Material	Agent: You	Object: ten thousand days and nights
13	Till age snow white hairs on thee,	Material	Agent: You	Object: age snow white hairs on thee
14	Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me,	Verbal	Subject: Thou	Object: me
15	All strange wonders that befell thee,	Material	Subject: All strange wonders	Object: thee
16	And swear,	Verbal	Speaker: You	No explicit Object
17	No where	Existential	No explicit Subject	No explicit Object
18	Lives a woman true, and fair.	Existential	No explicit Subject	Object: a woman true, and fair
19	If thou find'st one, let me	Behavioral	Subject: Thou	Object: one, Object Complement:

	know,			let me know
20	Such a pilgrimage were sweet;	Existential	No explicit Subject	No explicit Object, Circumstance: were sweet
21	Yet do not, I would not go,	Behavioral	Subject: Thou	Object: I
22	Though at next door we might meet;	Behavioral	No explicit Subject	Circumstance: at next door, Circumstance: we might meet
23	Though she were true, when you met her,	Relational	Subject: She	Object: you
24	And last, till you write your letter,	Behavioral	Subject: And	Object: till you write your letter
25	Yet she	Existential	No explicit Subject	No explicit Object
26	Will be	Existential	No explicit Subject	No explicit Object
27	False, ere I come, to two, or three.	Relational	Subject: Thou	Object: I, Object Complement: to two, or three

5. Meta Functions of Language

a) Field (Ideational function)

Field is the basic idea and theme which is incorporated in a text. In this poem 'Field' is a stereotypic judgement about women, as they are not fair and loyal.

b) Tenor (Interpersonal function)

Tenor is a relationship between speaker and listener or writer and reader. In this poem, John Donne is a poet having a social role while the people have the role of readers.

c) Mode (Textual function)

The selected poem is in the form of text.

6. Discursive Analysis (Interpretation)

The second dimension of Fairclough's model is interpretive which deals with the relationship between discourse processes and text. This dimension focuses on the possible interpretation of a text. "Go and Catch a Falling Star" can be interpreted by different lens and it offers wide range of interpretations. This poem starts with mentioning some impossible tasks like go and catch a falling star, get a child with mandrake root, etc., to find someone honest and loyal but still there is complexity that what is poet looking for, will it be so difficult and impossible more than above mentioned tasks? These impossible task also interpreted as unfilled desires of human due to their limitations of body. The poet assigns the reader another impossible journey, which consists of ten thousand days and nights around the world. This quest aims to accumulate mystical experiences until one discovers a lady in the entire realm who is loyal and fair in her relationships. By narrating these impossible tasks and journeys, the poet declares that just as these tasks are unattainable, so is the discovery of such a lady. In last stanza, the poet raises a hope for such a lady as if after all this struggle someone find this lady then I will definitely visit her. He uses word 'pilgrimage' for visiting her to relate this journey with sacredness. But again, at the end of the poem, he disappoints us by stating that when he goes to that discovered lady with loyalty and

fairness, she may deceive two or three of her lovers. In the last stanza, the poet describes that no lady can remain true and fair for a long time. In this poem power relation between male and female is depicted that how in a male dominant society an entity having power can suppress and blame an entity with no power. The poet has power of poetics, words he can produce any discourse of his choice.

7. Social Analysis (Explanation)

The third dimension of Fairclough's model is socio-cultural which deals with the social and cultural text in which a text is written. This aspect reveals the socio-cultural conditions of that time when text was written. The text of "Go and Catch a Falling Star" placed within the socio-cultural context of the Renaissance. It refers to a period in European civilization that was marked by a revival of Classical learning and wisdom. This time period also highlights the early modernity in English literature and John Donne was one of its contributor. This poem also describes the anti-feministic society of 17th century. Feminist movements start in 19th and 20th century before that society was totally man dominated which can also be seen in the light of this poem. Donne's anti-feministic stance aligns with broader societal attitudes towards women and relationships of 16th century. It depicts women as unfair creature who have no character, loyalty and fair attitude toward a single person. They are just the creatures who created to deceive men. He is considered one of the main metaphysical poet, this poem verifies this. Metaphysical can be simply understood by anything that can go beyond the nature or physics rules. He used metaphysical features in this like catching a falling star, child with mandrake root, hearing mermaids' singing etc., which are above the nature of human beings or beyond the rules of physics. The metaphysical style of writing, characterized by intellectual and abstract concepts, adds a layer of complexity to the socio-cultural practice. Donne's unconventional approach challenges conventional norms, reflecting the intellectual currents of the time that sought to question established truths and explore paradoxes. The anti-feministic undertones, when viewed through this socio-cultural lens, offer insight into the broader discourse on gender relations during the Renaissance.

