The Discourse of Transcendence in The Book of Songs [Al-Aghani] by Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani (D. 356 AH)

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Abstract

The discourse of transcendence within discourse analysis is employed to understand how language and discourse shape reality and concepts. Language is not just a means of communication, but a powerful tool used to create and shape reality and sense. The discourse of transcendence is based on the assumption that language works with newly developed metaphorical tools to convey rhetorical codes between the sender and the recipient. In other words, language can convey reality into a set of possible and potential worlds for various discursive events and phenomena. This was demonstrated through the research conducted in "Kitab Al-Aghani "The Book of Songs" by Al-Isfahani". The discourse was evident on two important topics:

– *The first topic: The poets' discourse – The poetic discourse makers*
– *The second topic: The discourse of the rulers and clan leaders.*

Keywords: the discourse of transcendence, rhetorical phenomena, "Kitab Al-Aghani [the Book of Songs]".

Introduction

Undoubtedly, the world of the text and reality are two opposite worlds for the reader, as the text carries certain mechanisms related to self-understanding, indicating that the self can be understood through the text. The only way for this to happen is to gather these two worlds in a way that the text comes as a transcendent self that seeks to reshape the reader's self. Reading becomes a bridge between the two worlds: the world of reality which includes all its characteristics previously drawn in the reader's mind, and the world of text which includes everything that is socially imposed, whether it goes with or contradicts to what the reader's external reality. The journey that the reader of the text goes through is characterized by skepticism, in addition to many conversations with the implicit reader of the text, in which the reader's external world converges with his internal counterpart made by the author. It is what brings the reader back to himself in confronting the internal world of the text in a way that connects to his horizon of waiting. Thus, several questions arise in which the reader himself seeks to answer, agreeing with the similarities in the text with his external world, whereas the differences between the two worlds conflict. (Borges et al., 2022)

The discourse of transcendence is related to the gender discourse because the concept of setting, or what is called (sociological setting), is the one that governs the relationship between men and women through the prevailing concepts in that setting spreading at the time of writing the text. (Al-Ghadami, n.d). This, in turn, refers to the conflict between the reader's external world and the internal world of the text, as the text seeks to replace the external world with its own world. It is not that easy. Rather, the conflict intensifies between the reader's foundations based on what he learned from his external world in the

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face of the world of the text. He re-evaluates what the two worlds differed regarding women and society's view, as well as their position in the text. This would prepare the reader to enter the world of the text and separate from its external world, so he gets rid of the act of doubt arising from outside the text, and engages within it. The discourse (text) formulates the addressee's awareness, directs his will for a specific direction, and identifies his relationships with things, people, situations, and positions. It would make him accept or reject." It is said that "discourse" dictates the conditions of acceptance, rejection and the conditions of vision and perception in addition to truth and reality." (Al-Humyiri, 1981; Baris, 2022)

Accordingly, the discourse of transcendence is based on eliminating doubt and skepticism in behaviors and replacing them with certainties in a way that reevaluates the relationships among individuals, particularly men and women. It also reconstructs the two sides of the gender discourse on the basis of the customs and traditions prevailing at the time the text was written. This is what enables the reader to understand himself by reformulating the relationship according to sociological standards resulted in behaviors that contradict the vocabulary of his realistic external world. (Ghali, 2013). In traditional texts, the discourse of transcendence is characterized by converging the self (I) = the (reader) with the (we) = the (text).

According to Ali Abboud Al-Muhammadawi, it is not just a mere meeting, which means that the reader's consciousness does not remain with him in his deep slumber, and his horizon does not remain in the position of a spectator towards the horizon of tradition, but rather delve into the horizon of the traditional text to discover the truths of things. It means relationships and the rules regulating that relationship, including the relationship between men and women, of course. (Al-Mahmadawi, 2014; Sopandi et al., 2023)

The pattern of transcendence was evident in the Book of Songs as follows:
The first topic: What is related to the narrations of poets.
The second topic: What is related to the rulers and clan leaders.

The First Topic: What Is Related to the Narrations of Poets

Al-Isfahani reported several narrations related to rulers, governors, and clan leaders, in which the pattern of communication clearly emerged. Al-Isfahani mentioned numerous literary instances that varied artistically and rhetorically. Arab social development has contributed to the development and adaptation of literary texts to confront problems, crises, and social needs and benefit from them. It was narrated that "Umm Jaafar", when Al-Ahwas mentioned her frequently, came wearing a veil, and stood over him when his people gathered, but he did not know her. She was a chaste woman.

She said to him "pay the price of the sheep that you bought from me".
"I did not buy anything from you". He replied.
So, she showed them a book that she had placed on him then cried and complained of need, distress, and poverty.
She said, "O my people, talk to him".

