

LANGUAGE IN MARJORIE OLUDHE MACGOYE'S FICTION

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Abstract

Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye is a British-Born Kenyan Writer whose consistent interest in the experiences of women in rapidly modernizing society is increasingly attracting critical response. Because of her dual cultural heritage- (half English half African) the author has for a long time been consigned to a literary no-man's-land by critics who are hesitant to treat her as an African writer. This explains why Macgoye's works have not enjoyed similar critical interest like other women writers. This study intends to reverse this trend. It, first of all, considers Macgoye's writing as part of African, and particular, East African literature.

Previous studies on Macgoye have emphasized that the author's prominence as writer lies in the manner in which she blends history and art to reflect the experiences women go through. While not underrating this concern with content value and social relevance of her work, this study goes ahead to demonstrate that Macgoye's excellence in creative writing lies more in her stylistic facility. The study evaluates language in Macgoye's *Coming to Birth, The present moment and Home coming in*. It highlights the fact that the author uses vocabulary, translational English, Syntactic options and symbolism in a special way to enhance readers' understanding of character, theme and meaning.

A critical evaluation of Macgoye's language reveals that the author brings out a fresh awareness of familiar themes like religion, freedom, identity and gender issues in ways that show a deeper perception of linguistic possibilities available to her. The study reveals that Macgoye purposefully employs stylistic devices such as transitivity choices to reflect inequality in social relations. Further, the study observes that the author varies sentence length and structure for aesthetic effect. This contributes to simplicity in her style. Above all, Macgoye employs symbolism to capture ideal experiences inaccessible through normal language description. Such symbols create multiplicity of meaning which make the texts semantically rich for interpretation at several levels.

Analysis of language in Macgoye's fiction, therefore, confirms that, the author demonstrates credible and purposeful consistency in her use of transitivity choices, syntax and symbolism to portray character, theme and meaning effectively. Further, the study has proved that Macgoye's use of language is functional. The author employs stylistic devices mentioned above, to inculcate in readers humane values of love, truth and simplicity.

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