Doris Lessing's Our Friend Judith: A Reading in Feminist Discourse

Jinan F. Al-Hajaj
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Abstract

The study of feminism and feminist discourse falls in with ideology research. Ideological apparatuses whether social, political, psychological and linguistic represent the frameworks where feminist analysis is carried out. In the preset study, an ideology model devised by Barbara John-Stone is applied to investigate, analyze and interpret Doris Lessing's ***Our Friend Judith*** in an attempt to uncover the feminist ideologies that operate in the text. The analysis proves that the story is loaded with feminist references and cues that are designed by the author to penetrate and comment on women's status in the 60s, and by extension and analogy, the upcoming generations of women.

1. Introduction

In her short story ***Our Friend Judith***, Doris Lessing creates an independent, eccentric, talented and mysterious woman to have the events or rather the revelations of two friends revolve around, the narrator and Betty. Judith, the eponymous heroine, embodies a generation of liberal, independent, intellectual women who aspire to and think they managed to break from conventionality. But despite the fervent endeavour to flout conventional, social legacy, they still have their roots deep buried in instead. Judith is a poetess, an academic lecturer, an art dilettante and a modern woman who has claims to all the ideals of the Sixties' modernity: atheism, freedom, indifference, free love, autonomy, estrangement and loneliness.

The narrator and Betty, Judith's friends, seem to wallow in traditionalism and cherish, not to mention relish in it. Still, they have the open-mindedness, for one really could not think of affection alone, as the binding tie that glues the trio oddly enough together. There is no question that Judith stands on the other pole of the equation. She is everything that Betty and the narrator are not or could have ever been or will ever be. Without acknowledging it, Judith is the sort of woman whose feminist airs, not self-acknowledged though, define her as an eccentric and set a gulf between her and her friends.

Judith's feminist stance takes on the form of a ruthless, almost heartless nonchalance where self-indulgence materializes along with spontaneity and naturalness that one almost misses. It feels as if Judith was born with it and she, poor thing, could not help act the mutant she was born as. Inwardly, the story touches upon Judith's nature rather critically; it casts aspersions on her self-

reliant, self-sufficient character and the choices that pertain to her sense of loftiness and asymmetry.

The story is perceived to lend itself to a feminist reading that provides insights into the feminist interpretation of the forces that are set to trigger the construction of such a fictional character as Judith. A model by Barbara John-Stone is adopted to carry out the analysis in terms of feminist discourse and ideology.

2. Feminism: an Overview

Feminism and its waves came as a belated reaction against the notions of male superiority and par excellence in particular relation to creative powers. The claim that women are incapable of producing creative, intellectual work has been put to severe and thorough tests in the feminist writings. Criticism of the lack of profundity, inability to analyze male mentality and the likes which used to be levelled against women's literary visions are debunked, refuted and even derided by the generation of pioneering female scholars and critics on the ground that all these critiques which sought to belittle women's writings have been written by men, not women. In addition, the accusations and judgments of inferiority and subordination are encountered with defences that affirm women's capability of creative achievement as men once given equal opportunities (Gamble, 2001: 4). The inferiority claims have been further overruled by such observations as 'that women's experiences differ from men's in profound and regular ways' and hence their writings have to differ accordingly (Kolodny in Gardiner, 1981, 348).

Feminist thought has manifested itself in many different shapes and forms. From its early rise, the Feminist movement has debated a diversity of women-oriented issues of suffrages, equality, education, oppression and Patriarchy to mention few. However, feminism is often equated with contending against Patriarchy, male authority in society. As women struggled towards liberation, recognition and appreciation, Patriarchy is maximally challenged.

Historically speaking, though the germ of the Feminist movement dates from the late ninetieth century, it has its roots far deeper in time, Rampton puts it in a nutshell:

> Some thinkers have sought to locate the roots of feminism in ancient Greece with Sappho (d. c. 570 BCE) or the medieval world with Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) or Christine de Pisan (d. 1434). Certainly Olympes de Gouge (d. 1791), Mary Wollstonecraft (d. 1797), and Jane Austen (d. 1817) are foremothers of the modern women's movement. All of these people advocated for the dignity, intelligence, and basic human potential of the female sex. (2008:1)

Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was the first to draw the attention to the power women who could invest as a major social

influence. She went as far as to anticipating a future in which women get involved in all the-then-deemed male professions including politics and government (Sanders, 2001: 15). *The Vindication* created, instead, rather reactionary responses where the notion of 'separate spheres' was promulgated against any claims of equality.

