

Discourse Analysis of ‘The Sick Rose’ By William Blake in The Light of Text Within the Context

Ali Siddiqui

PhD Scholar, Institute of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh, Jamshoro,
Sindh, Pakistan
scorpion_king2893@outlook.com

Inayatullah Kakepoto (Corresponding Author)

Professor, Department of English, Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering Science &
Technology Nawabshah, Sindh, Pakistan
kinayat@quest.edu.pk

Tania Laghari

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed
Benazirabad
taniyalaghari@live.com

Abstract

This paper critically analyzes the vision of William Blake to compose his poem ‘The Sick Rose’ in 1794. Fairclough’s CDA (1989) model examined the language used in this poem, which claimed to debate the discourse of numerous literary texts. Theories represent the spectrum of diverse interpretations based on socio-cultural and power domains prevailing in present-day society. Theories helped construct a framework in light of text in the context of the fantasy world. The imagery world in the text is open to various interpretations. Still, this study focused on selecting and assessing a few important elements of the text that tend to reveal the fictional domain of the world in the context of theories based on the three-dimensional analysis method. Analysis of the poem ‘The Sick Rose’ (1794) based on Fairclough’s CDA three-dimensional model (1993) analysis revealed a new concept that prevailed in the writings of poet William Blake. The critical vision shows that poet William Blake used symbols to represent text within the context. The use of symbolism by the poet was an artistic attribute to highlight the implicit heinous crime of sexuality. He mastered crafting disadvantages that can be received with the corrupt attitude of men in society.

Keywords: CDA, Sick, Poem, Discourse, Context, Text

Introduction

The scope of literature is wide in literary world of writings on literary and scientific topics. The readers intend to interpret excerpts of literary texts on basis of diverse dimensions. These dimensions are in form of societal aspects. These may be based on political, social, gender, literary and critical domains that are brought into practice. The interpretation of literary texts require language that play significant role. The artistic criteria of the poem are planned, created and influenced with help of language (Jianxin & Yiqing, 2001). Hence, the paper attempts to analyze use of the language through Fairclough’s CDA (1989) model of poet William Blake composing poem ‘Sick Rose’ in 1794.

Problem Statement

In the era of advancement in interpretation of literary texts, it has become significant to rely on given sources of literary devices to interpret the entire text and acknowledge its importance.

Research Aim

The poem with its title and its overall design aimed to analyze specific utilization of techniques with the lenses of discourse analysis. So, the aim of this study is to analyze different strategies that are used in analysis of discourse and highlight its critical significance.

Literary Groundworks

Discourse: *Its importance and implication in Academic Disciplines*

Titscher et al., (1998) presented broad concept of discourse in terms of its implication in different academic areas. As per definition given by (Gee, 1990), discourse integrates entire palette of meaning making words in a context. It ranges from the field of linguistics to philosophy, sociology, psychology, education, and other social science disciplines. Titscher et.al (1998) says discourse is a text within a provided context that visualizes liable data for application of empirical based analysis. It narrows focus on the procedure of actions and processes. Thus, it is clear that discourse itself is a major concept than the text (Blommaert, 2005). Fairclough (1989) describes it as the entire process that picturizes interaction of text with the reader. According to Mahboob and Paltridge (2013), it's critical to look at how power is implemented and understood how dominant group uses it to oppress the subjugated.

Critical Aspect to Analysis of the Discourse

The critical analysis of discourse does not have any fixed principle. Van Dijk (1993) stated three principles analyzing discourse through manifold perspectives. It includes semiotics, applied linguistics and analysis of discourse. The central aim of discourse analysis is a practice of language in a society (Brown & Yule, 1985) and it shows functional aspects of language. It describes functions of language never work in isolation (Wodak, 2001) but, it comprises of several other aspects in terms of social, psychological and cultural frameworks. The critical analysis of discourse visualizes application of texts in a society. It bridges connection between text and societal implications. The account of social interaction between structures of given text and extra textual phases are explored through interpretation prearranged by writer and its implications on reader. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) describe CDA is a multidisciplinary method of analyzing how “discourse as well as social and cultural developments” relate to one another in cross-cultural settings. Aiming to “systematically analyze the ambiguous interrelationship of informality and to identify amongst a) discursive behaviors, events, as well as texts, including b) wider cultural and social structures, relations, and processes”

