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**PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGIES AND FEMALE UN-
FEMININITIES IN A CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST WRITING:
A GENDER-ORIENTED AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE
ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Drawing on the Critical Discourse Analysis grid put forth by scholars such as Van Dijk (2001a&b, 2004, 2006), Fairclough (1989, 1995, 2001, 2003), Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), Meyer (2001), Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard (1996), Wodak (2001), the current paper exuded how institutional social power is deployed to naturalize ideologies as common sense or common knowledge in a sample text drawn from a contemporary feminist novel, notably Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2006). It also tried to unravel how, through discursive structures and properties, the womenfolk resist or/and transgresses the established sociocultural norms and conventional ideologies as regards gender, role assignment and power. Finally, it advocated the view that only gender-balanced power relations between men and women can ensure a fair social justice and peaceful society.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis, feminism, gender, ideology, patriarchy, power

Introduction

It has been proven through literature that creative writings in Africa particularly from the pre-colonial age to the early colonial era were dominated by male writers. Indeed, African literature has for long portrayed male-dominated societies in which women were depicted/represented as mere appendages (as wives to be bullied, and helpers to preserve/perpetuate man's lineage, or as daughters to be given away in marriage). In fact, some African literary critics have recently become aware of the male-dominated nature of African literature and have sharply denounced it. Quoting Femi Ojo-Ade, Bassey & Eton (2012) noted that "African literature is a male-created and male-dominated chauvinist". In the same token, Kumah (cited in Dooga, 2009) posited that due to

the male-dominated literary tradition, many depictions of African women are reductive-perpetuating popular myths of female subordination. Female characters in male-authored works are rarely granted primary status-their roles often trivialized to varying degrees-and they are depicted as silent and submissive in nature, remaining absent from the public sphere.

It follows from the above assertion to contend that male writers have depicted the African woman through/with the lenses of unpleasant images and/or portraits that muffle their voices and aspirations. In view to balancing that negative feature associated with or stuck to women in African literature, some contemporary female writers have committed themselves to 'breaking the silence' by claiming, through their artefacts, equal rights and equal treatments for men and women. These authors, known under the term '*feminists*' (or broadly *literary foremothers* in Tess Onwueme's designation), focus their attention on the multifaceted problems confronting the female gender or 'the muted and emergent issues affecting women' (to borrow Dooga's expression).

Put another way, feminists focus on the political, institutional and social challenges of women in contemporary society, and the place of women in a male-dominated society (Dooga, 2009). Their ultimate goal is "to challenge the masculinities underpinning the structures of repression that target women" (CODESRIA Gender Series 4, 2005; cited in Dooga, *ibid*). In that regard, the fictional narratives of those female writers dig into/out the dark trenches of cultural mores or traditions wherein women are robbed off their normally inalienable rights. *Everything Good Will Come* (2006) is one of those prose works (authored by Sefi Atta; it exudes some female characters who defiantly challenge the 'sacred order' which has hitherto debased or demeaned women. In other words, female characters in the novels at stake cogently display features of un-femininity or masculinity in their (discursive) reaction/interaction. To unearth that bold attitude of theirs, and against the backdrop of three distinct theoretical approaches, the current study aims to analyze their language use (or discourse) in a sample text drawn from the novel. However, it is expedient before carrying out the analysis proper to revisit the assumptions underlying women's plights in a patriarchal society, and how the female gender itself attempts to cope with these.

Theoretical Constructs through a Sketchy Related Literature Review

The current study uses a theoretical approach that is eclectic in nature. This is to say, it draws on theoretical insights from three distinct but complementary disciplines: linguistics, gender studies and Critical Discourse Analysis. From this perspective, the elucidation or clarification of some basic tenets such as patriarchy, gender discrimination, and feminism become a prerequisite or a preliminary step towards an in-depth discussion of the topic we set out to work on. Moreover, reviewing or, say, broaching some previous studies related, in one way or another, to the ongoing research topic seems useful in deciphering later on, the intended meaning conveyed in the literary writing under scrutiny.