However, it was in the ninetieth century that feminism obtained its official status along with its appealing momentum. In feminist studies, three waves of feminism are, consequently, identified; each is concerned with certain female-oriented issues. What is termed as First Wave Feminism was formally sparked 'at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 when 300 men and women rallied to the cause of equality for women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (d.1902) drafted the Seneca Falls Declaration outlining the new movement's ideology and political strategies' (Rampton, 2008:1). Against the backdrop of urban industrialism, the first wave focused on women's rights to political equality, suffrage, demonstrating, public speaking, and many conservatively dubbed as un-lady-like activities.

In the Second Wave, Feminism, which was launched in the 1960s and continued to the 1990s, had on its agenda:

> the anti-war and civil rights movements and the growing self-consciousness of a variety of minority groups around the world. The New Left was on the rise, and the voice of the second wave was increasingly radical. In this phase, sexuality and reproductive rights were dominant issues, and much of the movement's energy was focused on passing the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing social equality regardless of sex. (Rampton, 2008: 2)

The Second Wave formally started with the protest against Miss America Pageant in 1969 when Feminists demonstrated against what they described as 'a degrading cattle parade' that reduced women to mere objects of beauty as conceived of by a dominating patriarchy. The achievements of Second Wave Feminism are numerous and various promoting 'feminist campaigning and consciousness raising' which eventually led to 'equal opportunities in legislation, greater access to work within the public sphere, access to childcare, access to contraception and abortion' (Gvozdeva et.al., 2005: 300).

Second Wave Feminism has also inaugurated the linguistic investigation though it has limited its framework to such issues as 'stereotypical speech' of women where women's language is assumed to reflect powerlessness and oppression at the hands of a patriarchal model (Gvozdeva et. al., 2005: 300). Second Wave Feminism can be associated with Liberal Feminism linguistics which developed effectively during the 1970s where the notions of 'gender-neutral solutions and women's moving to the public sphere' from which they

were allegedly thwarted are emphasized (Mille and Mcllvenny, 2000: 2). Alternatively, during the 1980s, radical feminism prevailed where the models of liberal feminism are rejected in favour of an approach that placed women in the centre and advocated beliefs in women's oppression and exploitation (Mille and Mcllvenny, 2000: 5).

Third Wave Feminism started in the mid-90s to adopt a stand that is highly critical of the analysis promoted by the Second Wave (Gvozdeva et.al., 2005: 301). It is marked by its 'post colonial and post modern thinking (Rampton, 2008: 3), a matter that makes the phase identified as post-feminist or postmodern feminist. Issues like gender, class, race and ethnicity which were passed over almost in silence by the Second Wave Feminists are focalized by the Third Wave Feminists and highly questioned and investigated (Gvozdeva et. al., 2005: 301). In consequence, notions of womanhood, body, sexuality, homogeneity are all destabilized in favour of 'ambiguity and the refusal to think in terms of "us-them" or in some cases their refusal to identify themselves as "feminist" at all.' The girls, ironically not women, of the Third Wave emerge as 'strong and empowered, eschewing victimization and defining feminine beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy' (Rampton, 2008: 3).

Gvozdeva et. al (2005: 301) argue that the linguistic frameworks of Third Wave Feminism marks a departure from the universal or 'global statements about women's language but rather focuses on a more punctual analysis, that is one which can analyse the way that one's gendered identity varies from context to context.' Third Wave feminist linguistics relies heavily on the arguments launched by Judith Butler [1990, 1993, and1997] and 'the notion of performitivity' where gender is regarded, (Crawford, 1995) as 'a verb, something, which you do in interaction, rather than something that you possess,' and is, thus, constructed through the repetition of gendered actions that vary according to the context and are relevant to the speaker's choice (Gvozdeva, et. al. 2005: 302). As the notion of women as a homogeneous body is rejected, a multicultural framework is devised where women are localized and their language is found to display diversity and difference. The determining factors are various and often not gender relevant. For instance, the notion that politeness, deference and cooperation mark the language of women declines since these traits are found to characterize middle-class women and not necessarily women in general (Mills, 2003: 5). As such women's language is neither global nor symmetrical, but differs in relation to age, class, identity, education and cultural background.