His people blamed him by saying, "Give the woman her due." He began to swear that he had never seen or known her. So, she uncovered her face and said "Woe to you, don't you know me?! He swore diligently that he did not know or see her. They talked for a long time, until people gathered and heard what was going on. She said, "O people, be silent." She turned to him and said "O enemy of Allah, you have spoken the truth, by Allah, I have no right against you, and you do not know me." You swore to that, and you are telling the truth. I am Umm Jaafar, and you say, "I told Um Jaafar" and "Um Jaafar told me" in your poetry. Al-Ahwas was ashamed and recoiled, whereas she was acquitted. The text revealed the features of the internal world of the text, where the woman was in a position of trickery and deceit towards the man to clear her name in front of the people from the poetry mentioned by "Al-Ahwas" in a way that the reciter of the lyrics varied the styles. The woman used structural methods to draw the listener's attention to herself by using the words (pay the price of the sheep, woe to you, don't

you know me, O people, and talk to him). The declarative methods, on the other hand, were used as a context of confrontation and reporting the truth of the trick that the woman resorted to which is "I am UmJaafar, and you say "I told Um Jaafar", "Um Jaafar told me" in your poetry. (Al-Rifai, 1980; Nawaiseh et al., 2023)

Hence, the woman represented a model that the reader was not accustomed to in the real world. "Verbal connotations can explain textual interpretations in a way that serves to implicate the meanings that are sometimes declarative and sometimes implicatures." The woman tends to use cunning without exposing the victim in full view of the people, contrary to what Umm Jaafar did, who was forced to prove that Al-Ahwas did not know about her in advance. Her behavior was to rehabilitate herself before society. "The Arabian woman was known as an important actor in Arab history possessing enormous potentialities", which is part of a broad social and discursive organization. (Radam, 2019)

She is trying to program her behavior according to the societal cultural discourse of her era, since innocence is declared publicly among people (Al-Humairi, 1980). The reader's external world conflicts with the world of the text, as it points to a sociological reality surrounding the situation in which Arab women are accustomed to expressing their opinions in the society of men. It is a trend that has been repeated in many situations, in addition to the prevalence of comparison with women, at the time of the novel, to those whom the poet does not know in advance. (Marouif, 1999) (Abd-Altawab, 1995).

This indicates the poets' lack of commitment to the prevailing moral standards, including Al-Ahwas who said:

Without seeing Umm Jaafar in your abodes I would not have walked hereabouts

This is what led Omar bin Abdul Aziz to exile the poet outside the city when Omar was the governor. Also, the pattern of replacing worlds seemed to cause the image of women depart from their usual stereotype. It was narrated that Al-Uqayshar came one day to the winemaker's house that he used to visit, but he did not find the winemaker. He waited for him until a woman entered the house, and he said to her, "What did so-and-so do?"

"He went for something, and I am his wife, so what do you want?" she replied.
"Wine," he replied.
"How much?" she replied.
"Two dirhams" He replied.
"Give me your dirhams and wait for me" she replied.
"No" he replied.
"As you like" she replied.

So she went, and he followed her. She entered a two door-house. The woman got out of one of the doors and left the man in. Sitting for a long time, some of the people in the house came out to him and asked "Why do you sit? So, he told them why. They said to him, "She is a fraudulent woman, called 'Umm Hunayn', one of the Abadis." He knew that he had been deceived, so he went to the winemaker and told him the story. He said to the winemaker, "Let me forget today, so give me a drink." So, he gave him wine. Al-Uqayshar wrote a poem reciting:

No one has been deceived except us
except for Umm Hunayn did it only
She promised us wine by two dirhams
or paid non-fermented beverage quickly
Then she stole all of the two coins
O my people, for the waste of dirhams wholly (Daqqa, 1997)

The novel dealt with a situation in which a fraudulent woman deliberately deceived Al-Aqisher and took his money. The dialogue indicated the woman's ability to keep up with the victim as an active party in the discourse by asking about the reason for coming, and appreciation of the wine that the narrator requested. This reflects her experience in fraud, as well as her containment of the victim and her ability to get rid of dilemmas, which was represented in her acceptance of Al-Uqayshar accompanying her to one of the houses she knew before as a trick to please him after he refused to give her the two dirhams. The above verses reflect Al-Uqayshar's shock and astonishment at the woman's ingenuity in fraud. This was evident in the stanza (No one has been deceived by anyone except us), where he considered himself an inattentive man. (Khafaji, n.d.). The paradox of the situation hidden in the second and third verses was also evident. She promised to give him wine to drink, but then broke her promise as soon as she got the money. This has an implicit pattern that indicates Al-Uqayshar's admiration for her, and his submission to her out of admiration for her. He regretted the loss of money by saying, "O my people, for the waste of dirhams wholly," as a way of seeking help from his people to recover the two dirhams. He was ashamed to declare what he was feeling, in addition to the verses indicating his miserliness due to his sadness over the two dirhams he had allocated to buy wine. (Haroun, 1988)

