

The Hierarchy Of Secrets In The Female Novel: Dissecting The Narrative Between Disclosure And Secrecy

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Abstract: *The feminist novel uses secrets as a narrative tool to resist Male Domination, where secrecy and disclosure expose oppressive regimes through techniques such as metaphor and an unreliable narrator, as in the works of Nawal al-Saadawi and Hanan al-Sheikh. The reader is faced with the challenge of interpreting these symbolic layers between superficial reading and deep interpretation. While some critics see the secrets as fostering a culture of silence, others defend their liberating role in repressive societies. In essence, the secrets in feminist writing represent resistance and rebellion, in which literature becomes a means of survival and reshaping of social consciousness. Secrets in the feminist novel form a complex tapestry of silence and speech, with which the reader interacts as an explorer of muffled depths, surfacing as much as diving into the vestibules of memory and identity. The secrets here are not just a dramatic plot, but a narrative strategy employed to create a hidden dialogue with social reality, dismantling the masculine traditions that have settled in it. What does the author want from this hierarchy of secrets, and what does she announce and hide in the narrative spaces, and how does the reader receive this double language, and what criticism is directed at it? This research reveals some aspects of it.*

Keywords: Feminist novel, Secrets, Resistance, Recipient, Criticism

Introduction

Secrets in the feminist novel form a complex tapestry of silence and speech, with which the reader interacts as an explorer of muffled depths, surfacing as much as diving into the vestibules of memory and identity. The secrets here are not just a dramatic plot, but a narrative strategy employed to create a hidden dialogue with social reality, dismantling the masculine traditions that have settled in it. What does the author want from this hierarchy of secrets, and what does she declare, and hide in the narrative spaces and how does the reader receive this double language, and what criticism is directed at it?

The secret to doing resistance: what the writer wants

Literary critic Susan Gilbert argues in her book "The crazy woman in the attic" that feminist writing often turns into a space of rebellion against stereotypes imposed by patriarchy. Here, the secret becomes a tool for avoiding social censorship, a means of saying what is not said. As in Nawal al-Saadawi's novels, the Writer hides under the guise of personal anecdotes scathing criticism of symbolic and physical violence against women, using techniques such as metaphor or an unreliable narrator to confuse the reader and force him to look for the hidden layers of the text.

In the novel (A woman at Ground Zero), the Confessions of "Firdaus" turn into a mirror revealing an entire repressive system, while the writer, masterfully concealing any direct reference to the author's own self, as if reminding us that every revealed secret carries with it a thousand other secrets.

Secrecy and disclosure: The problem of the dual narrative

The strategy of concealment in the feminist novel is inseparable from the concept of "danger and opportunity" that Julia Kristeva talked about, every disclosure involves a risk, every reticence carries a seed of liberation. Sometimes the writer chooses to reveal small secrets to protect the big ones, for example, to show the heroine's struggle with stormy love to hide her criticism of the essence of marriage as an oppressive social institution, as in the works of Hanan Sheikh. Other times, the secrets are presented piecemeal, like an amputee archive, to point to a woman's lost memory, as in Asia Jabbar's novels that reconstruct women's history through narrative fragments.

Accept the recipient: between the introduction and the fragment

Here the reader faces a double challenge: feminist texts rich in secrets ask him to be a partner in deciphering codes, but they also raise questions about the limits of hermeneutics. Some readers, as the critic Edward Said sees it, may fall into the trap of superficial reading, ignoring the symbolic layers, while others see in this hierarchy an expression of female specificity that is not translated in the dominant male language.

On the other hand, studies of the reception of texts, such as those conducted by the critic Fatima Mernisi, show that Arab readers, for example, react to the secrets revealed in the novel as a liberating experience, while conservative readers may reject it as a departure from "social modesty".

The targeted criticism is: is the secret a prison or an outlet?

The feminist novel faces varying criticism; some critics consider relying on secrets as a continuation of the culture of silence that women want to get out of, as critic Abdelfattah kilitu puts it, where the text becomes an arena for winking instead of direct confrontation. Others, such as critic Gayatri Spivak, defend this strategy as being a necessary tactic in societies that judge women for their words.

As for the aesthetic problem, some, such as Tzvetan Todorov, sometimes criticize the ambiguity of feminist texts, usually because overcoding literature loses its communicative function. But he replies to them that the literary language is not a carrier of meaning, but as its creator, and that secrets are part of the formation of the identity of a different female text.

Secrets like other geographies

The hierarchy of secrets in the feminist novel is inseparable from the course of the feminist struggle itself; every revealed secret is a small victory over the taboos, and everything that is hidden remains a seed for a coming rebellion. Perhaps these novels, with their twisted secrets, have found a way to say everything without saying it, declaring that feminist writing is, in essence, the art of survival.