Patriarchy, Gender Discrimination and Ideology

Patriarchy is a concept which has attracted the attention of many scholars with respect to its impact on the society. Diversely tackled, this concept has not received a common consensus or agreement as regards its definition. Anthropologists view it as a social system in which the father is the head of the household, having authority over women and children, and in which lineage is traced through the male line. Feminists, on the other hand, regard patriarchy as a system of government or society in which men are dominant or preferred. From these two stands, it can be contended that patriarchy is that form of social organization in which males

exercise power and thus create for females an inferior status (Amouzou, 2006). It logically follows from this to argue that patriarchy exalts the male gender over the female one.

Gender, as Allagbé & Allagbé (2015, p. 386) observed, is used as a cover term for both masculine and feminine acts, roles or/and attributes assigned to the two sex categories: male and female. According to Rogers Webster (1990; cited in Oluwayomi, 2013:370) the term 'gender' refers to "a socially constructed difference which forms the basis of inequality, oppression and exploitation between sexes. Drawing on this, Wodak (2015) viewed gender as 'differential tendencies' between women and men, boys and girls. Simply put, she defines gender as linguistic dealings with women, men, boys, and girls, for example, how they are addressed, what is said to them and, more importantly what is said and written about each of those groups. That is what she calls *social constructionism*. It could be assumed from this that there is a dialectical relationship or a close nexus between patriarchy and gender. As a matter of fact, gender is a socially constructed order set in a given (patriarchal) society. As for patriarchy, it delineates the society along gender lines, thereby ascribing certain acts, roles or/and attributes to one gender or the other. In short, patriarchy serves as the channel whereby gender relations are expressed or displayed in society in that the aspirations, expectations, and desires of the two sexes are conditioned on the dictates of the socio-cultural or/and religious structures entrenched in it.

Ideology, as Koutchadé & Amoussou (2017) note, has not been unanimously defined by scholars. In common parlance or everyday usage, the term has a negative connotation and typically refers to the rigid, misguided or partisan ideas of others: *we* have the truth and *they* have ideologies (Van Dijk, 2004). However, critical linguists have always been very careful to avoid the definition of ideology as 'false consciousness' (Fowler, 1996, p. 10). In contemporary political science, the term is used in a more neutral, descriptive sense to refer to political belief systems, for instance. From a critical linguistic perspective, ideology describes the ways in which what we say and think interacts with society. Ideology, therefore, derives from the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and value-systems which are shared collectively by social groups (Simpson, 1993). Van Dijk (2001b) viewed it as the basic social representations of social groups. From these definitions, two inferences can be made. First, *ideologies are closely linked to language* because using language is the kind of social behaviour where we rely most on 'common-sense'. Second, *ideologies are closely linked to power*: the common-sense assumptions people have can be ideologically shaped by power relations. For instance, the power relations that commonly exist between men and women have their roots in the system of beliefs which considers men to be powerful, bold, intelligent, while women are perceived as weak, coward, subservient, dull, and irrational.

It follows from the foregoing to argue that people generate and transform ideologies in actual discursive events. As underscored by Van Dijk (2001a), "...ideological discourse analysis is usually based on individual discourses" (p. 23). In this paper, we tried to decipher the hidden assumptions through language use or discourse in a selected passage from Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2006).

Conscience Awareness: The Way Out

The ultimate goal of a Critical Discourse Analysis is to arouse consciousness on the way language is used to sustain or enhance the domination of some people by others (Fairclough, 1989, p.1; Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p.14) in order to create the equilibrium many seek in society. In the light of the injustice perpetrated on women through patriarchal stereotypes, gender representation, Allagbé & Allagbé (2015) contended, has been given a new dimension in contemporary African literary writings. As a matter of fact, the asymmetrical representation of

power relations between male and female characters “has seriously bothered and prompted the reaction of many advocates of gender equality, womanists or/and feminists in the past four decades or so” (Amouzou 2006, cited in Koussouhon, Akogbéto & Allagbé, 2015a, p.148). The advantage behind the re-orientation of male-female relationship stems, in fact, from the shift from the phallogocentric (or male-dominated) perspective to a woman-centered perspective or simply a blend of both called the human-centered perspective. While some scholars or activists (i.e., womanists) have committed themselves to the survival and wholeness of society through the promotion of such aspects as mutual dependence between or complementarity of the two sex categories, others (i.e., feminists) have cogently protested against societal biases against women.