Fairclough (1995:132) said with reference to this methodology. Consequently, analysis of a text itself is a difficult and multifarious process. It lacks direct correspondence between textual patterns and spectral functions of society. The relation between this complex paradigm and discursive function of literary texts willingly remained opaque. They are operated in need to maintain relation between different courses of interpretations. The prior concern to critically analyze the texts is creation of a framework that can assist to decrease above discussed opaqueness. Janks (1997) said CDA is a type of social practice in which the opaque connection is

analyzed through the use of critical ideas. In light of this idea, CDA applies critical theories that examine language in connection to power and the fight for power, revealing the identities of those who oppress (Corson, 1995). Conversely, CDA, focuses on how social structures affect a social group's mental representation (Van Dijk, 2003). Although it includes variety of analysis and methodologies, the use of CDA in interdisciplinary fields is not limited to study of text and speak only (Van Dijk 2009; Wodak and Meyer 2009).

Wodak and Meyer (2009) state CDA methodology is concerned with analyzing “social phenomena that is intrinsically multifaceted and therefore necessitate a multi-methodical approach”. More, Fairclough (1993) tried to explore aims of analyzing texts critically and minutely to draw the proper meanings. The objectives are to determine opaque relations, between causalities and determinations. There are two relations that could be defined, first is between events, discursive mode of practices and texts, and second between critical and literary textual patterns with societal aspects (Van Dijk, 2001). These two relations combine to investigate processes, events, textual patterns and practice that literature tries to shape relations between discourse and textual factors. However, the relation is bi-directional in nature (Fairclough, 2003). The use of language in literary text is affected by ground theory that shapes its entire frame in either cultural or societal practices. Thus, language influence stylistic situation to define it. Therefore, it can be stated that the practices in discursive mode can be constituted through literary patterns. The critical analysis of discourse is bi-directional that tries to explore a keen tension of sources that is between the two separate sides of language usage and constitutive textual analysis. Language has been identified through different levels of society and this division was highlighted by Fairclough. It was based on levels that affected its variation and strength. The interpretation in context of these discourse frameworks and cognition of literary texts has been addressed in following work.

Perspectives of Applied Theoreticians and Linguists for Analysis of Texts

The only element in focus is critical aspect in analysis of discourse that attributes its connection with causes as subtle. Fairclough (1992) implies it with intervention. The example is to provide resources to those that may feel disadvantaged through modification. Therefore, significant efforts are taken to explore subtle facts that tend to avoid evidence to be involved by individuals. Van Dijk says there are many books, articles and literary excerpts in literature to use critical analysis of their discourse. According to many theoreticians of applied linguistics, the analysis of discourse has been focused on different dimensions of ‘power’ in works given by Fairclough (1989, 1992).

So, the critical analysis of discourse can be perceived to be one of the tactics in research than direct thought and even analysis model. The perceptions of critical discourse analyzers were summarized within the work of Batstone (1995). Batstone (1995) describes analysis of critical discourse to seek and construct particular indoctrination with interpretation of texts. The perspectives are expressed covertly with delicate composition. They are found elusive to directly challenge the features of language. Then, it tries to retreat the mystification and impersonality of thoughts in the text. The scope of definitions given above can identify general idea of critical discourse analysis. However, they cannot explain working framework of critical analysis of any discourse (Luke, 1995). Norman Fairclough tried to examine the ways of framing the discourse

into critical analysis. It is through the ways communication constraints the structures and institutions in society that are forced to live and function. It was a great contribution of Fairclough in *Language and Power* (1989).

