

“I AM HIS PAWN, HIS SLAVE AND HIS PROPERTY”: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ABUSE OF WOMEN IN AMMA DARKO’S *BEYOND THE HORIZON*

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Abstract

In *Beyond the horizon*, Amma Darko uses words in unique ways to bring the subject of gender representations and the abuse of women to the fore. Employing a stylistics framework of analysis, this study investigates the text’s parallelisms and deviations, and interprets and uncovers the implied and underlying meanings of issues related to the abuse of women in the novel. The analysis reveals how through patterned repetitions of words and sentences, as well as some language deviations in the text, men abuse women physically, emotionally, sexually and economically. The paper shows that through the use of patterned repetition of words and sentences, and deviations such as metaphor and simile, Darko reveals the struggles of and unequal relationships between the “pawn”, “slave” and “property” (largely represented by Mara) on one hand, and the “master”, “lord” and “pimp” (represented by Akobi, Oves and Osey) on the other hand.

Keywords: Amma Darko, *Beyond the Horizon*, stylistics, parallel structures, women abuse.

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Introduction

A closer look at Amma Darko's text, *Beyond the horizon*, reveals the abuse of women, represented by the protagonist, Mara, in a largely patriarchal society. Thus, in Ghana (and later, in Germany), Mara is abused by the traditional system of her society where she is presented as without voice. Within this same traditional setup, Mara's husband, Akobi is empowered to assume control over Mara and this gives him the tenacity to perpetuate the evils against Mara in *Beyond the Horizon*. The unequal relationships in the text are signalled by the words of Mara in: "He is my lord, my master and my pimp.... I am his pawn, his slave and his property" (p.3). These negative remarks capture the systemic abuse of women in the novel by men. Looking at the concept of abuse, Tracy (2021) notes that:

While the definition of abuse is simple, the meaning of abuse isn't so clear. Yes, abuse is when one person purposefully hurts another, but that is a common occurrence in life and most of us are guilty of engaging in that from time to time. But what abuse really means is control. When a truly abusive situation exists, it's because one party is seeking to control the other through abuse. And while this might be an explanation of abuse, it's certainly no excuse. One person has no right to exercise control over another through abuse" (<https://healthyplace.com.com/abuse/abuse-information/what-is-abuse-abuse-definition>).

Evident in the definition are elements of hurt and control, where an abuser subjects the abused to hurt, and controls the abused in various ways. Abuse happens in homes, at the workplace, and in every facet of our lives. But whether home or workplace, or any other place, abuse takes many forms. For instance, Slabbert & Green (2013) discuss the abuse at home (domestic violence) and conclude that it "generally occurs in the form of the following types of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and economic" (p.237). It means the abused could undergo any of these four main forms of abuse. These four forms of abuse are further endorsed by a number of studies (Bassuk, Dawson and Huntington, 2005; Danis and Lee, 2003; and Riger, Bennet, Wasco, Schewe, Frohmann, Camacho and Campbell, 2002). This situation is further expanded by Bollen, Artz, Vetten & Louw (1999) when they note that "the range of abuses that women

may suffer is wide and can include physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse, as well as stalking, forced isolation in the home and other controlling behaviours” (p.7). Although everyone is prone to abuse, women and largely children suffer most abuses (Slabbert & Green, 2013; Bollen et.al., 1999).

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (hereafter referred to as WDHS) (2016) defines these four main forms of abuse as follows: “Physical abuse is an intentional act that results in pain, injury, or impairment” (p.1). Emotional or psychological abuse “is language or behavior intended to intimidate, humiliate, ridicule, threaten, frighten, harass, coerce, blame, or scapegoat, or otherwise cause emotional pain or distress” (WDHS, p.1). Sexual abuse, on the hand, is “nonconsensual sexual contact of any kind” (WDHS, p.2), and may take several forms such as rape, name-calling, withholding sex and/or affection, among others. Financial or economic abuse “is the illegal or improper use the funds, assets or property of an individual” (WDHS, p.2). The woman, who undergoes these forms of abuse may suffer one or all of these abuses at a time: “A number of women who are physically abused are also abused emotionally” (Slabbert & Green, 2013, p.241). As a woman, Mara in *Beyond the horizon* undergoes these four forms of abuse and this situation makes her think of herself as a “pawn”, a “slave” and a “property”. Thus, the conditioned society, where one is perceived as a pawn, a slave and a property and the other as a lord, a master and a pimp informs the abuses and imbalance of equal relationships in the novel. A study of these abuses with focus on how words are selected and given prominence in specific structures or utterances, as well as the sort of deviations these words may carry and signal the abuse of women, becomes the primary concern of this work.