Whatever the ideology put forth, the endeavour of the proponents of gender equality aims, so to speak, to create enlightenment on the dichotomy set up between the two sexes by patriarchal practices. In that perspective, Ofori (2013, p.182-3) stressed that “creating awareness of the issues that concern women in the contemporary [African] society is a major step towards finding solutions to them”. Likewise, Fairclough (1989) stated that “consciousness is the first step toward emancipation” (p.1). It follows from this to argue that contemporary writers, especially feminist writers, use their literary oeuvres to create awareness on social actions (or “social practices”) with a view to deconstructing patriarchy and its underlying sexist and/or androcentric ideologies, on the one hand, and redefining or rehabilitating women’s identity or image, on the other (Koussouhon and Allagbé, 2013; Koussouhon, Akogbéto and Allagbé, 2015a & b, Koussouhon, Akogbéto, Koutchadé and Allagbé, 2015, Allagbé and Allagbé, 2015; 2017, Allagbé, 2016, Koussouhon, Amoussou and Amoussou (2015), Koussouhon, Koutchadé and Amoussou, 2016, Koussouhon and Agbachi, 2016, Koutchadé and Amoussou, 2017, Allagbé and Amoussou 2018, Allagbé and Amoussou, b & c (forthcoming), etc.). The pursuit of such a goal has become more than a necessity nowadays in that “we [...] live in an age of great change and instability in the forms of power and domination are being radically reshaped, in which changing cultural practices are a major constituent of social change, which in many cases means to a significant degree changing discursive practices, changing practices of language use” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 219).

In the next section, we shall demonstrate how the feminist female writer at stake attempts, in her literary artifact, to represent actors (i.e. men and women) in such a way as to display what can be termed a ‘role reversal’ between them. But for the moment, let us make an incursion into the analytical framework which underpins the current study.

The Adopted CDA Approaches

As mentioned earlier, the approach this study draws on is Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter, CDA). Viewed as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk 2003, cited in Amoussou and Allagbé 2018, p.13), CDA is a multidisciplinary approach to discourse that emphasizes on language as “a form of social practice” (Fairclough, 1995). Following Amoussou and Allagbé (ibid, p. 14), we are not going to use a specific approach, but a combination of approaches including namely Fairclough’s Socio-Cultural Method, Van Dijk’s Socio- Cognitive Method, and Van Leeuwen’s Socio-Semiotic Method. Of these, Fairclough’s approach will be more stressed.

As a matter of fact, Fairclough (1989)’s critical approach focuses on three dimensions of discourse (text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practice) which are analyzed in three phases: description (text analysis), interpretation (processing analysis), and explanation (social analysis). For text analysis at the first level (i.e., description), Fairclough suggests a ten-

question model analysis to disclose the hidden meaning in text. Among those questions, the first seven (grouped into two sets of vocabulary and grammar) are relevant to the current study. These are:

A. Vocabulary

Question 1: What *experiential* values do words have?

What classification schemes are drawn upon?

Are there words which are ideologically contested?

Is there re-*wording* or over-*wording*?

What ideological significant meaning relations (*synonymy*, *hyponymy*, *antonymy*) are there between words?

Question 2: What *relational* values do words have?

Are there euphemistic expressions?

Are there markedly formal or informal words?

Question 3: What *expressive* values do words have?

Question 4: What metaphors are used?

B. Grammar

Question 5: What experiential values do grammatical features have?

What types of *process* and *participant* dominate?

Is agency unclear?

Are processes what they seem?

Are *nominalizations* used?

Are sentences active or passive?

Are sentences positive or negative?

Question 6: What relational values do grammatical features have?

What *modes* (*declarative*, *grammatical question*, *imperative*) are used?

Are there important features of *relational modality*?

Are the pronouns we and you used, and if so, how?

Question 7: What expressive values do grammatical features have?