The pattern of transcendence in the text was represented by the model of the fraudulent woman who manipulates men and robs them of their money. According to the reader's realistic external world, this is what men are famous for, not women, which represents a conflict between the two worlds for him: the world of reality, in which the arts of deception by men are numerous, and the world of the text that highlights women as deceivers. (Asfhani, 208)

Hence, there was no way for the reader to understand the situation other than the sociological significance of the novel. The researcher is keen to leave an imprint that aims to highlight the meaning in proportion to the need of the speech in conveying linguistic codes that hit the intended goal of the speech act. In the past, some women were notorious for practicing the arts of fraud and setting traps for victims, as mentioned in the paragraph. The novel also indicated a popular community activity, i.e., "selling alcohol", and "having shops in remote places", to avoid accountability before the governor. (AbuOthman, 1423).

This indicates the loosening of the authority's grip over the sale of alcohol, as well as the laxity of some Muslims in adhering to religious teachings and drinking alcohol despite its prohibition. Likewise, it was narrated that Tawbah ibn Himyar used to date Layla Al-Akhiliya, and she used to go out to him wearing a burqa (veil). When his matter was uncovered, he was complained to the Sultan. The Sultan made it permissible for them to sacrifice his blood if he came to them again. So, they set up an ambush for him in the place where he was dating her. When she knew about the ambush, she went out unveiled and sat in his way. As soon as he saw her unveiled, he realized what she intended, and he knew that he had been censored. Therefore, she got out unveiled to warn him. So, he mounted his horse and escaped. He said:

Whenever I came to Layla, she would wear a veil on her head.
So, I felt suspicious when I saw her unveiled.

Layla Al-Akhiliya intended to warn her lover from her people when she unveiled her head and revealed her face. The woman was covering her face so that people would not know who she really was. So, Laila used this trick which made (Tawbah) understand the matter, so he unleashed his horse and escaped from the evil that Laila's people were preparing for him. The above verse briefly referred to the situation, as the poet was accustomed to his lover coming to him wearing a veil (Whenever I came to Layla, she would wear a veil). He used the conditional particle (whenever) to investigate and confirm what she usually does (Al-Hazmi, 2010). On the other hand, when she violated her norm, it was indicated that she was walking as if she was going to do something, not caring about those around her. This was what alerted him to her warning in a smart way. (So, I felt suspicious when I saw her unveiled). The pattern

of transcendence, for the recipient, was represented by Layla's behavior contradicting what the reader was accustomed to in his outside world, of the innate modesty of females, in addition to what he learned of the girls' fear of being exposed in front of the tribe. This is similar to the position of Imru' Al-Qais with his beloved, when he said:

May Allah keep you away from me, you are scandalous.
Don't you see the night-speakers and the people hereabouts?

The cultural pattern explained the contradiction between the world of the text and the world of the external reader, as it was the custom for women to cover themselves when dating their lovers. This was common in ancient times (Al-Jundi, 1991). This is what made the reader engage in the world of the text, and did not stop at this point, but rather delved into it to explain the contradiction between the two worlds. The text mentioned above included a social pattern prevalent among the Arabs: jealousy over honor and the disavowal of one's family and clan to defend it no matter what the cost. This is a position that has been mentioned in numerous books of history. (Al-Sheikh, 2003)

The second topic: What relates to the rulers and clan leaders.

Al-Isfahani cited several narrations related to rulers, governors, and clan leaders, in which the pattern of replacing worlds clearly emerged. What was narrated in favor of Habba bint Al-Aswad, a man from Banu Tha'al, over Harith bin Anab, who became angry, was a good example of this pattern. Harith satirized her people. One day, he was in Khaybar, and he came to meet a man from Quraysh who was sitting in his courtyard, reciting the poetry that he had recited to attack the Banu Tha'al and Banu Hattar, the sons of Atwud. In Khaybar, there was a man from Banu Jashm bin Abi Haritha bin Jiddi bin Tadul bin Bukhtar called "Awfa bin Hajar." He was reciting poetry that satirized Banu Bukhtar. Awfa heard him reciting:

The most people deserve to be insulted is
A lion competes with fawns and foxes
Awfa approached him and said "I am a deaf man and can hardly hear". "Come closer to me."

