

Celebration Of ‘White Supremacy’: A Critical Stylistic Analysis Of Tarzan Of The Apes

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Abstract

Edgar Rice Burroughs' novel Tarzan of the Apes has been celebrated as a classic of adventure fiction that is known globally. It is important to explore the ideological world built through the language choices that the writer has made. For that purpose, the current research through the lens of Critical Stylistics aims to examine the different ways through which ‘white supremacy’ is built and reinforced throughout the novel. Critical Stylistics as a methodological tool looks at challenging dominant ideologies. The analysis of the novel shows that Burroughs through linguistic and structural choices has been able to create a dichotomy of white being superior to ‘black’ Africans. In addition, they way Tarzan has been characterized is another illustration of how ‘European’ intellect is superior that is why despite growing up with gorillas he is able to stay civilized and showcases his intelligence and intellect through different feats in the novel.

1. Introduction

1.1 Literature & Critical Stylistics

Literature is one way of constructing realities, it is about actions, emotions, thoughts and desires, and language is a tool that creates these realities. Not only does it help us learn about different cultures and perspectives but Literature can be a powerful force for social change. It can help us to see the world through the eyes of others, to understand the experiences of people who are different from us, and to challenge our own assumptions.’ ‘[Literature] is shaped by the world and it shapes our understanding about the world’ (Meyer, 2011).

Going ahead with Meyer’s idea about how literature or fictional texts both build and shape how individuals view the world¹ showcases the power the written word has. Keeping that aspect in view it is imperative that we explore the world views that are represented through the text and what ideologies are built and reinforced through the use of language. In the current paper the researchers aim to explore how Critical Stylistics can help decipher the world view built and examine the ideologies that are built in the internationally acclaimed novel ‘Tarzan of the Apes.

The study will focus on how white supremacy in built and celebrated through different llinguistics and structural choices. Critical Stylistic analysis aims at investigating ‘how social meanings are manifested though language’ (Nogaard et al, 2004, p.11). The Critical Stylistics approach draws on both aspects of Stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis to present a robust framework for analysis that would provide an insight into how social and ideological meanings are expressed through language. Leslie Jeffries (2013) says that the

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Critical Stylistics is a 'framework which places stylistic analysis at the heart of the endeavour to see the power in language.' The current study is an endeavor to understand how the ideological construct of 'white supremacy' is built in the novel.

Critical stylistics is a valuable tool for understanding the ways in which literature works. By combining the tools of stylistics and critical theory, critical stylistics scholars can reveal the ways in which literary texts construct meaning and the ways in which those texts can be used to promote or challenge social, political, and historical forces.

1.2 Tarzan of the Apes and its Creator

'Tarzan of the Apes' written in 1912 by Edgar Rice Burroughs is one of the most popular fictional characters of our times. The popularity of the character and the book series can be gauged from the fact that Tarzan is a 'household name'. The character that Burroughs produced has not only been immortalized in his books but also in the different movies, comics and cartoon adaptations till date. Burroughs added to his credit many other fictional characters like John Carter. Lupioff (2005) writes.

Burroughs in addition to writing Tarzan of the Apes in 1912, and some two dozen additional Tarzan books over the following thirty-five years, was one of the most popular prolific, and influential science-fiction writers of all times. (p.3)

Burroughs' work has been praised for its imagination, adventure, and humour. He is considered one of the most important figures in the history of science fiction and fantasy literature. Ray Bradbury said that 'Burroughs is a master of the adventure of story'.

1.3 Tarzan of the Apes Series

The Tarzan of the Apes novel series is a series of 24 adventure novels written by Edgar Rice Burroughs and published between 1912 and 1966. The series follows the adventures of Tarzan, a man raised by apes in the jungles of Africa. Tarzan is a skilled hunter and fighter, and he uses his skills to protect the jungle and its inhabitants from danger. Neil Gaiman asserts that 'Tarzan is a timeless character who continues to inspire readers of all ages.'

The Tarzan of the Apes novels were a huge success when they were first published, and they have continued to be popular for generations. Moreover, these novels have had a lasting impact on popular culture. The character of Tarzan has been featured in numerous films, television shows, and comic books. The novels have also been praised for their imagination, adventure, and humor. The Tarzan of the Apes novels are a classic of adventure fiction and continue to be popular and influential works of literature even today.

1.4 Production Agenda of Tarzan Series

One of the interesting aspects about the book series production and publication is that the books were written by an American and even published there. Apparently, the Tarzan series is innocent enough and takes on the adventure as in Robinson Crusoe (Schneider, 2008), a lone name fighting for survival. The first book of the Tarzan series which is the focus of the current research is successful in creating the demarcations between the 'Whites' which in this case are the Englishmen of England and their descendants in America and the Africans which in this case were the natives of Africa and the African Americans. This tradition of divisions in literature is not new, Burroughs has followed in the path of Conrad by presenting the stereotypical image of Africa as 'primitive' and 'dark'. Torgovnich (1991) explains the reasons for the continuation of the Conradian tradition as, 'set in Africa Tarzan novels have been about race and to address American curiosity about the origins of the African-American' (p.58). In this way Burroughs through Tarzan character has upheld the tradition of presenting the Englishmen in the positive light by them being civilized, educated and led by the light of reason and the African natives as savages and cannibals.

1.5 Research Question

- i. How does the characterization of Tarzan and other characters in the novel reinforce the concept of white supremacist ideology?
- ii. What linguistic choices are made to create different oppositions and dichotomies in the novel to reinforce the idea of whites being superior as compared to native Africans?
- iii. In what way does the setting of the novel contribute to the celebration of white supremacy?