Are there important features of *expressive modality*?

Van Dijk's social approach is rather different in that he gives an utmost importance to cognitive analysis. Indeed, for him, socio-cognition mediates between society and discourse; it coincides with "the system of mental representations and processes of group members" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 18). In that respect, the scholar defines social power of groups or institutions in terms of control. Thus, groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups (Van Dijk, 2003). However, dominated groups may more or less resist, accept, condone, comply with, or legitimate such power, and even find it "natural".

As for Van Leeuwen (1996/2008), he identified a range of rhetorical/linguistic devices used to represent social actors and their semantic roles in discourses. Among them, exclusion and assimilation will be relevant to this research work. According to the scholar, exclusion may be expressed in two ways: suppression or backgrounding. Suppression of social actors occurs when there is no reference to the social actors in question anywhere in the text. It is classically realized through passive agent deletion, non-finite clauses, nominalization or process nouns, post modifying phrases or as adjectives. In the case of backgrounding, by contrast, the exclusion is less radical: the excluded social actors may not be mentioned in relation to a given activity, but they are mentioned elsewhere in the text; and we can infer with reasonable (though never total) certainty who they are. Backgrounding can result from simple ellipses in non-finite clauses with –ing and –ed participles, in infinitival clauses with to, and in paratactic clauses. Like exclusion, assimilation is subdivided into two types: aggregation and collectivization. The former quantifies groups of participants, treating them as ‘statistics’, while the latter does not. Aggregation is realized by the presence of definite or indefinite quantifiers, which either function as the Numerative or as the Head of the nominal group.

A Kaleidoscopic Analysis of Female Un-femininities in the Selected Extract

It is important to recall, before indulging in the analysis proper, that the theoretical and methodological approach we have adopted here is the one suggested by critical discourse practitioners (Meyer, 2001; Van Dijk, 2001b/2003; Fairclough, 2005), transdisciplinary. More precisely, we have focused on the mediation between the social and the linguistic as recommended by Chouliaraki & Fairclough (2003; cited in Weiss & Wodak, 2003) in the statement below:

We see CDA as bridging a variety of theories into dialogue, especially *social theories* on the one hand and *linguistic theories* on the other, so that its theory is a shifting synthesis of other theories, though what it itself theorises in particular is the *mediation between the social and the linguistic* – the ‘order of discourse’, the social structuring of semiotic hybridity (interdiscursivity). (p.6; italics not authors’)

It should also be stressed that, following Chouliaraki & Fairclough (2010), we have simultaneously kept a constant analytical focus not just upon discourse as such, but on *relations between discursive and other social elements*. The analysis has been conducted in three phases. First, we have examined the meaning relations embedded in the sample text under study. Second, the grammatical features identified have been duly outlined. Finally, a particular emphasis has been laid on the expressive values of the grammatical features.

1. Analysis of Meaning Relations

We are concerned here with showing how ideological meanings are coded in the vocabulary of the sample text under study in its representation of the world. In other words, this sub-section is devoted to identifying meaning relations in the text and trying to specify their ideological bases. The main meaning relations are, as suggested by Fairclough (1989, p.116), synonymy, hyponymy and antonymy.

Synonymy, should it be recalled, is the case where two words essentially restate each other (Eggins, 1994, p. 102; Koussouhon, Akogbéto & Amoussou, 2017, p. 94). In that sense, the phrase “show respect” in line 9, for instance, is almost similar in meaning with the predicates “defer” and “obey” in lines 18 and 19 in that order. While the receiver ‘me’ (standing for Enitan) is the performer of the first action (show respect), the actor ‘I’ (still representing Enitan) is the doer of the actions expressed by the other two verbs, with ‘a man’ and ‘him’ functioning

as goals. It follows from this to infer that in traditional African societies, such attributes as respect, deference, or obedience are asymmetrically required from women to men because “we all know that a man is the head of the family” (Achebe, 1958, p. 121). Endorsing this, Kolawole (1998, cited in Amouzou, 2006) claimed that “generally, African women are presented as a *subaltern group* in the margin of society, *docile*, and *accepting* the multiple levels of subjugation *gracefully*” (p.98, emphasis not in the original). However, that social order, which positions the male gender as superior to the female one, contributes to the perpetuation of female effacement or erasure. Although stoically assuming their debased role, women have never been at ease in that position. To express her feelings, Enitan uses the verb “bothered” (line 18) followed in the next line by the participle “shocking”. These two words convey the same idea of the protagonist’s inability to stand bearing the abhorrent treatment she is submitted to.