Approach to the study

Stylistics involves “the analysis of the distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect” (Verdonk, 2002, p. 4). It examines the use of language to bring out issues and their literary effects. Language is crucial to stylisticians because various patterns of a text form the basis of analysis (Simpson, 2004). Rahmani and Pashazanoons (2017) explain further that stylistics studies the linguistic structures of works and employs the ways of language to underscore the aesthetics of literary work. Defining stylistics can be an arduous task because its scope can be wide (Zyngier, 2001). Does it belong to linguistics or to literary

criticism? Zyngier (2001) traces the history of stylistics and how some writers have condemned stylistics; but after many years, it has survived and continues to be a potent approach to analysis. Interacting with the language of texts and inferring meanings from texts are all part of the stylistic approach to analysis (Timucin, 2010). In *A Linguistic Guide to Poetry*, Leech (1969) reveals how stylistics may be simply regarded as an analysis of style in literary works. Surely, one cannot consider the style of any text without looking at the language and/or organization of the text. To appreciate language, words are crucial, as they form the main building blocks for the exposition and development of ideas in a text.

The use of a word in a specific context determines its meaning, as do the regularities that control our deployment of the sentences in which it appears. Horwich (1998) notes how the "meaning" of a word or group of words can be the concept it reveals, or the thing in the world to which it refers, or the propositional element that it expresses (given the context), or what the speaker (perhaps mistakenly) believes it to be about, or what the speaker wants his audience to infer from its use. Sometimes, patterned words, phrases, clauses or sentences – elements of parallelisms – of a text have meanings other than the literal meanings. Haugh (2012) notes that "inference" is the "cognitive process by which participants figure out meaning beyond what is said" (p. 1). In effect, he refers to the unexpressed ideas in a text which are encoded but decoded by the mind of the reader through the reader's interactions with a text. This is what is meant by reading between the lines. There are several utterances in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* which carry more than just one interpretation, encoded in deviations such as similes, metaphors, repetitions and others. Thus, beyond the words, phrases, clauses and sentences which could be patterned to reflect the abuses of the woman, the similes, metaphors and repetitions, among others, are also textual patterns and deviations potentially employed by Darko to convey the struggles and experiences of the protagonist, Mara. Before we delve into patterns and interpretations of language used by Darko to foreground the abuse of women in her narrative, let us briefly consider the synopsis of her work, *Beyond the Horizon* and some reviews it has received.

Synopsis and brief review of *Beyond the Horizon*

Beyond the Horizon recounts the story of Mara, a Ghanaian girl from the village of Naka, who is made to marry Akobi, a messenger clerk at the Ministries in the city, Accra. Mara moves from the village to join her husband in his one-bedroom corrugated-iron sheet shelter but he constantly abuses her through beatings and sadistic sexual demands. Brought up to respect men, Mara endures the physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuses of her husband (and others). Akobi finally travels to Europe but Mara still hopes for the best on his return. However, to her surprise, she receives a letter from Akobi in which he asks her to join him in Europe, Germany to be specific. This news raises Mara's hope of a better marriage. However, when she finally gets to Germany through the help of an agent, she has to endure all four forms of abuse in her dealings with Akobi and his cohorts.

