

ANALYSIS OF COMMENTARY OF “A FAREWELL TO ARMS”
USING APPRAISAL THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Appraisal theory is concerned about the interpersonal meaning of a language. It acts as a tool for people to negotiate their attitudes and feelings. Therefore, every social event that appears is social relationship which results in a text that might be spoken or written. Novel commentary is one kind of text in which the reviewer poses his or her attitude and feelings towards the writer. This paper examines the language used by the writer of the Great American Bathroom Book (GABB) Volume 1 in giving commentary towards Ernest Hemingway's novel entitled *A Farewell to Arms* on page 5-A2. Appraisal theory is used to investigate the evaluative language expressed by the writer in reviewing the novel and presenting his opinion on the novel under review.

The findings demonstrate that the commentary mostly contains positive Appreciation as it reviews the novel. Positive Appreciation means that the writer evaluates the novel good and worth to read. Moreover in the last paragraph, he uses the word preeminent to appraise the novel writer, Ernest Hemingway. The analytical tool, afforded by the Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation systems, have been useful for the analysis of the novel commentary as it had allowed for a linguistic description to give review for the readers.

Keywords: appraisal theory, novel commentary, discourse analysis

Introduction

Interpersonal meaning in language which deals with the subjective presence of writers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate is important. It concerns with how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticise, and with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise. It involves the construction by texts of communities of shared feelings and values, and with the linguistic mechanisms for the sharing of emotions, tastes and normative assessments (Martin & White, 2005:1).

From the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the three variables of the context of situation through which the genre of novel commentary is realized can be briefly classified as follows: (1) field: information about the content of the novel as well as the reviewer's opinion; (2) tenor: the reviewer provides information and tries to persuade the readers to accept his opinion of the novel, and the readers receive the information, (3) mode: channel taken by language, whether it is spoken or written. Eggins and Slade in Page (2003:213) state that the interpretation of the lexical meanings is not only dependent on the co-text but also on the sociocultural background and positioning of the interactants. Appraisal analysis must therefore be sensitive to the potential for different readings or hearings of attitudinal meanings. Thus the language users (both speaker/writer and audience) and the importance of cultural and contextual issues are clearly foregrounded in the process of constructing appraisal.

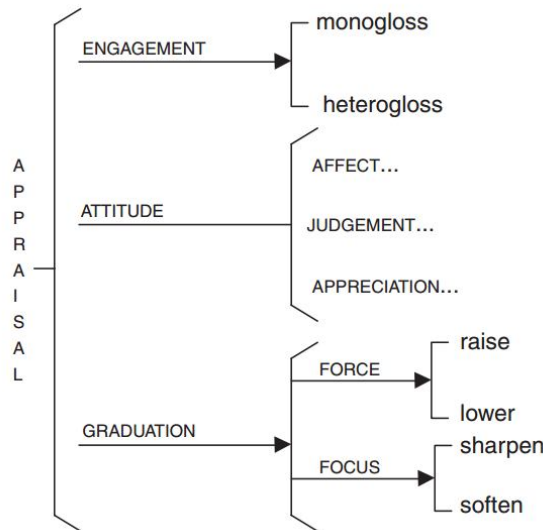
Most of appraisal theory is implemented to analyze narrative and fictive, yet analyzing novel commentary has received little attention. So this paper presents an investigation of novel commentary or review of *A Farewell to Arms*. A systemic functional analysis drawing on the Appraisal theory will be used in this study in the attempt to uncover commentary of a popular novel.

Appraisal Theory

Appraisal is understood as ‘[a] particular approach to exploring, describing and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships’ (White 2001:1). As Martin (2000:145) notes, this has points of compatibility with other approaches to evaluation including earlier work such as that developed by Labov (1972). Labov’s comments on evaluation stress the centrality of this area in the context of narratives of personal experience (1972:366).

Appraisal theory concerns about the interpersonal meaning of a language. It is considered to be a significant development of the theory within the paradigm of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The major concerns of Appraisal theory include how writers or speakers express their stance toward the things or ongoing events in the world, how they express their agreement or disagreement with the potential responses from the other readers, and how they establish and strengthen their identities in a text or discourse. (Wang & An, 2013:2)

The theory of appraisal proposes a taxonomy which includes three systems of attitude, engagement, and graduation. As stated by Martin & White (2005:35) attitude refers to our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things. Engagement deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse. Graduation attends to grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred.



Appraisal System (Martin & White, 2005)

Engagement deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse. According to White (2001), this system covers all the resources that the language offers for speakers to express their interpersonal positionings in the texts they produce. According to the Engagement system, utterances are either ‘monoglossic’ or ‘heteroglossic’. An utterance is ‘monoglossic’ when it makes no reference to other voices, and ‘heteroglossic’ when other voices other than the speaker can be detected.

Attitude itself is divided into three regions of feeling: ‘affect’, ‘judgement’ and ‘appreciation’. Affect deals with resources for construing emotional reactions. Judgement constitutes resources for assessing behaviour according to various normative principles, whereas Appreciation looks at resources for construing the value of things.

Martin & Rose in Pascual and Unger (2010:266) stated that the system of graduation encompasses those resources which strengthen or weaken attitude, resources for “adjusting the volume” of items. Graduation is subdivided into Force (the strengthening or weakening of the degree of evaluation) and Focus (the sharpening or softening of boundaries between categories in the context of non-gradable items).