Still accounting for the vile place conferred to females by stereotyped traditions, the narrator also makes use of antonyms. Antonymy, needless to remind, refers to the situation where two or more lexical items encode a contrast relationship. “To stop” in line 4 is purposely used by the narrator to oppose the meaning of “to continue” (line 14). Through these two antonymic expressions, Enitan lucidly believes that, contrary to the rigid conventions whereby women are “expected to continue” perpetuating the degrading practices imposed upon them; they should stand straight ahead “to stop trembling from lack of sugar in [their] blood”. More than a mere rhetorical device to give voice to her confined feelings (as previously seen with synonymy), this is a pressing call to react against those responsibilities that only women are assigned. To convey her message, Enitan successfully refers to hyponyms.

Hyponymy, as defined by Fairclough (1989:116), is the case where the meaning of one word is, so to speak, included within the meaning of another word. For example, the phrases “get[ting] th[e] animals something” (line 1), “carry[ing] firewood” (line 10) and “get[ting]... drinks” (line 24) are all hyponyms of the superordinate term “duties” recorded in line 17. In the text at hand, those hyponyms reveal that a woman is not portrayed as a good wife unless she adheres to the chores which make her a domestic servant. As Asiyanboba (2005) notes, “traditionally men do not participate in domestic work-such tasks are considered to be the exclusive domain of women...women oversee the domestic chores”. Such an ideological view of role assignment (or division of labour) is so largely acquired and expressed through discourse that it becomes, in the mind of the dominated (i.e., women), normal, natural, common sense, legitimized, naturalized, and thus ‘self-imposed’ (line 17). This also unveils the inequality of social power in a patriarchal society wherein the male gender is exalted as superior.

However, drawing on her feminist standpoint, the authoress makes Enitan cogently resist that assumption in the following terms: “And the expectation of subordination bothered me most” (lines 17-18). That’s why, rather than comply with her husband’s commands to perform the domestic activities, she replies harshly: “you have hands” (line 6), “well, why can’t you ever get drinks for once?”, “why can’t you go to the kitchen? What will happen if you go? Will a snake bite your leg?” (lines 24-25). These strident discursive reactions purport to disclose Enitan’s deliberate transgression of cultural and social norms set by powerful institutions. They also display the feminist stand Atta chooses to adopt in her novel for a social change in society because “changes in semiotics (orders of discourse) are a precondition for wider processes of social change” (Fairclough, 2012:458). In the coming sub-section, we are going to focus on the grammatical patterns which exude ideological meanings in the extract.

2. Analysis of Experiential Values of Grammatical Features

This has to do with the ways in which the grammatical forms of language encode happenings or relationships in the world, the people or animals or things involved in those happenings or relationships. As a matter of fact, a close examination of the text under study unveils the predominance of material and verbal processes. Material processes are encoded in such verbs as “get” (lines 1 & 24), “clutching”, “keeling” (line 3), “trembling”, “had spent” (line 4), “fending off” (line 5), “show” (line 7), “go” (lines 8, 24 & 25), “respected”, “carried” (line 10), “had been getting” (line 13), “to continue” (line 14), “defer” (line 18), “touched”, “obey”, “choking” (line 19), “plucked”, “choked” (line 20), “bite” (line 25). According to systemicists (Eggins 1994/2004, Halliday 1985, Halliday & Matthiessen 2004/2014, Thompson 2014, Bloor & Bloor 2004, Fontaine 2013, etc.), material processes are processes of doing. Their prevalence in the passage under study is suggestive of the fact that the events described in the text are mostly represented by actions. This means that the change of the social order, as advocated by Atta in her novel, will not become effective unless women undertake concrete actions to free themselves from the bondage they live in. Ofori (2013) thus calls for women’s (re)action in the following terms: “women as individuals and collectively, [should] device ways to cope with the stressful issues that militate against strong will, hope and determination to challenge and overcome patriarchal inhibitions” (p.186).