The issues in *Beyond the Horizon* are captured in the literature. Scholars such as Kammampool (2017), Zanou, Gbaguidi & Djossou (2017), and Nutsukpo (2019a) establish that male-controlled ideas and standards are pressing factors in Africa which govern many situations and aid in the subjugation of women in general. Issues of prostitution and pornography have also been considered Frias (2002) and Ladele (2016). Frias (2002), for instance, notes how Darko articulates the concerns of African women who are voiceless and abused sexually in foreign lands. She observes that Darko uses her protagonist, Mara, to represent an African woman who struggles through conventions and ideologies of the largely patriarchal setting she finds herself. It is in this setting that the African woman manages to reconstruct her own self and voice. As remarked by Nutsukpo (2019b), Ladele (2016) "argues that through forced prostitution, the bodies of these women are re-colonized by European imperialism supported by indigenous patriarchal systems" (p.118). Umezurike (2015a) attempts a comparative analysis of the theme of resistance in contemporary African fiction by examining Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*. He points out how these writers confront patriarchal oppression and empower their female characters to "reconstitute their subjectivity from subaltern positions: positions of disadvantage and subjection" (p.153). Oseghale and Ohiwerei (2019), on their part, examine the various social ills in the narrative. Their work foregrounds the systematic exploitation of women by men in almost every part of the world, not just in Africa. Their work shows the levels of hardships that some women must

face in their various settings. These difficulties include physical and domestic abuses, rape and lack of financial opportunities, among others. Other scholars (Asempasah & Sam, 2016; Lefara, 2017; Joseph Peter, 2022) identify and discuss the structural logics that drive the narrative dynamics in the novel, *Beyond the Horizon*. Asempasah and Sam, for example, examine the demythologization of Europe as the privileged place of redemption and reconstituting the self. These two logics are not independent of each other but rather, the realization of the first brought about Mara's decision to reconstitute herself. By examining the semantics of names in the novel, the writers show how the name Mara is used purposefully to portray the protagonist's (Mara) awakening and transformation of her "self". This awakening and transformation of Mara from naivety to self-knowledge, as noted by Umezurike (2015b), does not really liberate her as it should have. This is because Mara continues to bemoan her current status as a woman when she is presented in the opening pages of the novel, sitting in front of an oval mirror. More recent works like Asempasah (2022) contribute to the relevance of Darko's work in the era of post Covid-19. Asempasah, therefore, argues (among other things) that Darko's exploration of the shame of being post-colonial and postcolonial liberation is necessary to thinking about a post-Covid-19 Africa and the need for Africa to systematically detach itself from western influence.

Clearly, scholars have looked at various issues and themes in Darko's novel with focus also on the structure of the novel. Considering the stylistic analysis of the text would underscore the importance of parallelisms and deviations in revealing the abuses of the protagonist, Mara, in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. Thus, the parallel structures or parallelisms, placing primacy on the significance of words and sentences, and the various deviations of language use such as similes and metaphors, can be further decoded and analysed to show the ways in which women like Mara are voiceless, marginalized and abused by especially men in the patriarchal society women find themselves. These patterns could be repetitions of similar or dissimilar words or expressions, as well as sentences. The patterns could also be seen in the sounds of words (resulting in sound devices such as alliteration, consonance and assonance, among others). In this work, focus is placed on (repeated) words and expressions, even when these patterns occur in sentence structures. Also, consideration is given to sentence structures that have deviations (from the "normal" language code) such as metaphor and simile.

Analysis

Before one gets introduced to the actual sequence of events that take place in the story, one finds the female protagonist of the story, Mara, sitting before her mirror in her room and brooding over the situation she finds herself in. Bollen et al. (1999) note that "psychological abuse often more frequently and chronically than physical violence and the well-being of many women is affected negatively by psychological abuse" (p.7). This is the state Mara finds herself in. Her disturbed state of mind is reflected in the following language:

I am just in brief silky red underpants, so I'm virtually naked, but that is not why I feel cold because this coldness I feel does not grip my body so much as it does my soul. It's deep inside me that feels this chilliness...
(p.1).

Paying attention to the first and complex sentence of this instance, it is understandable that one may feel cold when virtually naked. But, as shown in the second and emphatic sentence, for coldness to grip one's "soul" is a totally chilling or perhaps extraordinary experience. Nakedness or exposure to cold air is what makes one feel cold; so, it can be deduced that Mara is indeed exposed or "naked" in the sense of the expression. Both outwardly and especially inwardly, Mara is cold, naked, exposed and vulnerable. Thus, in the above quotation, one notices that Mara is presented as uncovered, unprotected, divested, peeled, and stripped emotionally and this makes her feel the chilliness inside her "soul" more than what she feels on her "body". The tangible – Mara's "body" – becomes less relevant in this situation for Mara, while the intangible, her "soul", rather assumes prominence in order for her to express her innermost feeling. It is an experience that can, perhaps, only be imagined; and even when imagined, it does not still come close to how Mara herself feels. It is a "chilling" experience for Mara herself and the involving reader. No wonder Mara resorts to crying. As she cries, she compares the way her tears are dropping to "the beating of the devil's drums" (p. 2): "Tears are slowly rolling down my face in an agonizing rhythm like the beating of the devil's drums ta...ta...ta... dropping down one after the other, painfully slow, painfully gradual..." (p. 2).