1.6 Aims and Objectives

Through the lens of Critical Stylistics, the current study aims to:

- i. Explore the characterization of Tarzan and other characters in Tarzan of the Apes to assess how that promotes the concept of white supremacist ideology.
- ii. Analyze and explain the linguistic choices that the writer makes to create different oppositions and dichotomies in the novel to reinforce the idea of whites being superior to native Africans.
- iii. Evaluate in what ways does the setting of the novel contribute towards the celebration of white supremacy.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The current research under the Critical Stylistic analyzes the popular novel Tarzan of the Apes to explore how the ideological narrative of white supremacy is built. Tarzan of the Apes is a well known pop-culture character on which movies, comics and even cartoon series have been developed. It is imperative to critically evaluate and objectively assess how a harmful ideology is being promoted. Within today's socio-political context where the world is more connected and even then poles apart in ideological leanings, exploration of seemingly innocuous and innocent texts like these can help researchers see how language is being used to reinforce harmful stereotypes.

2. Literature Review

Literary stylistics involves analysing the language used in literature by applying linguistic concepts and categories. The aim is to understand how specific language choices and patterns create meaning and effects in the text, known as linguistic foregrounding. While stylistics has aspired to be objective, replicable, and rigorous like a scientific discipline, subjective interpretation is an inherent aspect of textual analysis. Nonetheless, the most effective stylistic analyses establish clear procedures, provide systematic arguments, and can be tested by independent researchers.

2.1 Stylistic Analysis: Focus

Stylistic analysis in linguistics involves identifying patterns of language usage in both spoken and written communication. In certain approaches to stylistic analysis, the frequency of specific stylistic features is examined to make judgments about the nature and quality of the writing. One crucial concept in stylistic analysis is foregrounding. Leech and Short (1981: 48) define foregrounding as a deliberate deviation motivated by artistic intent. According to Mukarovsky, foregrounding refers to a range of stylistic effects that occur in literature, whether at the phonetic level (e.g., alliteration, rhyme), grammatical level (e.g., inversion, ellipsis), or semantic level (e.g., metaphor, irony). These effects disrupt the expected patterns of the text. When conducting a stylistic analysis of a literary text, it is important to first read the text to grasp the overall context and meaning. Then, the text can be further examined by focusing on distinctive and attention-grabbing features that stand out from the norm.

2.2 Critical Stylistic Studies

There have been multiple studies in stylistics that have dealt with exploring different aspects of racial dynamics. Critical evaluation of these aspects is important to understand how discourses are built and ideas reinforced. Critical Stylistics as discussed earlier is a relatively newer development and the theoretical framework given has been applied on both literary and non-literary discourse.

A study conducted by Archakis, Lampropoulou, and Tsakona explores the formation and renegotiation of social stereotypes and language ideologies related to immigrants and their use of the Greek language in fictional data. The researchers specifically analyze an online anti-racist campaign that aims to challenge the common phrase "I'm not racist but...". They focus on three anti-racist videos uploaded on YouTube, depicting interactions between members of the majority and immigrants. By analysing the linguistic and stylistic choices assigned to the characters represented in the videos, the researchers uncover the deeply ingrained belief in the exclusive use of the Greek language, which aligns with racist attitudes. Moreover, Faniyi's research focuses on the stylistic representation of race and gender politics in Beyoncé's album *Lemonade*. The author argues that Black women often face subordination in social power structures and are marginalized in terms of class, gender, and race. The study highlights the lack of feminist analyses of musical texts by African literary scholars and the scarcity of stylistic studies on *Lemonade*. The findings of the analysis reveal that Beyoncé resists racist and sexist ideologies in her text. *Lemonade* takes a deconstructionist and intersectional approach by simultaneously challenging racist and sexist situations and advocating for a united front against oppressive social power. Intertextual references are cross-continental to emphasize the inclusivity of Black feminism.

Fomukong examines the stylistic processes of meaning-making in selected newspaper headlines from May 20, 2017, in Cameroon. The research explores the influence and impact of headlines in shaping discourse, focusing on three newspapers. It presents a coherent system of meanings that are historically situated, supportive of institutions, and involved in reproducing power dynamics and ideological effects. The study highlights the interplay between the context and interpretation of headlines in creating meaning. Khan et al. (2017) have explained that language is a puppet in the hands of materialists. Ramzan and Khan (2019) discussed the stereotyped ideological construction and Bhutto and Ramzan (2021) elucidated the gender issues and feminine injustice in Pakistan. Ramzan et al (2020) have explained that speech act theory is useful for ideological purposes. Nawaz et al. (2021) have discussed the ideological representation in speech acts. Ramzan et al. (2023) align the link between social media usage and academic achievements. Ramzan et al (2023) used the power of social media to enhance ESL learning. Ramzan et al. (2023) checked ESL learner motivation internal structures. Ramzan et al. (2023) have concluded that style shift in the native context belongs to the universal level. Chen and Ramzan (2024) used social media for the promotion of English learning. Ramzan and Alahmadi (2024) discussed syntax instructions.

Rohmeena et al (2021) in their research aim at exploring and analyzing the construction of 'ethnicism' in Gautam Malkani's *Londonstani*. They applied van Dijk's model to devise their frame work for critical stylistic analysis to decipher the construction of cultural, linguistic and religious differences. Sadd and Srabini (2021) employing the Critical Stylistics tools provided by Jeffries (2010) attempts to uncover the ideologies of the poet, Rudyard Kipling in 'If'. The findings reveal the different ways through which the poet has shared their beliefs and in what way the ideological assumptions are embedded in the structure of the text. Koish (2019) in their work explored how it transmits different aspects about the African culture through analysis of different elements.

With a review of different studies, it can be seen that frameworks from Stylistics can be applied both in literature and non-literary and they can provide insights into dynamics like race, power and culture.