He asked Awfa, "Who are you?. Awfa replied, "I am a man from Qais, and I satirize this neighborhood of Bani Tha'al and Bani Bahtar, and I would like to narrate what satire was said about them." The man had a stick, and when he controlled Ibn Inab, he put his hands together with the stick and then hit his nose, shattering it and falling on his face. The above text dealt with what resulted from Hubba bin Al-Aswad preferring a man from Banu Tha'al over Harith bin Anab, who attacked Banu Tha'al in revenge for his dignity. This is what led Awfa to take revenge on his people, as mentioned in the paragraph. The woman represented the model, who had the ability to choose suitors due to their large number. This does not contradict the reader's outside world because it is common in all times and eras. However, the pattern of transcendence was represented in the generalization of satire against the people (Hubba bint Al-Aswad), which was evident in the verse above, as the poet made them all the most deserving of being insulted (people most deserving of insult). This goes in contrast to the external world of the reader by virtue of his life experience and awareness of the reality of things in his world, which determines the freedom of women in choosing a life partner and their equality with men in the images, codes, signs, and connotations that appear in the arts, and other patterns that formulate minds and perspectives". Thus, these patterns also formulate the behavior towards others in society". (Harman, 2010) (Raghib, 1991).

The societal background explained the contradiction between the two worlds and contributed to the recipient's involvement in the world of the text through the prevalence of satire in ancient Arab societies, whether due to marriage, 'musahara' (marriage kinship), or other reasons. Fighting occurred for the most trivial reasons, especially when dignity was violated, which the Arabs considered to be something that should not be violated. (Berou, 2001)

Likewise, it was narrated that when Muawiyah appointed Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah as governor of Kufa, he passed by Hind's house, and he went there and entered upon Hind after asking her permission. She let him in and put a sackcloth on earth for him, and he sat on it. Then she said to him, "Why did you come?"

"I came to marry to you" he replied.

She said, "By Christ, if I knew that I had a feature of beauty or youth that you desired in me, I would have responded to you, but you wanted to say, 'I owned the kingdom of Al-Nu'man bin Al-Mundhir, and I married his daughter.'"

"For the sake of your idol, is this what you wanted?
"Yes, by Allah". He replied.
"There is no way for him," she replied.
Al-Mughirah got up, left, and said to her:
You (Hind) realized what I wished for when alone
God bless you, daughter of Al-Numan
You brought Al-Mughirah back to his mind
Kings are of a pure kind
O Hind, sufficient it, you told the truth, so hold on
Honesty is the best speech for a person

The above text dealt with the position of Hind, the daughter of Al-Nu`man Ibn Al-Mundhir, who had entered monastic life and secluded herself in a monastery named after her. Al-Mughira bin Shu'bah, the governor of Kufa, proposed to her, but she rejected him, as stated in the paragraph above. Hind represented the model of an ascetic and devout woman, who devoted herself to non-worldly pleasures. Her response to Al-Mughirah was like breaking the reader's horizon of expectation, filling the textual gap that Iser calls "zones of negation." These areas are where the reader intervenes, based on his horizon of expectations, the facts, and customs of the interpreted group to which he belongs, in order to modify some of the values he expects, but they don't happen"(Hamouda, 1989).

He expected her to accept marriage to the governor in the hope of regaining her father's lost kingdom, but she rejected the suitor, the king, and the sultan. This represents a conflict for the reader between his external world, which assumes her acceptance of the marriage proposal, and the internal world of the text. Hence, the reader resorts to contemplating the prevailing cultural pattern at that time, which indicates the monastic life's estrangement from worldly pleasures and the deprivation of the body from them. It was a trend that was repeated many times in Arab countries, as sources reported that many monks stopped worshiping in their cells and moved away from social life. (Al-Jazari, 1997). Hind's position represented the effect of religion on adding psychological balance to discourse, as it is one of the main components of human reality. This position does not merely represent knowing Allah, but rather must reflect on human will, which was evident in Hind's refusal to marry Al-Mughira despite the temptation of the offer. (Boukhudra, n.d.)

Moreover, the context of the discourse bears an indication of Hind's understanding of what was going on in Al-Mughirah's mind and his desire to bring together the king of Al-Nu'man as governor of Kufa, as well as marrying Al-Nu'man's daughter (Hind). This doubled her rejection of the offer, especially since Al-Mughirah acknowledged the validity of what she said, which was evident in his saying, "You (Hind) realized what I wished for when alone." She was able to bring him back to his right path when he said, "You brought Al-Mughirah back to his mind." This confirmed the validity of her position and prepared the reader to engage in the internal world of the text and replace it with his external world.

Conclusion

The context of transcendence is a substitution based on an assumption where language replaces real worlds with metaphorical or created worlds. That is, it conveys reality into a set of possible and potential worlds. This hypothesis found its substitutive dimensions in the narrations by Al-Isfahani in his book 'Kitab Al-Aghani (the Book of Songs)', in a way that prompted the reader to engage in the world of the text. The reader did not stop at this point, but rather delved into it to explain the contradiction between the worlds created by language in discursive patterns. This may create different worlds of astonishment and fascination, getting out of normality, and other things that contradict the real world of the reader. It may refer to knowing the social context of the situation in order to engage in a world inside the text and replace it with his external world. This discourse is mentioned in many historical books.

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