3. John-Stone's Model of Ideology

Among the studies fostered by Critical Discourse Analysis is the investigation of ideologies embedded in text which is a pursuit grounded in the observation that 'texts, embedded in recurring "discursive practices" for their production,

circulation, and reception which are themselves embedded in "social practice," are among the principal ways in which ideology is circulated and reproduced' (Johnstone, 2008: 53). According to Barbara Johnstone, what alone comes to settle in the core of ideology is the matter of choice whether being linguistic or non-linguistic. She sees that the world is structured via linguistic choices having 'an epistemological agenda' modelling out some about thirteen patterns of choices which are said to incarnate 'strategic goals' and some can be briefly sketched below into:

3.1 Choices about Representing Actions, Actors and Events

The first of these choices alludes to the representation of actions, actors and events. The agents and patients play central roles in this type of choice in that these can be well portrayed via active and passive constructions. The agents are unknown, obvious or unimportant in the passive voice (2008: 54). If the agent and patient are obvious, the outcome is a transactive sentence results when a subject and object are at play. But there is a non- transactive type in which the subject position is occupied by the semantic experiencer. Other times, the agent and patient are both covert; a process takes up the grammatical subject. The process may fill in the subject slot through nominalization which Matthews (2007: 264) defines as "any process by which either noun or a syntactic unit functioning as a noun phrase is derived from any other kind of unit". Johnstone (56) adds that verbs, adjectives or adverbs can be nominalized without the addition of noun markers. Thus, the nominalised entity is either being represented as an event or action. Further, the two processes, semantic roles and nominalization, can picture out individuals as helpless and unable to take action against some other forces beyond his or her control. They are represented as observers (Johnstone, 56).

3.2 Choices about Representing Knowledge Status

The second choice is about the representation of knowledge status. Speakers publically disclose their knowledge, intelligence or confidence via choosing certain linguistic tools. Such tools include evidential and epistemic adverbials or simple present tense of verbs 'to be' to universalise claims. Other linguistic processes, Johnstone (2008: 56) argues, are those of cognitive verbs that reveal the extent of certainty on the part of the speaker. Accordingly, one gets fairly able to conceptualize a speaker as intelligent, confident or missing one or both. Besides the epistemic adverbials which by large indicate certainty, the use of simple present helps to show self-confidence about claims representing the world. But, showing uncertainty on the part of the speaker is one variety of reconstructing knowledge claims. In this respect, speakers can be accurately represented as appearing comparatively powerless in what is called 'hedging'. Knowledge status via measuring certainty can also be exposed through using

modal verbs when talking about the future which is either being 'oppositional' or 'privileged'. Thus, speakers could be fully described as uncertain through their use of contrasts in modality or via a question-answer structure (Johnstone, 2008: 56).

3.3 Choices about Naming

The third choice is about naming and wording. Johnstone (58) argues that "deciding what to call something can constitute a claim about it". For specific purposes, individuals name things via 'strategic choices'. In this case, males and females have different styles of choice. For example, certain terms for women dress in US catalogue use the names of flowers. Another dress style naming uses terms of colour. The choice in this prospect is designed to adequately reflect claims about the world. The process of rewording is well embodied via euphemism and dysphemism. Over-wording is another process when the use of synonyms or near synonyms can be ideologically oriented. What is normal is sometimes established through the representation of persons and events through metaphorical choices.

3.4 Other Choices

There are also choices relevant to representing other voices. Johnstone (60) argues that the multi-voiced discourse is a feature alluded to by Bakhtin who believes that discourses are formed from pieces of other discourses, styles and other voices. Other's speeches are usually explicitly quoted. One strategy is the reported speech which is sometimes referred to as 'a constructional dialogue'. What is not directly said can be sometimes indirectly reported in or disclosed through the other's reaction to a certain suggestion or point of view. Thus, speech is represented via choices indicating what is said and how it is said or via reportive clauses which clearly designate that what is going to be reported is a speech. Reportive clauses are oriented by such verbs as 'say' or less likely 'go, be, like' and such other expressions in the constructed dialogue as 'yell over, respond and whisper'. Free indirect discourse plays a role in describing what is quoted.