From the excerpt, the modifier "agonizing", which portrays bitterness, cruelty, galling et cetera, is used to describe the way the tears are rolling down. Even in bitterness and pain, the

rolling down of the tears forms a rhythm which is compared to the beating of the devil’s drum. The simile is apt since the devil is noted for evil, trouble and wickedness; therefore, the rhythm of the rolling of the tears cannot be anything pleasant too. This alone can set the reader thinking about what this woman might have gone through to harbour this kind of pain. She further describes herself as “garbage”: “I sit...this bit of garbage that once used to be me and I cry” (p. 3). Whoever compares herself to garbage? The metaphor in the quotation presents her as something that is unwanted, trash, useless, chaff and waste. This is how she sees what is left of her and, again, the reader wonders what might have happened to the protagonist to unapologetically refer to herself as garbage. The effective combination of the appalling visual imagery in the opening scenes with instances of simile and metaphor helps to underscore the psychological abuse of the protagonist and the heavy dose of suspense as to what lies ahead in the text.

With this kind of entry into the story, it is not surprising when Mara describes the man she works for as: “He is my lord, my master and my pimp” (p.3). This is contrasted with how the man (Oves) perceives her: “And I ... I am his pawn, his slave and his property” (p. 3). These two pregnant opposites suggest the physical and sexual abuse of Mara and they (the opposites) can be presented stylistically as follows:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. He is my + $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{lord} \\ \text{master} \\ \text{pimp} \end{array} \right]$ | 2. I am his + $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{pawn} \\ \text{slave} \\ \text{property} \end{array} \right]$ |
|---|--|

These two instances are paradigmatic sets, with each describing a particular person (Mara) and her relationship with another person. Looking at the two sets on the surface, it is obvious that one is superior to the other, although both are undesirable in the life of Mara. The first set or patterning of noun phrases is how Mara, the protagonist sees Oves, the man she works for. From this first set, all the words are related in the sense that each item can be replaced by the other. They suggest domination in the text. Syntagmatically, all the words are related to “He is my” and they are also synonymously related as they can all be +human, and context-wise, +male. All the words again share a synonymous meaning of “having control”, and potently

depict Mara's sense of helplessness. The second set, which describes how Oves perceives Mara, has words like "pawn", "slave" and "property" which also form a paradigm of similar meaning. Syntagmatically, they are all related to "I am his". Synonymously, these three words are related as they can all be +animate, that is +/- human. These words also share the synonymous meaning of "being controlled", and further depict the helplessness of Mara. While the sense of "being controlled" is evident, the more crucial semantic relationship has to do with ownership or possession which makes Mara a disposal commodity. It is clear that Oves – the boss – has control over the woman (Mara) who works for him, and this is why he prostitutes her for money. This is also why Mara finally declares: "He is... my pimp", to show her dependency on her master.

On the other hand, the noun phrases Mara uses to describe herself in the second paradigm show that she can be considered not just as human, but also as non-human since other things aside from humans can be "pawns" and "properties". This is the plight of the protagonist who is a woman and represents the oppressed African woman who can be likened to, for example, something that is not human (a pawn). The protagonist is also without any voice or will as human (a slave) and therefore can be treated like someone's asset (property). These attributes are further heightened when one traces the roots of Mara's abuse to her family setup in Naka.