As for verbal processes, they are realized in verbs like “asked”, “claimed” (line 1), “said” (lines 6,7, 8), “told” (line 9), “called” “to say” (line 22), “answered” (line 24). The significant use of verbalization contributes, as Koussouhoun, Amoussou & Amoussou (2015) put it, to the creation and maintenance of dialogic passage in the literary artifact. Actually, verbal processes are meant to overtly criticize the traditional precepts that still chain up and enslave the African ‘good woman’ who, in the words of Udumukwu (2007, cited in Ibeku, 2015), is “that woman who suffers the effects of oppression, and neglect, and who must maintain a silence and passivity in order to remain good” (p.426). The Nigerian writer consciously crafts the ‘real woman’ in order to say no to all kinds of subjugation from the menfolk because “silence is no longer golden; it has become a destructive metaphor” (Akung, 2012, p. 114). It should be noted that Enitan and Niyi are the two *dominant participants* (sayers) in those processes.

However, in the course of their interactive event, there is no one-to-one relationship between *mood structure* and the *speech function* it projects. For instance, the clause “you have hands” uttered by Enitan should be understood, not as a statement, but as a command issued to ask her husband to get the animals something by himself. Likewise, the series of questions (lines 24-25) which follows Niyi’s interrogative mood (“why did you have to say that in front of my brothers?”) are in fact, an invitation to undertake the desired action by himself. In replying that way, Enitan intends to remind her husband that in the couple, they are on the same footing and he has no right to give her orders inconveniently. In other words, Niyi’s wife is letting him know that in marriage power is equal between the two spouses. Akung (2012) attempts to account for her assertiveness thus:

Enitan has grown up; she knows what is good for her, she is no longer a naïve docile girl who must hide once a man is around. Disobeying a man’s orders, according to her, does not translate to disrespect, but if the man wants her respect and obedience, then he must earn them (p.118).

It should be understood from the foregoing quote that Atta is not calling on women to disobey their husbands. On the contrary, she is drawing their attention to the fact that they should not obey them like gods. Put another way, the Nigerian writer wants modern wives to assert their

individuality and not behave like their mothers as required by traditional dictates, since “the family’s responsibilities should be collectively carried out by both sexes” (Adeyemi, undated).

To disapprove of how patriarchal lordship recommends the continuity of women’s domination, a type of assimilation, namely *collectivisation*, is alluded to in line 14: “We, their daughters, were expected to continue”. The use of the exclusive ‘we’ is a means of *categorization* or *polarization* whereby ‘daughters’ are asked to follow in their mother’s footsteps in terms of perpetrating their submissiveness. In the same way, the second type of assimilation, i.e., *aggregation*, is introduced through the indefinite quantifier ‘too many’ (“too many women, I thought, ended up treating domestic frustrations like mild cases of indigestion”) to showcase the great number of women affected by domestic frustrations. By assimilating those ‘domestic frustrations’ to ‘mild cases of indigestion’, the narrator intends to highlight their harmful impact on women, muffled to boldly retain their pent-up feelings. Therefore, the heroine of the *Everything Good Will Come* soundly admits with Bassey and Eton (2012) that individually or in groups, women should:

take up the gauntlet and let the menfolk know about how they feel, breaking their long silence in process. One sure way of breaking this silence is through sound education which as Eboh notes, will break ‘the quagmire of unjustifiable subordination of women, the paternalistic attitude of men, and the entanglements of taboos and retrogressive customs which bog women down (p. 54).