4. Feminism in *Our Friend Judith*: Choices and Ideology

Our Friend Judith is a short story that reflects the 1960s with the nascent sparks of Second Wave Feminism where the model of the modern woman was being popularized. Doris Lessing is often dubbed as a Second wave Feminist whose writings focalized issues of gender, race, class and identity (Watkins 2007: 97) with commitment and 'ideological maturity' (Rubenstein, 2001: 3). Judith, the eponymous protagonist, embodies modern women as hypothesized by fervent feminists of the time; she is the woman that answers literally to their dream and lives up and even goes beyond their ideals. She is the independent, indifferent, self-conscious, intellectual poetess and academic lecturer who inspires liberalism

and sets the example for other women to follow into her steps if they have kindred spirits and common concerns. Judith is fully aware of her non-conformist identity in relation to the general social mainstream and above all does not exert any effort to appear otherwise. Doris Lessing creates Judith to be the spokeswoman of the brewing generation which would claim its access to whatever was deemed then as off limit for women.

However, Judith poises a problem, for while women of her calibre would be then, in the 1960, brushed aside and even outcast, Judith seems to ooze charm, beauty and charisma wherever she steps. She is the centre of the attention to her two female friends- one of the them is the narrator, left ironically nameless, the other is the traditional, unattractive housewife Betty. Judith is the academic poetess-lecturer who picks her lovers and feels empowered by the mistress role. Even, in Italy, she is treated as the ageless goddess adored and doted on despite her aberrant manners.

A look at the linguistic choices the text makes do of gives insight into both Judith, the society status quo and the society to be.

5.1 Feminist Aspects via Voice Constructions

What is essentially central for Judith is, to a great extent, the preservation of her emotional independence from the male dominance. The physical and psychological detachment can be fully and publically disclosed by Judith, the narrator and Betty via choosing between the active and passive voice. The table below shows the frequency and percentages of occurrence of passive and active voice as far as Judith's personality is concerned.

Table (1): Voice Constructions

Voice	No	Percentage
Active	20	40%
Passive	30	60%

Most of the active constructions are strongly oriented to and associated with Judith's concerted attempts to free herself, sexually and emotionally, from men. She feels it is important to establish her own autonomous identity and to hold onto more important things in her life. In the face of claims laid against successful women who are said to proper through donning a male identity (Heilbrun in Gardiner, 1981: 347), Lessing creates a female character whose identity seems intact and even indifferent to male standards. In twenty active structures, Judith's assumed and preserved identity is shown through manipulating activities as in the following table which categorizes such actions together with their implied

connotations.

Action-Agent	Connotation
1) I really ought to enjoy meeting new more people than I do. (p.1) 2) Spinster provoked fascinated speculation about other people. (p.1) 3) Judith's calm and severe face, her undemonstratively perfect body succeeded in making everyone else in a room or street look cheap. (p.2 4) Judith took the cat to the vet to be killed. (p.3) 5) She didn't think of compromising. (p. 3) 6) Every three or four years, she publishes a volume of poems. (p. 4) 7) She despises people who feel they need attention. (p. 8)	1) Rejecting the circumscribed life of a married woman and it is regarded as an attempt to commence a new life style. 2) This is an aspect of freedom of mind and setting loose from confinement. It can be seen as a positive prospect of an unmarried woman. 3) Judith is clearly shown as having good personality and identity as well as, having magnificent physique; in this case, she is attractive. 4) Judith dares to set aside the company of males if they disorder her life; an aspect of psychological independence. 5) She is seeking physical and psychological independence. This is another facet of Judith's perfect personality. 6) Detachment from the habits of married life makes her, as she thinks, more productive. 7) This type of feeling appears to indicate that she is trying to be powerful and authoritative.