Mara's abuse, or more specifically, exploitation starts from her own family. In the words of Nutsukpo (2019a), "Socio-cultural exploitation involves the social conditioning of women to accept patriarchal notions and values which devalue them, reinforce their supposed inferiority to men, and leave them open to manipulation and exploitation" (p.138). Denying Mara the needed education which could have given her self-awareness and raised her self-esteem was not enough; Mara's father marries her off with profit in mind rather than to ensure her welfare. Just as in Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* when kings and chiefs sell their kinsmen to slavery for a few pounds and shiny objects, Mara is also given to Akobi for "two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewellery, and two bottles of London Dry Gin" (p. 3). Mara's father does not consider the suitor's character and Mara's happiness because of the aforementioned items he receives. The items signify the wealth of Akobi, and subsequently the need for Mara to "worship" Akobi. Mara is thus exchanged for

animate and inanimate objects which cannot be equated to her value as a human being, not just as a woman. Mara is further positioned to appreciate the need to unequivocally worship and adore the wealth giver, her husband, as "Tradition demands that the wife respect, obey and worship her husband..." (p.13). Yet, she is not told that in return the man must take "good care of the wife" (p.13) as Mama Kiosk, her voice of reason in the text, makes her aware. In other words, the same tradition that appears to socially position the man as superior to the woman also makes it imperative for the man to take "good care of the" woman. This situation still does not create room for both men and women to be treated as equals in various relationships.

It is indeed dehumanizing for a fully grown, newly married woman to be physically abused and asked by her husband to consider throwing people's rubbish away as her job. It becomes clear from the onset of their marriage that Mara is brought to the city to work for the husband, Akobi. Akobi sees the union as a business venture which must yield profits rather than losses. Consequently, he slaps Mara for not adding interest to the money he gives her as capital for her boiled eggs business. In Akobi's view, Mara is actually meant to add interest to the capital in order for him to benefit: "'What do you mean paying without interest?' he bellowed eventually" (p. 21). In the immediate question raised by Akobi, the word "interest" goes with "benefit". If Akobi demands interest for settling his own wife in business, then it makes it possible for the reader to deduce one of the reasons why Mara has been married: to add value or interest to their "business" – marriage. It is a clear case of economic abuse in marriage by a husband.

Clearly, the perception Akobi has of his wife Mara as somebody he has brought from the village to work for him makes him treat her anyhow. Like a slave working for the master, Mara is beaten whenever the master feels unhappy about her. The writer uses the following parallel structures to depict Mara's plight:

When I didn't bring him the bowl of water and soap in time for washing his hands before and after eating, I received a nasty kick in the knee.

When I forgot the chewing stick for his teeth, which he always demanded be placed neatly beside his bowl of served food, I got a slap on the face.

And when the napkin was not at hand when he howled for it, I received a knuckle knock on my forehead (p. 19).

Parallel structures, also called parallelism, are the repetition of a chosen grammatical form within a construction so that each idea in the construction follows the same grammatical pattern. When writers use parallel structures, they are less prone to making common grammatical errors that may come with uncoordinated structures. Besides, writers may succeed in stylistically stating the monotonous and similar patterns of life using parallel structures. In the above instances, the writer succeeds in showing the symbiotic relationship between efforts and rewards or causes and effects. The effort or cause is signalled by the patterns: “When I didn’t; When I forgot...; And when the napkin was not at hand...”. These actions are all efforts Mara forgets sometimes when she serves her husband. These failed acts (causes) of hers become the reason for her to suffer the following physical abuses (effects): “I received a nasty kick in the knee...; I got a slap on the face...; I received a knuckle knock on my forehead.” The choice of “received”, “got” and “received” illustrates the rewards, although undesirable, that Mara had to endure from her husband. And the choice of “knee”, “face”, “forehead” also shows how her body was physically abused by the husband. Thus, from the three sentences, Darko uses parallel structures to show forgetfulness on Mara’s part (cause) and its (forgetfulness’) unhealthy consequences (effects). Mara’s forgetfulness when she attended to her husband was equally met with specific abuses by the husband.

As a slave, a worker and a subordinate to her husband, Mara is not even supposed to get pregnant in their “business” – marriage. Childbearing is very important to most couples and every marriage ideally looks forward to this with much joy and anticipation. However, since it is Akobi’s intention to exploit Mara economically, he becomes extremely angry and beats her for getting pregnant. It is obvious that caring for babies takes a lot of courage and time. For Akobi, the cost of caring for a baby in addition to looking after Mara was draining. He believes that if Mara has become pregnant, then she needs to start a proper job besides her menial job of throwing rubbish away for Mama Kiosk. This is established in the following utterance by Mara:

The third day he spoke with me. ‘I have decided that you must start work to earn proper money, now that we are going to increase,’ he began. ‘You have been here for long enough now, and you can work. I can’t cater for us when your child comes’ ... ‘and I have more important plans’ (p. 17).