A Farewell to Arms

A Farewell to Arms is one of most popular Ernest Hemingway's novel about psychological realism. The setting is written in Italy and Switzerland during the World War I. There are four principal characters of this novel: Frederic Henry, an American in the Italian army, Catherine Barkley, a British nurse, Rinaldi, an Italian surgeon and Frederic's friend, and Miss Ferguson, a British nurse and Catherine's friend.

I took the commentary of this novel from *The Great American Bathroom Book*, Volume 1, Compact Classic on page 5-A2. With over 1 million copies sold, the book which was edited by Steven W. Anderson contains nearly 120 comprehensive summaries and thought-provoking commentaries on the literary world's finest classics, including *A Farewell to Arms* which is written by Ernest Hemingway.

Commentary

Here is the commentary of the novel *A Farewell to Arms* as written in *The Great American Bathroom Book* Volume 1.

Combining a depressing ending and austere realism with an idealistic, descriptive story is one of Hemingway's particulars of style. A subtle, emotional power permeates the story without the reader really being aware of Hemingway's hand in it. Getrude Stein, the author's mentor, believed *A Farewell to Arms* was Hemingway's best novel. Certainly, it catapulted him into literary stardom.

Through the character of Frederic, Hemingway eloquently argues against war. Frederic accepts what life hands him without murmuring, but argues the fatalist's philosophy: whether you were good or bad, "they killed you in the end." Moreover, Hemingway shows how World War I, "the war to end all wars," transformed many of those who fought in it into a generation of cynics.

Hemingway himself served in the Italian army as an ambulance driver and, like Frederic, was wounded in the legs. Thus, much of *A Farewell to Arms*' emotional energy was taken from his own experiences.

The author portrays a sophisticated, intimate, caring relationship between Frederic and Catherine, a relationship entered into without the benefit of marriage. In the 1920's this was unheard of. The novel, in many other ways as well, helped break new social and literary frontiers, with its economical style and emotional understatement. And together with *A Sun Also Rises*, it established Hemingway as one of America's preeminent twentieth-century writers.

Results

The analysis results for each paragraph of commentary *A Farewell to Arms* are described as follow.

Paragraph 1

Combining a **depressing** [-Affect] ending and **austere** [+Appreciation] realism with an **idealistic** [+Judgement], **descriptive story** [Sharpen] is one of Hemingway's **particulars of style** [+Appreciation].

A **subtle** [+Appreciation], **emotional** [+Appreciation] power permeates the story without the reader **really** [Sharpen] being aware of Hemingway's hand in it.

Getrude Stein, the author's mentor, **believed** [Attribute: acknowledge] *A Farewell to Arms* was Hemingway's **best** [+Appreciation] novel. **Certainly** [Entertain: objective], it catapulted him into **literary** [+Appreciation] **stardom**.

Paragraph 2

Through the character of Frederic, Hemingway **eloquently** [Graduation: force, intensification, process] **argues** [Attribute: acknowledge] **against war** [+Judgement].

Frederic accepts what life hands him **without murmuring** [+Judgement], **but** [Disclaim: counter] **argues** [Attribute: acknowledge] the **fatalist's** [-Judgement] **philosophy**: whether you were **good** [+Judgement] or **bad** [-Judgement], “they killed you in the end.”

Moreover, Hemingway **shows** [Proclaim: endorsement] how World War I, “the war to end all wars,” transformed **many of those** [Graduation, force, quantification] who fought in it into a **generation of cynics** [-Judgement].

Paragraph 3

Hemingway himself served in the Italian army as an ambulance driver and, like Frederic, was wounded in the legs.

Thus, **much of** [Graduation: force, quantification] *A Farewell to Arms*' **emotional** [+Appreciation] energy was taken from **his own** [Sharpen] experiences.

Paragraph 4

The author **portrays** [Proclaim: endorsement] a **sophisticated** [+Affect], **intimate** [+Affect], **caring** [+Affect] relationship between Frederic and Catherine, a relationship entered into without the benefit of marriage. In the 1920's this was unheard of.

The novel, in many other ways as well, helped break **new** [+Appreciation] social and **literary** [+Appreciation] frontiers, with its **economical** [-Appreciation] style and **emotional** [-Appreciation] understatement.

And together with *A Sun Also Rises*, it established Hemingway as one of America's **preeminent** [+Appreciation] twentieth-century writers.

The calculation of each appraisal tokens in the text is presented into the table below.

Appraisal	Type	Total	
Attitude	Affect	[+]	3
		[-]	1
	Judgement	[+]	3
		[-]	3
	Appreciation	[+]	10
		[-]	2
Engagement	Disclaim	1	
	Proclaim	2	
	Entertain	1	
	Attribute	3	
Graduation	Focus	3	
	Force	3	

Appraisal Analysis of A Farewell to Arms

From the table above, it can concluded that the commentary mostly contains positive Appreciation as it reviews the novel. Positive Appreciation means that the writer evaluates the novel good and worth-to read. Moreover in the last paragraph, he uses the word preeminent to appraise Ernest Hemingway.

Another aspect of attitude, which is Judgement is also much demonstrated since the setting of the novel was in the World War I which shows a lot of normative principles during the war. Affect is also seen because it tells a roman story between Frederic and Catherine which employs feelings and emotions.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to use the Appraisal theory to examine commentary on Ernest Hemingway's 'A Farewell to Arms' novel . The primary advantage that has surfaced from the

use of the Appraisal theory for this analysis is in its capacity to trace the writer's commentary for his expressions of feelings or attitudes. The analytical tool, afforded by the Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation systems, have been useful for the analysis of the novel commentary as it had allowed for a linguistic description to give review for the readers.

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