When we turn to the ‘domestic frustrations’ previously underscored, we notice that it acts as a *nominalization* used intentionally to exclude agents (men). This is a conscious hedging of agency, not to hide causality and responsibility as is usually the case, but to suggest that the people responsible for those frustrations can be inferred through *presupposition* (who frustrated women? → Men). This kind of exclusion, as explained by Van Leeuwen (1996/2008) is called *suppression*, since no reference is made to the social actors responsible of the action. In the following nominalization, by contrast (“the expectation of subordination”), both the agent and the goal are deleted (Who expects? Who is subordinated?). Like the former example, a mere recourse to the social context presupposes the answers to such questions (i.e., men expect women to be subordinated).

Another linguistic stylistic device which helps leave the same causality and agency unclear is *passive agent deletion* or agentless passive, in Fairclough’s (1989, p. 126) terms. As a matter of fact, in the previous mental collectivized clause “we, daughters, were expected to continue”, there is no indication of the Senser, i.e. the agent responsible of the expectation. Yet, one can easily presuppose that it is men, or simply the patriarchal institution, that ‘expected women to continue’. As can be noticed, the obfuscation of agency serves here to highlight the *naturalization* of the ideology that men (and their powerful institutionalized patriarchy) always dominate women. Recall that ‘naturalization’ as described by Fairclough (1995), is a result of giving a particular ideological representation the status of ‘common sense’, “and thereby makes them opaque, i.e. no longer visible as ideologies” (p. 42). And to sustain, maintain, and reproduce those ideologies, a euphemistic construction is deployed to win women’s acquiescence and back up of their domination: they are called ‘the pioneer professionals’ (line 14). This is a strategic means to permeate participants’ cognitive models or perceptions. It is also a skillful device to manipulate women’s mental models in order to conceal power abuse and construct the “preferred model” targeted (Abidi, 2015); to make them do things they otherwise would not accept to do. The following stage is about a particular grammatical feature which is of utmost importance in the passage, i.e. expressive modality.

a. Expressive Modality Analysis

Modality is an important grammatical feature which projects ideological meaning. It relates to speaker or writer authority in a text or discourse. Fairclough (1989) splits modality into two dimensions: relational and expressive. We speak of relational modality when it is a matter of the authority of one participant in relation to others. As for expressive modality, it refers to the speaker or writer's authority with respect to the truth or probability of a representation of reality, i.e. the modality of the speaker/writer's evaluation of truth. Here, we have limited the analysis to expressive modality for two reasons: first to conform to Fairclough's (1989) approach (see question 7, p.128); then because the text under scrutiny is essentially made of expressive modal verbs.

Those verbs are: 'can' (line 1), 'can't' (lines 24-25), 'could' (lines 18, 21), 'needed to' (line 9), 'would' (line 20), 'may' (line 21), 'have to' (line 22) and 'will' (line 25). For reasons of space limitation, only those auxiliaries deployed during an effective face-to-face conversation between the two interactants (Enitan and Niyi) have been explored. As a matter of fact, the use of 'could' preceded by the question word 'how' in line 18 implicitly expresses the impossibility for Enitan to show respect to a man she has seen the naked buttocks of. In other words, the modal auxiliary 'could' resort to, implies that there is no way submitting to a man who is logically supposed to have an equal power relation with his wife. 'Can't', by contrast, is deployed to disclose, not the inability or incapacity of the addressee to perform the stated actions (get the guests drinks, go to the kitchen), but his obligation to carry them out. This confirms, as can be noticed, the atypical mood structure-speech function relationship emphasized in the previous sub-section. That syntactic construction of negative polarity of a low politeness modal verb, added to the deictic 'why' suggests that Enitan categorically rejects the hegemonic relation her husband wants to set. It also unveils, once again, the feminist ideology the authoress chooses to adopt in order to break away from the oppressive patriarchal forces which have, for long, maintained the female gender in debasement or effacement. Opining on the determination and decisiveness of women to achieve their goal of grappling with patriarchal belittlement of the female gender, Olusowa (2016) posited that:

Women are go-getters. Once they are determined to do something, they do not give up easily. [...] They can build and can destroy. [...] they easily disarm men and achieve their aims. [...] They have the right words for every occasion (p. 77).