Experiencer/patient-	Connotation
1) It would be a mistake, however, on entering a house in which nothing has been moved for fifty years. (p.1)	1) This clearly exposes Judith's social position as being a spinster and her choice to 'stay in character'
2) Neither Betty nor I were surprised at the renewed discovery that Judith was beautiful. (p. 2)	2) This shows Judith's own choice not to be a beautiful woman, but also to be an invisible person so as to 'stay in character'.
3) Unless she was prepared to have the cat fixed. (p. 3)	3) Judith refuses to have her male cat being castrated and instead sends it to a vet to be put down.
4) It would be morally wrong for Judith to have the cat fixed, simply to suit her own convenience. p.3)	4) Judith is respectful for the nature of a male cat more than the cat's right to live. They see that Judith is absolutely malicious for the masculine.
5) The moral aspects of the matter having been made been clear, she was irritated rather than not to receive letters of apology from him-fulsome, embarrassed, but above all, baffled. (p. 3)	5) Judith obviously manifests considerable respect for the liberty of other people. This is conclusive evidence concerning her desire for autonomy.
6) ..., each shelf filled with the works of a single writer. The two writers are not... the kind one would associate with Judith. (p. 4)	6) Judith's strict insistence on an independent life is made obvious when she isolated the works of writers.
7) No one of the books has been read. Yet each book is inscribed and dedicated to her. (p. 4)	7) Her social status as a single or mistress becomes convenient for her to be 'her own person'
8) It is safe to deduce, not all likely to be admired by her two admirers. (p. 5)	8) Her experience with the two men seems to have awoken her repressed nature as a woman and confused her sense of identity.
9) Was Judith embarrassed? ... I was embarrassed. But now she's bothered because the professor would like to marry her. (p. 6)	9) Her status as a single or mistress has protected her from the emotional life. Experiencing the hesitation of either to be independent or dependent.

5.2 Epistemic and Evidential Forms of Certainty

The characters in this short story make use of forms of certainty implementing thirty eight epistemic adverbials, verbs and models which are ideologically oriented. Out of these, sixteen adverbials (42.14%) are indicators of a high level of self-confidence and self-possession concerning the truth of their claims and opinions. The narrator, for example, presents herself as self-assured commenter and an antifeminist. Her claims are supported by the seemingly assured beliefs against her friend's attitudes regarding Judith's detachment from the bonds of marriage. The narrator is seen powerful through flaunting certainty:

These ladies, my aunts, Emily and Rose, are surely what is meant by the phrase English spinster.(p.1)

She is more puissant and frank when representing others especially Judith as a way of discouraging debate with Betty. The narrator stubbornly connives at the fact that Judith has, in essence, nothing in common with Emily and Rose for Judith is by no means the typical English spinster:

And yet, once the connection has been pointed out, there is no doubt that Judith and they are spiritual cousins, if not sisters.(p.2)

The narrator passes in silence over Judith's beliefs regarding the inconvenience of marriage to her ideal pursuits and 'the price of wifehood', which is no less than the 'abandonment of self' (Heilbrun in Gardiner, 1981: 347) or the fuzziness if not the loss of identity. The narrator's certainty, on the one hand, is only a sham as the narrative later exposes and proves.

Judith's character, on the other hand, seems to be less confident and sometimes more ambivalent as indicated by the adverbials she uses when defining herself. For example, she admits that she has grown rustic in social manners due to her self-imposed isolation as one expects, but she does not seem to regret the loss:

I really ought to enjoy meeting new people more than I do. (p.1)

Other times, she looks more powerful and confident at the constitutional prospect of rejecting all types of artificial beauty. That is why she makes a mockery of her friends' reactions to make- up when they rediscover Judith's beauty to see her not as the spinster, but as the beautiful woman she really is. Here occurs the re-discovery, re-definition and re-appropriateness of the female body (Hite, 1988: 121) epitomized in Judith who is fully aware of its assets. Thus, she remarks:

One surely ought to stay in character, wouldn't you say?(p.2)

The majority of the epistemic forms that indicate levels of certainty are attributed to the verb categories and modality making twenty two appearances with a percentage of (57.86%). With reference to the narrator, the truth of the claims, she gradually argues, about Judith's marital status is a way of exposing certitude. The non-scepticism is clearly disclosed via manipulating epistemic

forms in the present simple tense and modal auxiliaries of certainty. For instance, she disagrees with Betty when the latter declares that Judith's as a spinster is better off than married. Her opinion appears powerful through the delayed verb (need) and the prolonged noun phrase that exposes her view:

> *Therefore, it follows that one's pitying admiration for women who have supported manless and uncomforted lives needs certain modification. (p.1)*

After the narrator disapproves of Judith's current condition, she ventures a comment that almost verges on derision. To group Judith with spinsters who lead a *manless* and *uncomforted* life and hence to pity her on that account is a groundless sentiment soon to be debunked and discarded. This feeling changes because of realizing that Judith possesses an extrovert but equally charismatic appeal, a property that a married woman lacks in. This is supported by Betty's viewpoint rendered curtly and abruptly via the verb 'to be' as a universal claim: *She is remarkable*. (p.3)