The theory of analysis and upgrading and its approach to the hierarchy of secrets in the feminist novel:

Towards a libertarian narrative

The theory of analysis and upgrading is one of the regenerative critical schools that aims to go beyond the traditional interpretation of literary texts, by integrating two integral stages: Analysis as a deconstructive process of revealing the hidden layers of the text, and uplifting as a constructive path connecting these layers and their influence in the development of individual consciousness or social transformation. In the context of the feminist novel. This theory offers a unique critical lens for understanding the dynamic of secrets between disclosure and concealment, not just as an aesthetic tool, but as a revolutionary act that reshapes power relations.

Analysis stage: dismantling the geometry of the secret

At its initial stage, the theory is based on the dismantling of narrative structures to reveal the hidden geometry of secrets, which the writer forms to counteract social taboos. Here, the secret - as in the novels of Ulpha Youssef intimacy or Radwa Ashour's - becomes made up of overlapping layers; a superficial one that addresses the immediate recipient, and a deep one that hides an anti-patriarchal discourse.

The analysis is not limited to monitoring "what is being said", but dives into "how to say" and "why this particular concealment". For example, in the novel Al-Khebaa (Hiding) by Salwa Al-Nuaimi, the theory analyzes the use of bodily metaphors as codes to refer to systematic violence, in which the writer transforms the female body into a secret space that declares resistance via coding.

The stage of elevation: from the text to the social act

Elevation (upgrading) is the bridge that the theory builds between literary analysis and its impact in reality. Revealing secrets is not an end in itself, but a step to activate the role of the text as a tool of change. The theory argues that the feminist novel, via the hierarchy of its secrets, produces a collective consciousness capable of challenging constants.

Take, for example, Sahar Khalifa's novel women of orchards, where analyses show how the writer hides her criticism of the occupation behind every day women's tales, but the uplift manifests itself in turning these secrets into a public dialogue about identity and liberation, making literature an engine of political action.

Interaction with the problems of traditional criticism

The theory faces questions such as: can textual analysis actually bring about social uplift And does the focus on "secrets" promote change or reproduce the culture of silence?

Here, the theory's vision differs from classical feminist criticism (as in Gilbert and Gubar) which focuses on deconstructing male ideology, while the theory of analysis and upliftment adds a forward-looking dimension, evaluating texts based on their ability to

create a "cumulative effect" that changes the societal mindset. It also avoids the problem of "excessive ambiguity" discussed by Todorov, by linking coding to its editorial purpose, not to its aesthetic self.

Challenges and limits of theory

However, the theory faces criticism, most notably:

1. Hyperidealism: the assumption that a textual analysis is capable of producing change without considering social complexities.
2. Neglecting different cultural contexts: the strategy of secrets in the Arab feminist novel (as in Ahlam Mostaganmi) differs from its western counterpart (such as Virginia Woolf) due to the different nature of taboos.
3. A shift towards self-interpretation: the critic may reconstruct the "elevation" according to his personal vision, away from the writer's intentions.

The femAinist novel as a laboratory of critical renewal

Despite these challenges, the theory of analysis and elevation remains an inspiring framework for understanding the feminist novel, as it redefines literature from a "mirror reflecting reality" to an actor creating it. The sequence of secrets here is not a narrative game, but a map of the liberation of memory, body and language. The theory also provides an answer to the question "Why do we write?" Feminist writing is an attempt to analyze reality with new blood, elevating it to spaces that have not yet been penetrated.

Conclusion:

In the crumbs of words hidden between the lines of the feminist novel, a new geography of existence is born. The secrets here are not just shadows of silence, but candles that illuminate the labyrinths of alienated memory, digging rivers of defiance into the body of the text. The writer masterfully weaves a double narrative: she proclaims a semblance of confession, while concealing in it a revolt against sacred coffins. Thus the novel becomes a fragmentary mirror, reflecting to the reader an apparent face of the tale, hiding in its depths a thousand other faces of oppression and liberation.

Between the analysis of hidden layers and the ascent of the text into the space of social action, the novel unfolds as a laboratory of freedom. Every revealed secret is not the end, but a gateway to deeper questions of identity and power. Despite the ridicule of critics of the altruism of coding over frankness, this coded language remains the first survival language of women who fight with the body of words the prisons of reality.

It is a writing that triumphs not with fanfare, but with a whisper that penetrates consciences like wildfire. The novel may not change the world overnight, but it sows in the reader the seeds of distrust towards absolute certainty, reconstituting the authority of the question as a resisting act. This is how the secrets from the captivity of silence turn into wings that fly the novel towards a horizon that only those who dare to read between the lines realize, where the truth is not a revelation that is announced, but an adventure that is discovered by the conscience before the eye.