Three Levels in critical Analysis of Discourse: Fairclough (1992)

The publication of Fairclough (1992) stated different courses of procedures to analyze different texts. Fairclough (1992) gave opinions on nature of analyzing texts and discourses. According to him analysis can be done in three stages. First level identifies the societal conditions that are produced for interpretation of factors in society. This contributes towards origination in text. Similarly, factors that affect the overall interpretation. Second level identifies different processes in course of interpretation and it helps to identify text, its production and its effects on its interpretation. Third level is the final level and it is a product of two above mentioned stages. The stages of Fairclough (1989) in CDA do concur with three important levels in discourse that have been mentioned above.

- 1) The description is one of the stages that have been concerned to regulate properties in text.
- 2) The interpretation has been concerned to find relation between the interactions of text with the reader. The text has been a product to process production and a kind of resource to regulate the process of interpretation.
- 3) The third and the last stage is a relation of interaction between social contexts with the interaction. It is the societal determination through process of interpretation and production. It results in the effects of social motives on thoughts. Additionally, the dialectical relationship which includes the relationships between social practice and structure, as well as between event and semiotics is emphasized (Fairclough, 2009).

Conceptual Framework of Study

The conceptual framework of this study has been adopted from Fairclough's model on power and discourse. The model of Fairclough (1989) tried to give attempt that linked social and linguistic practices under micro and macro examination of texts. The analysis of poem, 'The sick rose' in this study is done through the possible relation of critical conditions with textual patterns under conceptual study of Fairclough. This study also attempts to review the hidden ideology within the text through deconstruction of conventionalized concepts. It has been adopted from theoretical underpinnings in study of Batstone (1995). According to the study of Batstone, the claim was made to analyze discourse critically to reveal construction of texts and exploit covert perspectives of the author that indoctrinates particular dogmas. They are elusive and retreat through mystification.

Tool to Analyze the Discourse

The instrument used to analyze text of this poem is the method of 'three-dimensional analysis of discourse'. It was introduced in power and language discourse and contributed by Fairclough (1992). It has been used for the language in the text, either written or spoken; the discourse is interpreted under socio-cultural practices. Fairclough (1989) transformed the analytic method of linguistic explanation into interpretation through the relation of discursive procedures and the text. It has been under process of social and cultural interpretation.

The references taken from the Text for Interpretation

The poem 'The Sick Rose' (1794):

- Rose thou art sick
- The invisible worm
- That flies in the night
- In the howling storm:
- Has found out thy bed
- Of crimson joy:
- And his dark secret love
- Does thy life destroy

(William Blake)

The poem is composed of thirty-six words. The elegant design is given by the poet to resonate image construction with the language of poem. On the special, poet William Blake tried to sketch an artistic view with the help of his insight. He exemplifies the creations of the world with his own perceptions that he accounts for in his poem. The perceptions that are metaphorically employed by poet in poem were to create interest for the reader and account for his state of mind. The example like lion is used to show a sign of bravery. Similarly, rose to signal beauty and sketch of moon, which is alone like a wanderer in pale. However, the rose is described with adoption of strategy to defy the poetic conventionalization. The one, who never have visited the beauty of garden can misunderstand the concept of a rose that have been artistically designed by Blake in a poem as diseased, corrupt and dead.

The second powerful element used by Blake was an implicit image of sexual activity. It is quite intertwined with the theme of poem. It is referred to as a worm that finds a way to peep into the rose. The joy on bed of crimson is mentioned that tends to corrupt within. The meaning of phrases in poem is multi-layered. Every time the new meaning ripples out from the phrases of poem that gives new construction of thoughts. This connects with impermanent attribute that has been given to the beauty. It goes to raise the question of long-time beliefs about the notion of sexuality. It is based on views of Blake for England that echoes in Jerusalem for again. However, no any idea represented the arguments as such. The entire poetry is themed on the work of suggestion. This does not ask for either agreeing or dis-agreeing the arguments. The poetry demanded reconsidering one's own past long experiences that enshrined the earlier conceived notions in shape of words.