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

Stylistics is a vibrant field of research where theorists work are working on integrating different perspectives to develop the field even further. Critical Stylistics is one of the branches introduced by Lesley Jeffries. Critical stylistics was developed in reaction to the rise of critical discourse analysis as influential approach to ideology in discourse. The theory bridges the ideas presented by stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. Jeffries (2013, p.40.8) shares that through this analytic framework wanted to ‘demonstrate that stylistic analysis was as useful and insightful when the data was non-fiction as when it was literary.’ Critical stylistics is a ‘framework which places stylistic analysis at the heart of endeavor to see the power in language’.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a discourse analytical approach that studies how ideologies, identity and inequality are produced, reproduced and maintained in text, in social and political contexts (van Dijk, 2011, p.352). It aims to identify manipulation and ideology hidden in texts (Fowler, 1999, p.66). Even Wodak (2001, p.10) states that language plays an integral role in the reproduction of ideologies and is central in establishing and maintaining social identities and inequalities. Jeffries maintains that ‘Critical Stylistics is an attempt to assemble the main general function that a text has in representing realities (Jeffries, 2010, p.14). Any text will make use if resources of language to present a particular view of the world, so it is imperative that it should be explored and analyzed to assess what the text is doing and how it is representing the world. It is through these texts that ideologies and world-views are created or in some cases reinforced.

Critical Stylistics then has emerged as a method of exposing ‘the ideology in any text’ and the main tool of critical stylistics is known as ‘textual-conceptual function’. The idea of a textual-conceptual function in general is that they capture what a text is doing conceptually in resenting the fictional world (Jeffries, 2013). The theory ‘explains’ how resources of the linguistic system are being used to produce ‘conceptual meaning’ and that encompasses the textual part of the process and is what defines the approach as stylistic.

The Critical Stylistic framework provides multiple tools that analysts can use for deciphering the select text. Jeffries (2007, 2010) has outlined the following tools of Critical Stylistics in her work: i) Naming and Describing, ii) Equating and Contrasting, iii) Enumerating and Exemplifying, iv) Prioritizing, v) Constructing Time and Space, vi) Representing action and events, vii) Hypothesizing, viii) Assuming and Implying and ix) Negation, x) Presenting other’s speech and thought. The analysts according to the focus of their research can pick one tool or all for devising the framework for their study.

These tools provide a flexible set of procedures through which analysts can objectively explore the selected texts. Coffey (2013, p.70) claims that by considering the conceptual functions of a particular linguistic form, readers can make links between stylistic form and ideological meaning and that’s what makes ‘Jeffries’ model a particularly illuminating tool kit’. For the purpose of the current study the select text, only two functions will be looked at which are described in detail as follows.

3.1 Naming and Describing

The way something is named and define has symbolic repercussions for the ideas developed in the text. Naming and Describing is realized through the nominal element like nouns or pronouns and it can refer to any descriptor element (Jeffries 2015, p.389). Naming and describing works through how different entities are named or described and it is used to construct the world with ideological underpinnings (Jeffries, 2010). Linguistically Naming and Describing ca realize in different ways in the text. Firstly, the selection of nouns from a group on nouns has a particular stylistic value. Secondly, how the noun is modified through different adjectives and descriptions add to idea. Not only adjectives but prepositional phrases add to the description. How the information is structured plays a vital

role in world building. Thirdly, nominalization can also be employed to see what factors have been subsumed or highlighted through such a strategy.

3.2 Equating & Contrasting

This textual conceptual function focuses on construction of oppositional and equivalent meanings. The choices that writers make works towards creating impressions about entities. Critical Stylistics explores this aspect through the linguistics and textual choices made. Jeffries (2007, p.150) shows that analysis of the dichotomies present also depends on our understanding of the text. The opposition can be presented through one sentence or built in the discourse through different linguistics choices made.

There are different linguistic constructions of equivalent and oppositional meanings. Jeffries (2010, p. 65) claims that oppositional and equivalent meanings can be constructed by sense relations, syntactic triggers (co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions such as and, but, or etc.) and negation. Nahajec (2009, p. 109) shows that oppositional meanings put two events, actions or states in contrast to each other. Negation constructs non-events against events, non-states against states or non-existent against existence, therefore it constructs “unrealised worlds” (Nahajec, 2009, p. 109). Jeffries (2010b, p.19) shows when two things are put into opposition with the negation as a trigger, they “presume complementarity”.

3.4 Research Design

With the select tools, different word choices, phrases and sentences will be selected to see how Tarzan has been characterized and along with that how different dichotomies are built throughout the novel. For that purpose, the analysis will be divided into two sections where section 1 will look at how the dichotomies and oppositions will be explored to assess how the binaries are reinforcing the ideological constructs of white supremacy. In the second part of the analysis different facets of Tarzan’s character will be explored to see what linguistic choices does the writer employ to describe and develop Tarzan’s character and what qualities are imbued in him. Different sentences, words and phrases have been selected to exemplify the ideas discussed.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

The current study has the following limitations:

- i. Only the first novel Tarzan of the Apes has been selected to explore the how white supremacy is constructed throughout the text.
- ii. The study is qualitative, future researchers can employ a mix-method design to analyze different aspects in detail.
- iii. Only two elements from the framework for the current study were chosen. Future research can employ all the tools provided to gain micro an macro-level insights about how ideological construction of white supremacy takes place.

4. Analysis and Discussion

As discussed earlier, the analysis has been divided into two parts to achieve the objectives set of the study. Moreover, the select tools of under the Critical Stylistics lens which are i) Naming and Describing and ii) Equating and Contrasting will be employed together. The analysis is organized according to the emergent themes in which the researchers are exploring how the ideological construct of white supremacy is built and reinforced through different means. In the first section the binaries and dichotomies present in the text are being explored and in the second section the different facets of Tarzan’s character will be focused on.

4.1 Section I

4.1.1 Representation of Africa

Africa in literature has been described as the exotic land full of its mysteries, ready to be discovered. The continent was mysterious because there was not known much about this place and people fantasized about discovering and exploring the continent. Burroughs selected Africa for the setting of his novel *Tarzan of the Apes*. The plot is about the story of the young English lord who was brought up among the Apes but even then, instead of turning into a savage, turned to be a civilized gentleman gong against his upbringing. Burroughs's describes Africa as the 'dark continent' (p.73) which was the stereotypical view about Africa presented since the earliest times. Even Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* presents Africa as a dark continent full of savages and evil, no positive aspect has ever been highlighted or written related to the image of Africa by the English writers.