Judith appears more confident than Betty and the narrator. Being single and childless, she seeks refuge into anything that compensates for the maternity instinct. Therefore, 'reading' is one of the techniques that she utilizes to bolster up her spirits since she wants to be carefree: *It does everything to me, I must admit*. Judith indulges in whatever that brings her complaisance and pleasure. Thus, she thinks that she should be devoted to her hobbies and interests, reading and poetry writing for instance, not to men. She, also oddly enough, does not crave attention as Betty argues: For *she certainly despises people who feel they need attention*. And why she should when she has everybody at her disposal? She has achieved autonomy and would not concede it as clear in the generalization she concludes her speech with. She makes explicit the claim that men have no room in her life: *No one can interfere with me if I don't let them.* She is the one who plays the rules of the game which men have to honour if they want to play along.

5.3 Information Flow through Representing Other Voices

The narrator here moves to portray Judith's feelings towards the environment which is heavily and severely masculine. One of which exposes the recklessness of teenagers who made a mess of Judith's apartment after she allows them to temporarily live in there for the sake of study. Contradiction surfaces as she handles the situation:

> *she telephoned twice to Paris, the first time to say that he was a disgusting young thing..., the second time to apologize for losing her temper.* (p.3)

She snaps at their headlong behaviour represented by sex and alcohol, two things Judith hates too much. She abhors anything that entails the loss of control and sobriety. However, losing her temper is also a danger or even perhaps a luxury she cannot afford and hence should ward off if she is the cool and self-possessed person she assumes so as to 'stay in character'.

One key aspect of 'stay in character', a statement confessed by Judith, is that anything that may acutely and mentally disturb her feministic view should be set

aside. This is clearly embodied in her deliberate rejection of reading novels since this genre, she thinks, is about social prospects including married life, which she utterly distrusts. The narrator quotes Judith affirming: '*Of course I don't read novels, this does not mean that novels have no place in literature'*, and the ensuing commentary the narrator ventures *'but that must be obvious she can't be expected to read novels'*. Rubenstein (3) shrewdly points to the contribution of imaginative literature to the notions of "adventure" and "romance" where the two are used interchangeably. Judith is sceptic of any practice that compromises her sober, self-assured stand. Novels provide life templates and models which for years and years paid homage to patriarchy, which Judith has successfully slipped away of and manoeuvred its unrelenting grip. However, her anxiety reveals all riddled through logic for all her high sounding assumptions, she entertains fears and falls prey to doubts. In a word, Judith is not that immune entity and has her own insecurities.

The need to have children is quite inevitable for women by all measures, and Judith seems to be no exception. Though not accepting the idea of getting married, Judith looks up and out at such responsibility as bringing up kids. Thus, her current condition clearly exposes her snobbish claim that she has everything except babies declaring herself satisfied with her current mental and physical states. This avowal is made unequivocal and definite in Betty addressing the narrator '*I asked her if she was sorry not to have children. She said yes, but one couldn't have everything. One can't have everything, she said'*. But at the same time, she thinks she may make a good mother, though not a good wife. This leads Betty to confess to the narrator that Judith chooses to be frank about having children for she believes that she has the expertise for upbringing:

> *Quite clearly the feeling she has everything. She said she thought it was a pity, because she would have brought up children very well*.

Judith believes has the ideal ingredients to endorse any role she fancies, a view that may verge on conceit and arrogance. Her snobbery gets conspicuous when, without justifications, she refuses to indulge into discussing marriage with Betty: '*I asked about marriage, but she said on the whole the role of mistress suited her better.'* She thinks that being married or not is just like accepting or turning down a role, an aspect of pretence. She, accordingly, prefers the role of *mistress* in defiance of norms and conventions.

The difference between Judith and Betty is that the former always feels and wants to be the one single person running the show, so to speak, even when '*intimacy and sex*'' may make her somewhat in need for the masculine. Judith eschews the complications companionship and intimacy entail for she treasures that state of utter independence where *'she is alone and her own person.*' Alternatively, Betty realizes by practical experience that a married woman should be held bound by her loyalty for her husband. Writing from Italy where she futilely followed Judith, Betty humbly confesses to the narrator '*It's no use, I'm coming home. I might have known. Better face it, once you're really married, you're not fit for man nor beast'*.