If to talk about the structure of poem, it starts with a question that what kind of words Blake use and what poetic version he used. He did not adopt the poetic version to a great extent. He loaded lines of poems with the use of decorative adjectives to raise the elegance of the poem. The reason to avoid poetic composition was based on principle to maintain artistic symbolism. The work has been crafted by poet's master vision to choose and use proper words in poem. The description of rose has been done with the use of these words. 'Unwell', 'poorly', 'fade' or Rose is sick. Monosyllabic in nature, the shock and isolation, it ends in first mark of poem. The onomatopoeia has been used in the phrase, "it's howling". The sound of storm is used to make readers aware of sound of storm in this poem. The word 'crimson' is used by Blake to associate it with the human blood. The other colors, pink, red are not used. The color 'crimson' in association with blood

gives a feeling of sensuality with the pattern of consonant cluster formation. The impact of poem is produced when it is heard aloud. The poetry is best experienced when it is read alive. The naturally produced rhyme is felt with the beat in each line. However, a close observation of poem has shown that the lines are set irregularly patterned. The rhyme pattern of poem is anapestic in Dimeter along with some substitutions. The poem can be put into music and gives a joy to read if the words are experienced in thoughts of the reader.

The poem, 'Sick Rose' is based on power symbolism. Each of the symbols play significant role in construction of thoughts. However, the central idea is probably taken easily within use of symbolic design created by properly chosen words. The layers of meaning are interestingly dispensed by poet for readers to read and ferret different meaning each time through various interpretations. Different perspectives are developed with an insight eye. The balance of checks is maintained for clichés, words and the ideas.

The mind of the Author to visualize through the lens of 'Text in a Context'

The poem picturized in 1794 in England. It was the time when women were forced to do jobs that comprised of nature based on prostitution. The poem is centralized to a theme that sketches the spread of disease 'syphilis'. It spread from the man who sexed with a prostitute. After sex with a prostitute, he had sex with his wife. His wife happened to give birth to a child. The disease 'syphilis' spread to such an extent that it caused defects to the severe extent and death. The poet used the word 'rose' as metaphor to represent 'love'. The love, that proved to become sick or malfunctioned.

'Invisible-Worms' is a reference given to the virus or the disease-causing bacteria that cannot be seen with naked eye. They are microscopic and like worm, they are too small to be seen. The word 'invisible' in a meaning refers to the worm 'syphilis' that surrounded the atmosphere of common disease in his time. The phrase 'flies out in night' here refers to spread of night with loud and whistling storm. The word 'howling' means violent, strong, loud storm that connotes pleasure during the satisfaction of sexual desire. This overall reference has given to fornication of a man with a prostitute and then to his beloved innocent wife. The last phrase in the poem 'Dark Secret Love Which Thy Life Destroy' connotes the virus 'syphilis' that destroyed his happy house and snatched life of his newborn child.

Discussion of Findings

- 1) First section showed some of the important literary elements in the poem. They can be briefed under the following theories. They are inclusiveness, pragmatism, acceptance of diversity in the religion and ethics, unity and liberalism.
- 2) Second component under analysis was selection of keywords. The significant words that were used by poet William Blake includes, love, rose, dark and secret with general dominance of two pronouns that locate personal attributes. They were 'thy' and 'thou'. Blake with utilization of these words tried to state perceptual attribute of inclusion in women in the time of his writings within society. Along with, there was a great need to call for unity among entire nation of the land.

- 3) The references were given a glance under the framework of semiotics. It showed William Blake chose this discourse to deeply strengthen the cause of unity amongst the nation and popularized the love and respect of woman within a highly diversified English society.
- 4) The principal theme of this poem can be inspired for more analysis of discourses. The discourses that one can use in form of instruments to interpret different texts.
- 5) The broad spectral vision of different events and patterns in poem are inter-related that have been proposed in the framework given by Fairclough. The results have been studied under this course of analysis. This can be a subject of discussion and interpretation by readers.