The other descriptions that have been used in the novel about Africa, impart a negative image about the continent as Clayton describes the place in terms of 'awful blackness'. Jeffries (2013) has stated that the way something is named and described creates a conceptual-worldview and that is what we see here. When Trazan's parents were left on the African shore by their vessel, they protested against this injustice as they did not want to stay on that place. Burroughs aptly describes fate in the following words, 'Clayton remonstrated against the inhumanity of landing them upon an unknown shore to be left to the mercies of the beasts, and possibly, still more savage men.' One always fears what is unknown but in Africa's case there were certain specific connotations attached to it which highlight the place as primitive and monstrous. What this categorization helped in was creating the positive image about the Europeans, especially the Englishmen as the image upheld by Burroughs through Tarzan's character and the negative-other image of the Africa and its natives and 'a place so out of this world'.

4.1.2 British Image

England cannot afford to be little.

-William Huskisson, 1828

In the start of the novel the readers get to know that why John Clayton was travelling to the African continent with his wife. The British government had appointed him to look into the matter of the natives of their colony being exploited by the other colonizers. The image of British that is presented through this action was that the English were fair colonizers and looked after the welfare of the people of their colony. The people of their colony were being recruited by another European power and they were doing it by promising the people a better future. One of the glimpses of how the African natives were being exploited at the hands of the colonizers is presented but even then, the English colonizers were presented as just and fair. Clayton was asked to investigate 'the unfair treatment of Black British subjects by the officers of a friendly European power (p.2)'.

The advancements the English have made in various fields have been highlighted. When Lord Greystoke presented with the challenge of making a home in the jungles of Africa, comforts his wife with the advancements the White race had been able to make,

...are we not armed with ages of superior knowledge, and have we not the means of protection, defense, and sustenance which science has given us, but which of they were totally ignorant.

Science is another hallmark of the civilized societies, as it provides logical answer to perplexing questions. The writer wants the readers to know that advancements in science and technology the English were able to make and they had done it after years of efforts and this started with their ancestors. When Tarzan goes to France with D'Arnot, he sees there all the things that the Europeans have been able to produce. The different types of buildings, arts and technology, all are advancements that these people were able to make

based on their knowledge and 'REASON'. The English state and its people are presented in a very positive sense to highlight the mighty civilization. D'arnot's words to Tarzan sums the argument of the superiority to the White race nicely,

You will think highly of your genes when you have seen its armies and navies, its great cities, and its mighty engineering works. Then you realize that it is the mind, not the muscle, that makes the human animal greater than the mighty beasts of the jungle. (p.128)

4.1.3 Natives vs. the Englishmen

Along with the image of Africa, Burroughs has highlighted the difference between the natives of Africa and the Englishmen at many places in the novel. Through this contrast not only of the continents of Africa and Europe but also of its natives has clearly classified the hierarchies of inferior and superior for the readers. Faced with the same circumstances of living in the 'primitive' forests of Africa, the Englishman and the natives confronted the same physical situations, how they have dealt with it in different ways. When Tarzan's parents were left on the African coast, Lady Alice started worrying about the prospects of survival and her husband comforted her by giving her examples of their noble ancestors who had overcome all adversaries. He says that their ancestors 'thousands of years ago' faced these difficulties and these harsh situations and they overcame them, 'today we are here evidences their victory (p.11).' The English couple was in a way not only acknowledging their ancestors but also celebrating their progress and development through their presence on the continent. They turned an adverse situation into a positive one by reconnecting with the past. So, Lord Greystoke armed with his knife, made a cabin for his wife in the cluster of trees. The description of the construction given by the writer is interesting which shows how through calculations and practical knowledge he was able to make the cabin on the coast. He made the walls of the hut by wood and clay. What Burroughs highlights is that with a very few resources and armed with the centuries of knowledge they were able to make a home for themselves in that savage wilderness. Even Tarzan when he discovered the cabin was impressed by it and 'disappointed' by the huts in Mbonga's village.

The description of natives is very interesting. Ironically the picture book that Tarzan's parents had the foresight to bring with them for their child had the word Negro for the letter N. Even the books for the children seem to be a part of the imperial agenda which highlighted the differences between the two races. When Tarzan saw a boy running in the forest, he connects his image to the picture in his books as the 'NEGRO'. He describes him as a 'strange creature' not even classifying him as a human and a 'sleek thing of ebony pulsating with life.' The description given of the native tribesmen given by Burroughs is as

They were fifty black warriors armed with slender wooden spears ...their yellow teeth were filed to sharp points, and their great protruding lips added still further to the low and bestial brutishness of their appearance (p.38).

The words choice for representation of natives adds to the monstrous image of their brutishness. They seem more like the carnivores who hunt for their prey's rather than humans. Apart from that they were wearing jewelry and had tattoos. The use of the word 'black' is significant as the writer does not want the readers to forget about the natives appearance and how they could be differentiated from the civilized Europeans. Another distinction that Burroughs highlighted was about the superstitious nature of the natives as they believed in spirits and the supernatural elements. When Tarzan went to the Mbonga's village for the first time and collected all the weapons of the main house and placed a skull on top of it just out of mischief, the reaction of that incident was that people got frightened and any explanations they had were about the supernatural.

Mbonga appeared with the loon of mingled wrath and superstitious fear writ on his hideous countenance. . . the last awesome discoveries within the village, within the dead Kulonga's own hut, filled their [the villagers] hearts with dismay, and conjured in their poor brains only the most frightful and superstitious explanations (p.46).

The villagers are shown to be simple minded who believed in spirits instead of looking at things logically. Another example that reinforces in the readers mind their superstitious nature is the incident of the death of their fellow villager Mirando by Tarzan's hand. Tarzan killed Mirando and propped his body near the gate of the village and then replenished his supply of arrows. The villagers thought that he had seen the evil spirit of the jungle that was the reason he was killed. '...Mirando had seen the evil spirit of the jungle. That now seemed to them the most logical explanation (p,59).' The village chief decided to appease the angry spirit by putting food and arrows near the village entrance so that they would not be bothered again. The comparison between the natives and the Englishmen presents the glaring contrasts between the two races. Even Tarzan distrusts the black people because he believes that they kill people, his experience is based on his experiences with the native villagers. It was alright for Tarzan to kill because he had a logical explanation for doing so but the natives were savages who killed in vain. D'Arnot asserts that, 'White men do not kill wantonly', here the premise being that Whites do not kill without reason while the blacks did.