While some husbands will ask their first-time pregnant wives not to work in order not to stress themselves and the unborn child, Akobi demands more work from his pregnant wife. In his self-declared business empire – the marriage, he sees everything as an opportunity to make maximum profit. In a dialogue with Mara, Akobi refers to the child as “*your child*” (p.17). The possessive pronoun “*your*” in the quotation shows Mara and not Akobi as the owner of the unborn child. As it is not mandatory to care for something that is not yours, the conclusion is that Mara needs to work to earn money. This is to enable Mara to cater for her child when he or she is born while Akobi saves his money for “more important plans” (p.17).

Furthermore, Akobi deliberately takes away from Mara anything that appears to bring any form of happiness or self-confidence into her life so that he can continue to manipulate her. He forbids her from singing while cooking or washing; he forbids her from being liberal in her approach to other tenants, like having a conversation with them; he forbids her from moving with Mama Kiosk who is mother figure to her; and forbids her from getting new cloths for herself. He takes away her high-quality gold jewelry under the pretext of safe keeping and sells it together with other properties of hers to facilitate his travelling to Europe. For Akobi, the following activities which Mara performs – singing, conversing with friends, making new friends, and owning property – depict Mara’s gradual growth and sense of fulfilment. Akobi knows the danger in allowing Mara to enjoy these privileges or becoming independent of him. He therefore forbids Mara from engaging in these acts. The more naive and poor she is, the more dependent she will be on Akobi and the more prone she will be to all forms of abuse. This situation is summed up by Mara in the following extract:

He had observed that I had resumed singing when cooking or washing and he didn’t like it. I had become more liberal in my approach to the other tenants and turned into more of a conversationalist who now had various things in common with them to talk about: trade, people, pregnancy, babies; and he did not like it (pp. 23-24).

‘Mara,’ he called me one afternoon, ‘from now on I don’t want you to leave in the morning for the station together with Mama Kiosk’ (p. 24).

From the above, the parallel structures of “He had observed.....and he didn’t like it”, “I had become....and he did not like it” echo definite observations made by Mara who had started doing things that would make her largely independent of Akobi. The repetition of “and he did not like it” affirms a strong opposition to what Mara had found as her sources of joy. Clearly, the following parallel structures forecast what Mara had “in common” with others, rather than with Akobi:

[trade]
	people	
	pregnancy	
	babies	

Akobi does not support her “trade”, does not like her mixing with “people”, is not happy about her “pregnancy”, and has declared Mara’s unborn child as hers, not his. All these noun phrases (trade, people, pregnancy) therefore form a paradigm of happiness and a worldview for Mara. Take these away from her and she is obviously devoid of happiness and more dependent on Akobi. The situation makes it easier for Akobi to continue to subject Mara to all forms of abuse as Mara is entirely dependent on him.

As the man of the house, Akobi sees the wife as a product purchased with the dowry of his father. When he eventually travels to Europe and realizes that things are not as he had expected and he could not make money as quickly as he had anticipated, he deceives Mara into joining him in Europe for him to continue manipulating her; this time, in a more degrading way than he did back in Ghana.

Mara’s journey to Europe marks another milestone in her abuse. She arrives in Europe with the hope of reuniting with her husband in a very special way. After being handed over to Osey, Akobi’s most trusted friend, to continue the journey, Osey deliberately tries to subconsciously prepare Mara for the task ahead of her. First, he buys her strange-looking sausages which Mara claims she has never seen before. Then he tells her Germany is a place of only six things which are: “knickerbockers, hunter’s hut, sausages, brown bread, beer and Mercedes Benz cars” (p. 61). Perhaps, these items portray Germany as a land of pleasure, a

place where Mara should expect to be entertained. It is because of this entertainment and mental preparation of Mara that Osey takes Mara to watch a movie:

Osey said before we went into the cinema house that this was his welcome treat for me, a film full of action...What I saw was not the kind of action I expected. Osey obviously had a different opinion of what an action film was. This action that I saw horrified me and left me sitting in my seat heated up with my mouth wide open (p. 61).