Discussion

By analyzing "Go and Catch a Falling Star" with the lens of Fairclough's three dimensional model it is concluded that Donne present his strong ideology for women in a very complex way. He uses shawl of words to wrap this ideology underground which can only be seen by socio-cultural analysis. In summary, the application of Fairclough's model to Donne's poem unveils not only the linguistic intricacies but also the power dynamics and societal attitudes embedded in the text. The anti-feministic undertones, in conjunction with the metaphysical style, provide a lens through which one can analyze the socio-cultural landscape, shedding light on the complexities of gender relations and intellectual discourse in the Renaissance period.

Fairclough's three-part model contributes to unveiling hidden meanings and ideologies in John Donne's poem "Go and Catch a Falling Star" by dissecting the text at multiple levels. In the first dimension, text analysis, the model allows for a detailed examination of linguistic features, revealing how Donne's choice of metaphors and imagery constructs a narrative of skepticism and unattainability in love. In the second dimension, discursive practice, the model enables an exploration of societal norms and power dynamics reflected in the speaker's quest for an idealized, faithful woman. Lastly, in the third dimension, sociocultural practice, the model provides insights

into the broader Renaissance context, exposing anti-feministic attitudes and the influence of metaphysical writing on societal discourse. By employing Fairclough's model, one can unravel the layered meanings embedded in the poem and understand how linguistic choices contribute to the shaping of ideologies.

The poem conveys implicit lessons about the roles and perceptions of women through its skeptical and cynical portrayal. Fairclough's model, particularly in the second dimension of discursive practice, helps critically examine these implicit lessons by highlighting the societal norms and power relations shaping the discourse. The anti-feministic undertones in Donne's depiction of women as untrustworthy and transient contribute to a discourse reinforcing traditional gender roles. Through a critical analysis, one can question and challenge these implicit lessons, shedding light on the historical perspectives on women and relationships prevalent during the Renaissance.

The use of simple language in the poem influences societal mindsets, particularly in relation to the portrayal of women, by making the anti-feministic attitudes more accessible and ingrained. In Fairclough's model, this influence can be analyzed in the first dimension of text analysis, examining the linguistic features that contribute to the poem's straightforward and cynical tone. The simplicity of language enhances the impact of the speaker's skepticism, potentially reinforcing societal stereotypes about women. Fairclough's model allows for a nuanced exploration of how language choices shape societal mindsets, providing a critical lens to question and deconstruct these perceptions in light of the poem's linguistic strategies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be asserted that employing Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model for the critical discourse analysis of John Donne's poem "Go and Catch a Falling Star" brings clarity to profound insights into hidden meanings and societal attitudes. Through deep text analysis, the model dissects linguistic features, unveiling a narrative of skepticism and unattainability in love. The discursive practice dimension exposes societal norms and power dynamics, emphasizing implicit lessons about women's roles in the male-dominated society of the 17th century. Placed within the socio-cultural context of the Renaissance, the model elucidates anti-feministic undertones, highlighting how language choices and metaphysical writing shape societal discourse. Donne's portrayal of women as deceitful creatures is critically scrutinized, providing a nuanced understanding of socio-cultural dynamics during this period. The simplicity of language enhances the poem's impact, reinforcing societal stereotypes. In essence, Fairclough's model proves instrumental in unraveling the complexities of Donne's work, contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the socio-cultural implications inherent in the poem.

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