4.1.4 Rites of Dum-Dum

Another interesting aspect in the novel which talk about the difference between the natives and the English is very intelligently shown through the ceremonies. At two points in the novel the ceremony using the drums has been described, once for the apes and the other time for the African natives. Tarzan describes the Dance of Death, as a celebration ritual on which the drums are beaten to celebrate the killing of the ape of the enemy tribe. The different occasions for which the 'tribes' used the rites of the Dum-Dum were related to 'victory, capture of a prisoner, the killing of some large fierce denizen of the jungle, the death of ascension of the king (p.32).' All of the reasons for celebration that are described by Burroughs add to the savagery of the Africans, because not only does he associate the rituals with the apes but also with the natives when they capture D'Arnot and tie him to a tree and start the ritual of the dance to kill him. One other point that the writer adds for this ritual is that the apes and the natives were cannibals and ate their prisoners or who they killed. When D'Arnot was captured by Mbonga's villagers, the women folk started to prepare for the celebratory feast. So the association between the apes and the natives is shown through this ritual and both of them being shown as cannibals who eat the flesh of their own kind.

When Burroughs talked about ceremonial rites, he wrote,

From this primitive function has arisen, unquestionably, all the forms and ceremonials of modern church and state, for all through the countless ages, back beyond...unthinkable vistas of the long dead past when our first shaggy ancestor swung from a swaying bough...dropped...[on] the first meeting place.

Through this contrast what is highlighted is that how the English have moved forward towards a brighter future. Not only are they civilized but have advanced in every field like science, arts and literature. From the passage quoted what Burroughs has presented is that even though the English were 'primitive' now they have progressed, have an organized way of living and a form of government as well. The institutions like 'church' and 'state' are a mark of civilization. The Europeans in contrast to the Africans are civilized and they have moved forward from the dregs of 'primitiveness' towards the light of civilization. Even though the primitive ancestors of the Englishmen are mentioned, they are described in a positive note by showing the progress that the White race has made that not they live

in states and have different institutions and the African race are presented as savage cannibals who are inferior to the White race. The description of the sound of the drums as 'fierce, mad and intoxicating', the choice of words complements the savage view of Africa, where people were unable to make any progress and were lagging behind.

4.2 Section II

4.2.1 Tarzan: King of the Jungle

The protagonist of the novel, Tarzan is an international fictional character who has not only been the central character of the novel series but different movies and cartoon series are also based on this character. One critic aptly writes that, 'Tarzan is a complex character.' Tarzan, 'the son of an English Lord and Lady nursed at the breast of Kala, the great ape.' Adopted by the apes when a baby, Tarzan transformation is not into an ape but into a gentleman, an English lordling, what he was born to be. How he was able to achieve that was not a mystery, as Burroughs has led the reader through every stage of his incredible progress. He has excelled in every walk of his life whether that be hunting, leadership, reading or speaking French.

He was able to conquer his enemies and establish his rule in the jungle. Not many people would be able to do what Tarzan had been able to achieve. What the writer has tried to reinforce through his character is the supremacy of the English blood that no matter in which position you put a person in, it is the blood that matters not the environmental conditioning that a person would get.

The writer at various points provides explanation for Tarzans behavior, as he had the foresight of his readers comments. Burroughs has defended Tarzans actions at various points and has asked the reader not to judge his actions harshly. When Tarzan was getting the treasure chest from where those sailors had hidden it, the writer acts as a mediator between Tarzans action and the readers judgment, so he wrote, 'Tarzan of the apes had a man's brain and a man's figure, but he was an ape by training and environment (p.83).' Tarzan had realized that there was something valuable in it and he was going to hide it from the bad men. Burroughs gives explanations to Tarzans action, which go against the rules of the civilized society, like when he killed Mobungo's son, at first he thought about eating the flesh just like the apes ate their enemies after killing them. The writer defends Tarzan's stance by preparing the reader by writing, 'how may we judge him, by what standards, this ape-man, with the heart of an English gentleman and the training of a wild beast (p.43).'

4.2.2 Ancestry: I am not an ape, I am a

In the novel at various points Tarzans ancestry is mentioned. Not only is his current aristocratic title at times used but his achievements have been traced back to primitive times highlight the greatness of the White race. One of the aspects of the literatures which celebrated Europe was that they always presented a self-positive image and the negative-other image, and in the case of this novel this was done though the opposites created through the character of Tarzan against the backdrop of the African continent. Tarzan combat skills and his intelligence mentioned at different occasions always attributed to his belonging to the 'mighty race'. The life in jungle in a way endowed him with extra skills but even without then he was a great human because he was White.

In his veins, though flowed the blood of the best of the race or mighty fighters, and at the back of this was the training of his short lifetime among the fierce brutes of the jungle. (26-7).

This fierceness has been reiterated at different points like when he kills the big gorilla, Tublat and then Kerchak, he never backed away from a challenge but met it head on by looking into his opponent eyes. The reason for this confidence was not only his strength and his confidence but also his having possessed the marvellous weapon: the knife.

Burroughs about Tarzans fearlessness writes, ‘...stubborn young Englishman that he was, he could not bring himself to retreat in the face of an enemy so malignant enemy.’ Another great quality of the ‘English’ race that the writer has highlighted through this point is that the people of this race are fearless and courageous and fight every battle head on. They are not cowards who back down in the face of a challenge but people who fight with their heart and mind. The book is not only about a young boy and his transformation but through his character and ancestry the celebration on the greatness of the White race in the face of the African savages. Through a contrasting physical description Burroughs reiterates the differences between not only between Tarzan and the fellow ape but the contrast of European race and African natives. ‘As they leaned to drink, both little faces were mirrored on the placid pool; the fierce and terrible features of the apes besides those of the scion of the aristocratic scion of an English house (p.21).’