How one is welcomed by another tells a lot about what one should expect. A warm welcome gives a sense of care and makes one feel that one can trust another. But that is not what Mara gets. Osey's show of hospitality horrifies and shocks Mara, as she sees women and especially African women having sex on a television screen at the cinema house. Why will Osey welcome a naive woman from Africa this way? Why did they have to watch a pornographic movie that was full of African women just like Mara? It could be said to be an indirect way of informing Mara why she had been brought to Germany. She had been brought to be sexually exploited for monetary gains. Referring to her cinema experience, Mara says: "It was a shock for me, my first shock, my first horror. And yet, my first lesson too" (p. 61-62):

My first + $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{shock} \\ \text{horror} \\ \text{lesson} \end{array} \right]$

All the three items are nouns, and they form a paradigm because they can be replaced by one another. Syntagmatically, they are all related to the repeated phrase, "My first". The patterned repetition of "my first" and the nouns in the paradigm emphasize the novelty in Mara's experience. Synonymously, "shock" and "horror" are related as horror comes because of shock, fear or dread. The watching of the movie, which is Mara's lesson, creates a mental disturbance (shock) that brings fear and shock (horror) to her. This mental and physical stress on Mara depicts her frailty in an environment where her immediate helpers are selfish and bent on using her to an end.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, one may consider two types of sexual exploitation: personal and consumer sexual exploitation (Nutsukpo, 2019a). Mara is not the only woman who experiences

these types of exploitation in the story. Vivian, Osey's wife and Kaye, Pompey's wife also fall victims. Surprisingly, all three women are engaged in prostitution which provides some form of income to their husbands. In fact, in the case of Mara, Akobi had always abused her sexually and treated her like filth, although she had accepted her lot as she thought tradition demanded she did so:

He was lying on the mattress, face up, looking thoughtfully at the ceiling when I entered. Cool, composed and authoritative, he indicated with a pat of his hand on the space beside him that I should lie down beside him. I did, more out of apprehension of starting another fight than anything else. Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped off his trousers, turned my back to him and entered me. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and lay out my mat because he wanted to sleep alone (p. 22).

In this extract, the writer carefully selects words that depict non-verbal communication which highlights the message of sexual abuse and male supremacy. Words like "cool", "composed", "authoritative", "indicated", "wordlessly", "stripped", "entered" and "ordered" all illustrate the power Akobi has over Mara and how he uses this power to abuse her. Mara is not only beaten when she does not add interest to the capital given her to start business, she must also come home after work to an unremorseful husband, who only sleeps with her without any foreplay as if to reassure himself of still being in control. This same behaviour of Akobi towards Mara is shown when Mara goes to Germany. After being away for some time, Mara expects her husband to welcome her in his arms and sleep with her in a manner that will indicate how much he has missed her. But that too is just one of Mara's dreams of a better Akobi. He reluctantly sleeps with her after Osey asks him to do so, in a way that makes Mara feel like a "whore":

As for Akobi's reaction, I could as well have been a four-penny whore. Without a word he got up, picked the cassette player, switched it on loud and with just a slight nod of the head towards the bathroom, beckoned me to come and receive my welcome dose...Then, very rigidly and businesslike, ordered as loud as the loud music would allow, 'Remove it quick quick,' pointing to my trousers (pp. 83-84).

Akobi's sudden, selfish and uninvolved acts leading to the sexual experience with Mara are acts which make Mara feel as if she were "a four-penny whore". The word "whore" itself is not pleasant for anyone to use for comparison. It can mean a promiscuous or immoral woman; it can also mean a venal or unscrupulous person. It shares semantic features of harlot, cocotte, bawd and call girl, et cetera. This is how Akobi's physical and sexual abuse of Mara makes her think of herself; she could easily pass for a whore, worth four pennies. In the two instances of lovemaking discussed above, the word "order" appears and this clearly tells the control Akobi has over Mara in their intimate relationship. The writer's use of the non-verbal mode of communication also goes a long way to portray the control that Akobi has over Mara which makes him abuse her in various ways. Akobi's body language in the above extract is selfish. He simply fails to regard the feelings of his partner, Mara. During their lovemaking, Mara describes the gory details in the following words:

He was brutal and over-fast with me, fast like he was reluctantly performing a duty, something he wouldn't have done if he had his way, which he must, because he must. And then he was up and I was still kneeling there, very much in pain because what he did to me was a clear case of domestic rape (p. 84).