5.4 Ideology via Naming and Wording

Deciding what to call something can constitute a claim about it. Naming and wording may require free borrowing from other fields of life and knowledge. Therefore, different linguistic techniques are extensively used especially when regarding this prospect such as euphemism, dysphemism, over-wording and choices about metaphorical representations. The choice of the name is a case in point for a feminist analysis of Lessing's ***Our Friend Judith***. Judith is the name populated by Virginia Woolf in her feminist treatise ***A room of One's Own*** published in the 1920s. Invited to speak on women's fiction at Oxford, Woolf finds herself, instead, examining the creative, intellectual worlds and naming the barriers and limitations that deprived women from fully expressing them at the times where men's intellectuality and creativity were celebrated. Nobody then foretold the turn the lecture had taken. As she argues about the absence of women's writing prior and during Shakespeare's time, Woolf creates the much debated Shakespeare's sister, Judith. Judith is the female version of Shakespeare; being his sister, Judith had hypothetically all the ingredients of a genius. Yet, Judith could not make it successfully to the world of the stage unless she risked being outcast and negatively branded and stigmatized. Judith was thus thwarted from pursuing her literary let alone theatrical career and reserved to the domestic drudgery. She was assigned to the inferiority of house chores and her intellectual talents lay dormant and fallow. Unlike her brother William, Judith had neither the luxury of time and education, even if insufficient, nor the comfort of a room of her own to meditate and create.

Lessing names her protagonist Judith to incarnate all the hypothetical Judith Shakespeare's aspirations and to inspire life into Woolf's image of intellectual, creative woman in challenge of socially popularized stereotypes. Unlike Judith Shakespeare, Lessing's Judith had available to her all the necessaries of a modern and intellectual life. She has, on top, autonomy- financial and, if one ventures to call, spatial- that entitles her to a thorough and unhindered existence. Thus, Judith is the breath of liberty and the women avant-garde who takes the world by stride in that she is non-committing, independent, unemotional and anti-romantic.

Still in the world of naming, one cannot fail to realize the thematic and moral significance of the other two female characters in the story. On the one hand, there is the narrator who is left nameless and, to feminist's dismay, shapeless as well. Occupied with relating what goes on in the life of the captivating Judith, the narrator has no space to introduce herself to the reader properly. One may rely on surmise to declare that it is not a wild guess at all to dub the narrator as an average woman who once had the ingredient of a Judith-like figure, but she, either by choice or circumstance, fell off the wagon so to speak. She symbolizes the silent, passive majority who deeply admire the challenging, liberal, *Judithian* spirit, but are simultaneously alarmed and even appalled by it. Her commentary on Judith as most the time objective, detached, and emotionless; it rarely however verges on mild, friendly censure.

On the other hand, there is Betty whom Lessing creates to group together the

majority of women where self-denial and sacrifice go unnoticed and unappreciated from a purely feminist perspective. Betty is the stay-at-home wife-mother who is so attached to her family and dedicated to its welfare and stability. Dependent on her husband, she is tormented by insomnia in his absence. Her intellectual inferiority and want of sophistication are inadvertently insinuated at by the contracted form of her name, Betty, which gives the reader such impressions as to nourish weakness, commonality, immaturity, puerility to sketch few. She is the other side of the equation. Shapeless and body-conscious, Betty pales next to the anti-marriage, charismatic, slim, gorgeous looking Judith.

One outstanding dysphemistic choice given by the narrator is the frequent manipulation of the word 'spinster' referring to Judith as if the narrator somewhat finds delight and relief in using it in reference to and baring her own disapproval of Judith. Thus, she satirizes Judith through the conceptual denotations of this word. This remark, first rendered by a Canadian woman when referring to Judith '*she is, of course, one of your typical English spinsters*' is later adopted by the narrator. This concept is over-worded in a series of synonymous words: '*unmarried, living alone, given up, English spinster, manless and uncomforted lives'*, portraying Judith's current condition. The narrator candidly conveys Judith's view on the matter decaling herself fully-satisfied with her status as being unmarried; and seems even to be partly convinced of the idea that plenty of women prefer to dispense with the company of men and she quotes, oddly enough, the example of her two aunts to support the ensuing flawed pity-logic:

> *Therefore, it follows that one's pitying admiration for women who have supported manless and uncomforted lives needs a certain modification.*

At the level of beauty, over-wording has a fundamental role in demonstrating Judith's physical attraction uncovering the friendly envy and jealousy that Betty and the narrator entertain. They too wish to have such bodies that would not fail to captivate male attention and regret that they no longer have the figure they one had but lost:

> *Judith is the right build.*
> *Judith is beautiful.*
> *Her undemonstratively perfect body, a rather intellectual nymph, she looked magnificent. (p.2)*

Voicing such positive, favourable evaluations create a contradictory chaos after all. This same Judith who has been earlier dubbed a spinster, manless and uncomforted is now being described as a beauty goddess and intellectual nymph. The narrator seems to suggest that Judith have both the looks and the matching brains which rarely exist in equal proportions in one single person.