Tarzan’s ancestry was also show through the various steps of his self-schooling. It is difficult to teach children to study and to keep them motivated but somehow Tarzan self-schooled himself, learned the alphabets ‘bugs’ by himself and was successful in learning English.

With the help of the dictionary and active intelligence of a healthy mind endowed by inheritance with more than ordinary reasoning powers he shrewdly guessed at much which he could not really understand, and more than often his guesses were true.

Even for that achievement not only does Tarzan gets the credit, but he gets it because he is a descendant of a great race. People of the White race, the Europeans are intelligent people who through logic and reasoning’s were the masters of the world at that point. As Tarzan was part of that race, he was not only able to unlock the secrets of the dictionary and understand its contents; he was able to guess what the words meant. Tarzans parents had the foresight to bring with them books from England and due to this wonderful coincidence, their son was able to acquire education form these valuable things. Not only is his dependency highlighted through is ‘active intelligence’ but also through his physical appearance, ‘...but now he was proud of his sleek skin for it betokened his decent from a mighty race.’ Beforehand when he had no idea that he was a human, he wanted to be like the apes in appearance. When he realized that he was different from the people in his tribe and when he started studying, he discovered how different he was from his fellows. His education enabled him to differentiate between him and the apes. When he kills Kerchak he publicly announces this difference in the following words, ‘Look! Apes of Kercahk. See what Tarzan the mighty killer has done...Tarzan is the mightiest among you. Tarzan is no ape. Tarzan is a (p.51)’. The mightiness through which Tarzan has achieved had come from all of the things which are associated with the White race which is courage, fearlessness and the ‘marvellous knife’. Tarzan realizes that he was different but he could not say the word ‘man’ out loud because of the limited vocabulary of the apes. In this way again Tarzan establishes himself at the top of the hierarchy.

When Jane gets abducted and Tarzan rescues her. Even at that point when his feelings for that beautiful girl overwhelm him, he treats her like a true gentleman, not like a brute, which was also part of his training. Instead of treating her like the males of his tribes used to do, he treats her with respect.

It was the hallmark of his aristocratic birth, the natural outcropping of many generations of fine breeding, a hereditary instinct of graciousness with a lifetime of uncouth and savage training could not eradicate. Now in every fiber of his being, hereditary spoke louder than training (p.101).’

On this occasion again what is pointed out is his ‘aristocratic birth’ and that he belonged to a family of nobles not savages. His mind was a part of that civilized world in which he had yet to visit but he was able to acquire the acceptable social behaviors of that society. In the

struggle between the savage and the civilized Tarzan, the 'true gentleman' is always able to save the day. Burroughs's in the novel at many points asserts the idea of a person having noble bloodlines, as with Lord Greystoke. What this reiteration does is presents to the reader the proof that no matter what the circumstances 'the son of a King will also be a King' as in the case of Tarzan, Lord Greystoke and 'the son of a criminal will also be a criminal', as in the case of the natives of Africa.

4.2.3 I am Tarzan, I am wise/ Intellectual Tarzan

Connecting this premise of the analysis to the previous argument about ancestry, there is a connection between noble bloodlines and active intelligence as drawn by Burroughs in the novel. As the faculty of thinking, logic and reasoning has not been associated with the natives or with the apes but only with Tarzan. Tarzan contemplates about the different things that went on in his life and 'at the back of it was the power of reason (p.24).' He had achieved excellence at many things, like the art of roping, his fellow apes tried to copy him but could not do it and the power of his mind was one of the factors for that, which the apes did not have. It was through this that Tarzan realized that he was different from the tribe that he was living with.

No longer did he feel shame for his hairless body or his human features, for now reason had told him that he was of a different race from his wild hairy companions. He was a M-A-N, they were A-P-E-S (p.30).

Before that he had wished to be like an ape because he was different. When he started studying, he realized that there was a reason for this difference; he was not an ape but a human. It was the illustrations in the picture book for children which helped him achieve this clarity. It was the faculty of 'reasoning' that gave him 'higher intelligence' and 'self-confidence' to deal with any situation. The apes were in awe of his 'superior cunning.' He had fought many battles with his enemies and he came out successful in all of them, the killing of Tublat, Kerchak and Sabour all of his achievements were credited to his higher intelligence and not his combat survival skills he had gained through living in the jungle. When he fought the big gorilla from the enemy tribe, his superior reasoning told him that he would not be able to get away from that beast as there was no way out, so he confronted the situation, took on the challenge and killed the enemy but got severely hurt in that process.

...so that he confronted Kerchak now only with his hunting knife and superior intellect to offset the ferocious strength of his enemy...Lord Greystoke tore his long knife from his sheath (p.51).

His journey from darkness of savagery to the light of knowledge was achieved through two things his intelligence and his curiosity about learning. He loved the intellectual activity which was brought on by the discovery of the books in his father's cabin. He learned slowly and gradually but he was successful at his task as he was determined to unravel the mystery of the bugs. As he grew up and learnt more things about himself and his life, he felt more of a stranger between the apes with whom he grew up with. No longer was he content to hunt and eat, which is what the animals and the natives are shown doing but he wanted to do more, he had this inner urge to do more.

As he had grown older, he found that he had grown away from his people. Their interests and his were far removed. Nor could they understand naught of the strange and wonderful dreams that passed through the active brain of their human king.