He was + $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{brutal} \\ \text{over-fast} \end{array} \right]$

The two words in the paradigm are structurally related to the phrase "He was" and can have the attribute of "+ animate", which means these adjectives can also qualify things that are not human. These words may not necessarily share any common semantic feature, but the writer carefully selects them to show Akobi's selfish nature during lovemaking. The effect of the simile is strong in the following line: "... fast like he was reluctantly performing a duty". This shows the lack of interest in what Akobi was doing, and his lack of shame too. Akobi sleeps with his wife without recourse to her feelings, and this is what makes Mara describe the situation as "domestic rape". The visual imagery is one of shock at the level of pain or abuse Mara has to endure in lovemaking.

It must be added that, the verbal and non-verbal actions of Akobi toward Mara, especially in the presence of his friends, create the impression that others can take advantage of Mara. This is why Osey tries to seduce Mara in the train. Moreover, besides Mara, the situation of Vivian, Osey's wife, is not so different from Mara's. Osey could even sleep with Vivian in the presence of his friend Akobi and both men saw nothing wrong with it:

...I concluded that this wasn't the first time Akobi was seeing Osey's wife naked or the two of them having sex together; which, I concluded, explained the arrogance with which Osey tried to seduce me in the train (p. 84).

If Akobi has seen Osey's wife naked before, then Osey simply could not wait to see Akobi's wife naked too.

It is of significance to mention here that Darko uses some simple sentences to effectively capture the entirety of the abuse of women in the novel. Ranging from socio-cultural to economic to sexual abuse, the writer uses simple sentence structures like SVO/ SVC/ SVA/ ASV et cetera (S= subject, V= verb, C= complement; A= adjunct) to foreground her message of abuse. Let us consider the following sampled examples:

1. *"Akobi took the money I earned"* (p. 106) (Akobi took the money Mara earned).
2. *"Gitte too put whatever money she earned into her and Akobi's account"* (p. 106).
3. *"He took all the money she made"* (p.117) (Kaye says this about her boyfriend).
4. *"So, for a whole year and half, Kaye worked for him"* (p. 117) (Kaye worked for her boyfriend).
5. *"I was there to work for him"* (p. 129) (Vivian says this about the husband, Osey).
6. *"Only a whore's income can finance that"* (p. 130) (Vivian says this about her new boyfriend, Marvin).

From the above instances, the simple sentences are straightforward and easy to understand. In the first three examples, the repetition of "money" and "earned" foregrounds the sweat of women like Mara, Gitte and Kaye in their work. Their sweat and pain are exploited by their own men who are supposed to protect their interests. The "money" these women earn spurs their men on to continue abusing them. The simple sentences sum up the lives of these women who have been reduced to dependents on their men. In the fourth and fifth sentences, the repetition of "work(ed)" depicts the toil of Kaye and Vivian while their men enjoy their earnings. These simple sentence structures are a summary of what the lives of these women had become. They had become "pawns", "slaves" and "properties" to "lords", "masters" and "pimps".

Stylistically, like simple sentences, all the women who are exploited in the above examples appear to be simple, naive, straightforward and honest. They are easily abused because of their naivety and simple nature. Comfort and other white women like Ingrid who appear sophisticated, could not be abused like the others. In fact, they appear to be in control of affairs even more than the men. It is possible to assume that the naivety of the women who are manipulated contributes to their abuse. The moment these women like Mara gain awareness, they start asserting themselves and taking charge of their own destinies, whether these destinies are desirable or not. Their voice and utterances then assume some sophistication, invariably depicting their supposed freedom and the need to be heard loudly and unambiguously.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how women are abused in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* using stylistics framework to interpret the abuses. It is clear from the analysis so far that women are indeed abused in the story in various ways by men and most of these abuses revolve around their love and work lives. Evidently, the study reveals that the physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuses of women are brought to the fore through the deviations of mainly simile and metaphor and various parallelisms in the text; patterns which have been referred to, decoded and analyzed in the narrative. In the end, Amma Darko succeeds in bringing out the abuse of women through patterned words and sentences, as well as deviations.

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