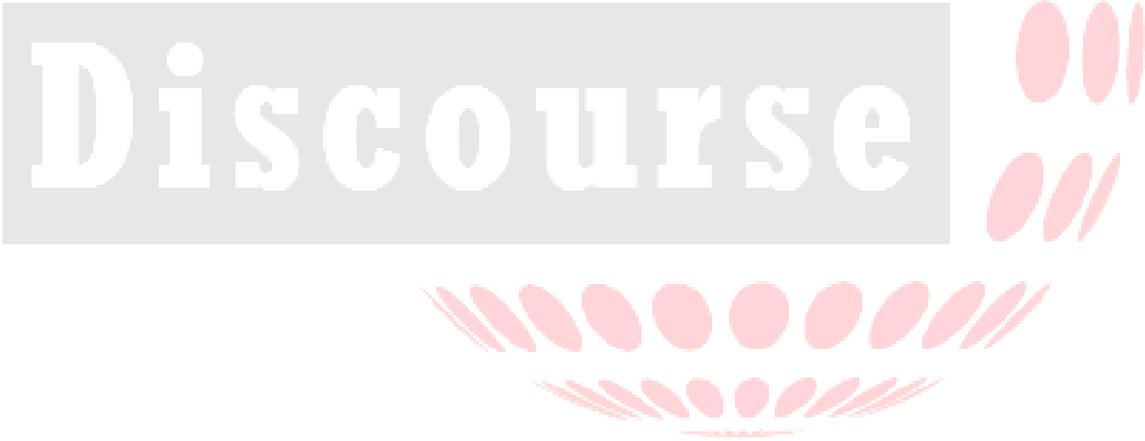
Conclusion

The present paper is an endeavour on the part of researchers to analyze the poem 'Sick Rose'. The contribution of paying a description to the world in text is done through Critical Discourse Analysis. The study tends to affirm observation of Fairclough CDA model (1989). The observation states that author perceives the world with the help of his own words that he attributes to different things. The style of author's mind designs the world of its own and things are created in the text. Therefore, meanings of words are created with interpretations. It relies on the part of reader to give a try for deciphering the suitable and possible interpretations that could refer to given text. This entire process used the mind frame of the poet, William Blake. The ideological perspectives of the writer are thoroughly presented in the renowned poem "The Sick Rose".

References

- Batstone, R. (1995). Grammar in discourse: Attitude and deniability. *Principle & Practice in Applied Linguistics*, 197-213. Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press.
- Blommaert, J. (2008). Discourse: A Critical Introduction. *Linguistische Berichte*, (214), 249-250.
- Brown, G. and Yule, G. (1985). *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Corson, D. (1995). *Discourse and Power in Educational Organizations*, Creskill: Hampton Press, N.J.
- Ding Jianxin & Liao Yiqing. (2001). Review of critical discourse analysis. *Contemporary Linguistics*, (4), 305-310.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press & Blackwell publishing Ltd.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical Discourse Analysis and the Marketization of Public Discourse: The Universities. *Discourse & Society*, 4 (2), 133-168.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Psychology Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2009). A Dialectical-Relational Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis in Social Research. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. Methods in Critical Discourse Analysis 2nd edition* Sage 2008.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Routledge.
- Gee, J., and Gee, J. P. (2007). *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. Routledge.
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical discourse analysis as a research tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329-342.

- Jorgensen, M. W., Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. Sage Research Methods.
- Luke, A. (1995). Text and discourse in education: An introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of Research in Education* (21), 3-48. doi: 10.3102/0091732X021001003
- Mahboob, A., and Paltridge, B. (2013). *Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Applied Linguistics*. Theencyclopedia of Applied Linguistics. UK: Wiley Blackwell.
- Teun A. van Dijk (2009). *Critical Discourse Studies: A Sociocognitive Approach*. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. The Discourse Studies Reader. London: Sage.
- Titscher et al. (1998). *Methods of Texts and Discourse Analysis*. London, Sage Publications.
- Van Dijk, T. (1996). *Discourse, Power and Access*. In C.R. Caldas-Coulthard, and M. Coulthard (eds.) *Texts and Practices*, 84-106.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. In D. Tannen, D... *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 352-371). Oxford Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2003). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 352-371.
- Wodak, R. (2001). *What CDA Is about-A Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments*. In W. R., & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp.1-13). London: Sage Publications.
- Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (2009). *Critical Discourse Studies: A Sociocognitive Approach*. In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London Sage.



Discourse