The above reveals that the woman is not the weaker sex as it is commonly believed. It means, in short, that women are powerful and can move mountains if they decide to. Anyway, Niyi's wife twice utilizes 'will' in consecutive interrogative clauses to seek to know the outcome of his undertaking the actions by himself. 'Will' in this case, predicts results. On the other hand, in the beginning of their conversation Niyi makes use of the median politeness modalizer 'can' preceded by the vocative 'Enitan', not to issue a command, but to deferentially make a suggestion. The implicit meaning of this is that Niyi does recognize the fact that obviously there is no unequal power relationship between his wife and him. This means that consciously men are aware of the equal power relationship between them and women; yet, patriarchy teaches them to demean their female counterpart. This state of things should, as resolutely displayed by Enitan vis-à-vis her husband, be denounced and combated. That's why, Ann (2015) sustains that "the woman does not always look for means of hiding the humiliation and subjugation she passes through but rather to look for a way to say no to all forms of ill treatments" (p.431). In the same vein, Olusola (2016) suggests a re-orientation of men's mindset via gender education to effectively empower women. In addition to the re-orientation of men's mindset, we gently

believe that female bonding and/or solidarity through a non-antagonistic feminism is necessary to challenge men's domination and exploitation in a society epitomized by patriarchal practices. That conviction seems to be sustained by Eze (2008) who opines that "it would have been better to weave solidarity among African women to interrogate the African patriarchal system" (p.104). Those solutions will ultimately result in social changes or better, changes of order of discourse; since an order of discourse is not a closed or rigid system, but rather an open system which can be changed or deconstructed.

Conclusion

In this article, we have tried to explore the interrelation of discourse structures and ideological structures in a passage from Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2006). More specifically, we have demonstrated how, through language use, patriarchal ideologies have been questioned in the prose fiction. Unlike some literary artifacts wherein females compliantly undergo the perverse effects of the established patriarchal practices (*Faceless, Not Without Flowers*, etc.), the protagonist (we mean Enitan) here overtly counter-attacks those practices which have hitherto contributed to maintaining women in a servile or slave-like position.

The critical analytical stance adopted here has actually helped unmask the use of power and hidden ideologies in language use on the other hand, and to take, on the other, the part of the unprivileged, of those who suffer, referred to as 'losers' by Meyer (2001), i.e., women. It could be drawn from the whole analysis that the ultimate hope of the current researchers is what Fairclough (2001) called the 'restructuring' of power relations between men and women for a fair social justice and peaceful society.

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Appendix

The symbol (N) indicates the number of a line. There are all in all twenty-five lines in the sample text.

Text: From *Everything Good Will Come* (pp. 183-184)

(1) As usual, he asked, "Enitan, can you get these animals something?" Niyi claimed he was totally inert inside kitchens. His favourite trick was to feign panic attacks by the door, clutching his throat and keeling over. Normally, I humoured him, because we had house help, but this evening, I only wanted to stop trembling from lack of sugar in my blood. I'd spent the (5) day fending off the treasury guys.

"You have hands", I said.

"My friend," he said, "show some respect."

"Go to hell," I said.

(9) In my 29 years no man ever told me to show respect. No man ever needed to. I had seen how women respected men and carried firewood on their head, with their necks as high as church spires and foreheads crushed. Too many women, I thought, ended up treating domestic frustrations like mild cases of indigestion: shift-shift, prod-prod and then nothing. As far back as my grandmother's generation we'd been getting degrees and holding careers. My mother's generation were the pioneer professionals. We, their daughters, were expected to continue. We (15) had no choice in the present recession. But there was a saying, and I'd only ever heard it said by other women, the books were not edible.

It was an overload of duties. I thought, sometimes self-imposed. And the expectation of subordination bothered me most. How could I defer to a man whose naked buttocks I've seen? Touched? Obey him without choking on my humility, like a fish bone down my throat. (20) Then whoever plucked it out would say, "look. It's humility. She shoked on it. Now she's dead." This may have been my redemption, since my husband needed a wife he could at least pity. Later that night, he called me aside to say, "Why did you have to say that in front of my brothers?"

"Well, why can't you ever get them drinks for once?" I answered, "Why can't you go to the (25) kitchen? What will happen if you go? Will a snake bite your leg?"