Judith is hence vividly depicted spiritually and mentally. She is the focus of the educated class especially the poets and novelists. They highly dedicate their writings to her and they seem to do so '*gratefully, admiringly, sentimentally, and amorously*'. She is defined as a '*brilliant*' poet by the narrator. At the level of personality, she is presented as '*allied, unmoved by words, conscious, and not*

embarrassed'. But, she has opposing attitudes towards the masculine. She thinks that living in the confinement of the marital conditions will oust her from these good traits. Thus, when someone vexes her, she immediately gets '*irritated, embarrassed, and baffled*'.

Some euphemistic expressions have been deliberately manipulated by Judith to effectively convey situations that Judith takes with a big grain of salt. These expressions are about how women are being abused by society. For example, she used the word '*sack*' instead of '*divorce*' when her lover-professor suggested that he abandon his wife and two children to marry Judith. Her euphemistic alternative pours into Judith's understanding marriage as a profession or job and not an eternal institution or partnership. When the neighbours complain about her cat's rampages insinuating that Judith should emasculate it, she uses the words '*cast*' and '*fix*' to refer to that act of sexual neutralization. These euphemistic expressions are employed when Judith feels uncomfortable or even compromised by existing social practices like divorce and emasculation which powerless members of the man-society have to grapple with.

6. Concluding Remarks

In ***Our Friend Judith***, Lessing seems radically affected by the society's ways of living and disconcerted by its habits. Judith, the main character, is often seen as breaking from the highly esteemed norms with neither fear nor regret. The society's disruptive and dominant influence inevitably leads her to adopt multiple personalities. Consequently, her persona becomes enigmatic in that, on the one hand, she strongly protects and positively values her privacy. On the other, she passionately argues personal matters such as sex and intimacy with her two friends. As a social non-conformist, she cherishes isolation as a self-defence mechanism and to 'stay in character'. She feels she intrinsically opposes to the life style of the majority. However, this public and strong opposition is registered linguistically and becomes evident throughout the structures the story makes use of. In a language where the passive prevails, Judith's life is sketched in terms of satisfying non-conformity and isolation. Judith is more concerned with the final outcomes of the action than their initiators. In the world of certainty, Judith is always the skeptic trying to test theories so as to arrive at the best choice that fits into her mental and psychological perspectives as an intellectual woman who distrusts emotions. She is a practical, realistic person despite her poetical airs; she neither gets sentimental nor even allows sentimentality, if any, to cloud her commonsense. She is the Second Wave celebrated example where awareness: physical and mental, is promoted. In a nutshell, Judith is a phenomenal creature whose likes rarely exist in this world and when they do, they blaze trails for others to follow.

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صديقتنا جودث للكاتبة دورس لسنغ: قراءة في الخطاب النسوي

أ.م. جنان فضل بريو

م.م. علاء حسين شرهان

الخلاصة

تقع دراسات الخطاب النسوي و الحركات النسوية ضمن الابحاث الايديولوجية حيث توفر الاخيرة النظم و النماذج و الاطر التطبيقية سواءا" كانت اجتماعية او اقتصادية او سياسية او ألسنية لغوية لأغراض البحث و التحليل . تسعى الدراسة الحالية الى تطبيق انموذجا" ايديولوجيا" صاغته باربرة جونستون في كتابها **تحليل الخطاب** للبحث عن الايديولوجيات النسوية و خاصة تلك التي ارتبطت بالموجة النسوية الثانية لغرض سبر اغوار قصة **صديقتنا جودث** للكاتبة الانجليزية دورس لسنغ و الكشف عن الايديولوجيات النسوية العاملة داخل النص. و قد جاء التحليل بنتائج تؤكد قوة و فاعلية حضور الافكار التي تحاول ابراز الصراع الذي تعيشه المرأة في الستينيات من القرن الماضي و انعاكسها على مستقبل الاجيال النسوية التالية.