Tarzan felt alone among his tribes men as he had no one with whom he could share his knowledge and dreams with. Burroughs here again highlights not only the superiority of the White race but also how the mighty Whites through their keen intelligence and the curiosity were able to achieve different feats in history. In the above quoted lines the contrast presented constructs hierarchies with Tarzan being the 'crown of creation' and the

rest of the humans and animals below him. Not only was he able to take on the leadership role of the King of the apes in a very good manner as he helped resolve the various disputes of his tribe, provided them with the means of acquiring food and water. He was not satisfied by the role that he had taken as there was no challenge in that as compared to the one which the books presented, so he left the tribe by declaring to the apes that he was different from all of them and now he was going to live where 'his kind' lived. Another example of his intelligence has been highlighted by Burroughs in the following words,

For a moment he scrutinized the ground below and the trees above, until the ape that was in him by virtue of training and environment, combined with the intelligence that was his right by birth, told his wondrous mind the whole story as plainly as he had seen it with his own eyes (p.92)

When Jane was kidnapped by the ape and taken away in the jungle, Tarzan just by looking at the scene of the abduction was able to visualize what had happened there. So strong was his power of observation and his visualization that he did not need to investigate the scene. He knew which path to follow to catch up with the big ape and after rescuing Jane, even though he had very strong feelings for her, he treated her with respect which she deserved. In both of these situations 'reason' comes to his aid and helps him realize the true way of doing things. The reason that the writer at various points specifically mentions Tarzan's intelligence and his superior bloodlines through which he had inherited, all the things that made him great was to celebrate the superiority of the White race and reinforce in the readers the idea that the Europeans the Whites are a superior race. They were civilized whereas the natives were equal to apes not capable of thinking or making progress. One person in this scenario represents the White race and living among the apes and the savage natives in the jungle, he was able to uphold the civilized values of his ancestors. Tarzan's intellect in the novel serves to highlight the oppositions present in the novel and working at the social level as well.

4.2.4 Multilingual Tarzan

One of the amazing feats that Tarzan was able to achieve was his learning of English language. As he grew up between apes, he knew the language and the vocabulary of the apes. One day when he was hunting he stumbled across his family's cabin, he was able to learn the mechanism by which the lock of the cabin door opened. There while searching he found different books which his father brought with him to Africa for their child. It is an interesting coincidence that by accident Tarzan found the cabin and the things were the same as the day Kala had taken him with her. In the books there he found with the pictures some 'strange bugs', and 'that was his first introduction to the letters of the alphabet (p.26).' The process through which Tarzan learned English language was not easy, but a hard one in which Tarzan was able to achieve success because he was dedicated towards his task. He found the activity, 'most engrossing' and 'enjoyable'.

On his own he was able to decipher what the bugs meant, an admirable feat for a boy who had never had an encounter with someone who spoke English till the day Jane arrives on the African shore. His progress in learning language has been highlighted in the novel with the following words, 'an allegorical figure of the primordial groping through the black night of ignorance towards the light of learning (p.29)'. 'Black night' represents not only Africa but also Tarzan as an ape and this journey towards light in a movement towards enlightenment which the White race represented. By the time he was fifteen he had learned not only the English alphabets but also the different combinations that these words represented. The different theories of language acquisition suggest that the child learns spoken language first and then afterwards is able to learn the written script. Tarzan does the opposite and learns to write English language at first. As his ability to learn English language had also been associated to his genetics and hereditary that as he was the son of the English lord, he would automatically be able to learn that language. Yule (2010) asserts that 'the particular language a child may learn is not genetically inherited, but is acquired

in a particular learning environment' (p.171). According to this premise Tarzan should not have been able to learn any other language other than the one used for communication between apes, but he was able to achieve this incredible feat.

He had a good grasp at English language that he was able to write a letter to the Jane and her group when they arrive at his father's cabin. The sentence structures were very simple but he had an apt command over the grammar and the meaning of the words as he had learned the things from the English dictionary. 'This is the house of Tarzan', he had been able to pass his message along. It's quite a coincidence that the White party that comes to the cabin is an English speaking party, not a French group. According to the different theories of language acquisition the one point that is highlighted is that the process of language acquisition has some basic steps. During the first three years of development a child requires interaction with other language users in order to 'establish the general capacity for learning a language like English'. Tarzan did not go through a process like this when he was very young, as at that time he had interacted with the apes. This acquisition of the English language by Tarzan is not scientifically supported but the writer has associated Tarzan's ability to learn language to his ancestry. One of the study performed by Moskowitz (1991) demonstrated that a normal (speaking and hearing) child born to deaf parents was able to acquire expertise in sign language by three years old even though the parents had exposed him to radio and television programs. The child had been unable to speak or understand English. So one of the important elements for learning a language is getting the opportunity to interact with others via language, the opposite of what was demonstrated in the novel through the process by which Tarzan learned language. The process more or less reinforced the idea of his superior bloodlines.

The title for this section was selected on the basis of the different language systems that Tarzan was able to acquire in the first novel of the series. Till the end of the novel Tarzan is not only proficient in animal language and English but French also. One of the requests that he makes to D'Arnot was , 'Teach me to speak the language of men (p.117).' As D'Arnot was a Frenchman, he helped him in learning his native language that was French. The learning process is describes as,

..he proved to be a most apt student, and in two days he had mastered French so much that he was able to produce simple sentences as : 'That is a tree.'

First Tarzan by self-schooling had learned how to write English and when it came to spoken language, he learnt French first and had some problems acquiring the grammatical structure of French language as it was different than English's. Tarzan through that knowledge was successful not only in the jungle but also in the civilized world as he had the means to communicate with that world also. As English and French were the dominant languages of the time when this novel was penned, the writer asserts the idea that learning these two languages meant access to civilization, modernity and progress. Not only is the White supremacy here shown through language but also the connotations of progress associated with it show that when Tarzan learnt English language he moved from darkness to light.

4.2.5 Titled Tarzan

One of the techniques that Burroughs has used in the novel at different points is the juxtapositioning of the two titles Tarzan and Lord Greystoke at different points. One of the reasons for doing this is that the writer does not want the reader to forget the real identity of Tarzan. Tarzan was the name that was given by the apes to the human bay that Kala had adopted after her youngling was killed by their leader. The meaning of the name Tarzan is 'White ape' which does provide hints about why the writer had contrasted the two titles together. Whenever Tarzan does something positive or a thing which is a source of pride for his White race and his warrior blood, his English title is also used to remind readers that he is of noble blood. When Tarzan became the King of his tribe, Burroughs wrote, 'And thus came Lord Grestoke into the Kingship of the Apes'. The writer could have chosen not

to use the English title in the sentence, as of what use was that title in the jungle? The reason for using that title was that Tarzan had been able to achieve a rank in the wilderness of Africa which complemented his noble superior status. This contrasting of the two titles given to the protagonist also creates a hierarchal structure in which again Tarzan comes on top.

Tarzan of Apes, the young Lord Greystoke... there was that which had raised him far above his fellows of the jungle-that little spark which spells the whole vast difference between man and brute- REASON.

The different occasions like killing of his enemies, performing his leadership role as the king of the tribe or trying hard to understand the bugs in the books, the writer stresses his superior intelligence and his ability to 'reason' as in the lines quoted above. The title has yet been used again to show that the superior ability of reasoning is due to his White blood with centuries of wisdom in it. His achievements if they are related to his use of reasoning or his active intelligence are never only attributed to the name Tarzan, as it is a name synonymous with the apes, and apes do not have the ability to think rationally, they are savages who only know how to kill and eat.

Tarzan is not an ape...[he] is going back to his own kind. And thus Lord Greystoke took the first step towards the goal which he had set- the finding of other White men other than himself.

There were different other titles which were given to Tarzan by the other characters in the novel, one of the title was 'The Forest God' which was given by Clayton, when he was rescued by Tarzan on his first day on the African shore. Jane names Tarzan as 'demi-god', when she was saved from the ape. She was fascinated by Tarzan's strength and his handsome features. Along with the contrasts of the two titles presented by the author at different points in the novel, the other titles that he chooses for Tarzan in no way demean the character but serve to highlight his larger-than-life persona. The use of the different titles by the author for the main character

4.2.6 Symbolism of Knife

One of the important artifacts that had been used throughout the novel by Tarzan had been the 'wonderful weapon', the knife that he found the first time he went to the cabin which his father had built. He first experimented with it on the chairs present in the cabin and even decided to keep it with him. When he faced the big gorilla Bolgani, he was able to kill it with his knife. In the process Tarzan does get hurt but he realizes the power of the weapon and to, '...recover the wonderful little weapon which had transformed him from a helpless outclass weakling to the mighty superior of the jungle.' The different battles that he fought afterwards, one of which was with Kerchak, were won with the help of the knife. After winning the battle with Kerchak he was made the king of the apes. The knife throughout the novel, in each battle in which it was used presents itself as a product of the Western civilization and marks their progress in different fields. It shows that the British army is advanced and has the advanced weaponry to defeat the world.

5. Conclusion

Tarzan of the Apes is no doubt a classic piece of fiction that even after hundred years of its publications; the fictional character is a household name, not lost in the jungles of time. Through the novel and its characters Burroughs has reproduced the plot of the 'imperial romance', which is the mixture of exploring and discovering an exotic land, adding adventure and a heroine to it which make up the elements of the perfect plot. In the novel 'Tarzan of the Apes', one can see the protagonist in a constant struggle between the hereditary and the environment and no surprise at all, hereditary overcomes the environment because the protagonist is from the 'mighty warriors' of the 'White race'.

The Critical stylistics framework applied in the research has emerged as a valuable tool for understanding the ways in which discourses binaries and representations are built as seen in this study. By combining the tools of stylistics and critical theory, critical stylistics scholars can reveal the ways in which literary texts construct meaning and the ways in which those texts can be used to promote or challenge social, political, and historical forces as explored through this study. We see the different ways in which the seemingly innocuous adventure novel celebrates white supremacy.

Burroughs in the novel not only treks to the exotic, undiscovered land of Africa but represents it in contrast with the Europe. The novel presents the stereotypical view of Africa, with an echo of Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.' Burroughs like Conrad, describes Africa as the 'dark continent' but also as a place of savagery. The natives were shown to be brutes, cannibals and superstitious while Tarzan belonging from the White race was shown to be endowed with higher intellect and power of reasoning. Burroughs in the novel does criticize the colonial power but other than the British powers, he upholds the Britishers by showing them as just people. In this case again Burroughs follows the Conradian tradition.

Burroughs in this novel no doubt talked about the White superiority and celebrated the races' greatness. This had been achieved through showing Africa and its natives in binary opposition with the Whites. Tarzan intelligence, curiosity, bravery and his ability to learn English language on his own reinforced the idea that indeed bloodlines do matter. 'He was of the finest tradition of English aristocracy by his heritage, and Burroughs strong belief in the effect of innate quality.' Hereditary and aristocracy played an important part in what Tarzan turned out to be. Supposedly if Tarzan's character would have been an Asian descendant, the story would have been much different.

Tarzan falls in love with Jane, and even writes a 'letter' to her declaring her feelings. The whole courtship ritual by Tarzan has been followed in terms of bringing her different things to eat and that made him happy. He is shown to be a true gentleman at heart because blood ties were shown to have a greater pull than training. When Tarzan saves D'Arnot, he trusts him and befriends the French army officer. This brotherhood at the broader context implied that people only let those into their circles who are their equals and England and France were both great nations, descendants of the same mighty warriors. Tarzan travels to France, learns French and even learns how to drive all because he was a descendant of great people. Burroughs does not let the reader forget the reasons for Tarzan's greatness.

Through Tarzan's character Burroughs has celebrated the greatness of the White race. The novel is not the story of an ordinary boy overcoming his battling the wilds and overcoming his circumstances but in actual the story of an English boy, who overcomes the different challenges that come his way to rise at the top. Not only was he able to secure the 'kingship of the apes' but he was shown to be 'the crown of creation.' So the idea of the White race being superior had been the main argument of the novel. Literary works especially works of popular fiction should be scrutinized to understand the ideologies working at the back of the work as in the case of the current novel. Readers are fascinated by what Tarzan represents and for them he is a character who knows the code of the wild and also of the West. Burroughs through the novel not only presents an immortal character but highlights the superiority of the Europeans in contrast to the Africans.

A critical stylistics analysis of Tarzan of the Apes has provided valuable insights into the ways in which the novel celebrates white supremacy and how this celebration has been received and interpreted by readers over time.

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