Exploring Creativity in Narrative Fiction: A Stylistic Analysis of Characterisation in Abubakar Gimba's *Witnesses to Tears*

Aishat Umar

Bayero University, Kano -Nigeria

Abstract

The works of the renowned Northern Nigerian writer, Abubakar Gimba, have attracted significant attention from literary critics, especially in terms of their thematic preoccupation. One aspect that has received the least consideration, however, is their mode of characterisation. This might have arisen because the critics think, "he is a novelist who is concerned with themes rather than with characters"; and that, "in all his novels, there is a preponderance of themes over the characters" (Okome, 1992:61). The few critics who care to make cursory remarks about the characters, therefore, do so, not on the basis of a profound linguistic study of the novels, but in a manner that suits their arguments. Drawing upon insights from current studies in stylistics and narratology, this article attempts to investigate Gimba's characters and the techniques used in their construction in the novel, *Witnesses to Tears*. This article argues that the writer's creativity in characterisation can best be assessed through a stylistic study of the novel.

1   Introduction

It has for long been established by scholars that a literary work is the outcome of the writer's creativity. Of particular interest to this article is the view that the creativity of fiction depends to a large extent on the writer's artistic manipulation of linguistic resources in order to attain aesthetic effects (Leech & Short, 2007:38). Since as readers, we encounter a text through its language, linguistic description of the narrative elements and the effects they produce are necessary for a proper exploration of the writer's creative enterprise. However, most of the critics that have attempted to study Gimba's novels do not seem to hold this view. On the one hand, are those who completely discount the author's concern with some narrative elements, especially, characterisation, because they believe that "Gimba's novels are elevated through his themes" (Mowah, 1992:69). Similarly, Khan (1992:49) draws an analogy between "Sensibility, Rhetoric and the Voice of Vision in Gimba's *Trail of Sacrifice* and Melville's *Moby-Dick"* and claims that, "the authors are so pre-occupied with their message to the extent that they seem to neglect form and technique".

Hence, the study of Gimba's novels by these critics, mainly focus on their thematic concerns.

On the other hand, are the critics who acknowledge the writer's creativity with regard to his use of language and narrative technique, but their views are not supported by any linguistic study of the texts. Isma'ila (2008:9), for instance, argues that "Gimba's language is not a product of a laboured thought process, but of a clear and well-coordinated thought process that reaches deep to the reader's convictions". Likewise, Fajenyo, (2008:19) describes the author's creativity as demonstrated in *Witnesses to Tears* in the following words: "…His grasp of situation, great sense of characterisation, manipulation of situation, and exploration of character's psyche is quite unique…Adroit narrative structures, well-placed flashbacks, smooth poetry, subtle sarcasms and ironies, neat plot arrangements and well-used language mark his work". Further still, Saje (2010:79) notes that some "linguistic components, like language, style, techniques of presentation, characterisation, dialogue and conversation, symbolism of names as well as the autobiographical posture of the novels, come together to bear on the general artistry of the writer". Babajo (2011:93) also describes *Witnesses to Tears* as "a remarkable novel" because of the manner the author "handles character and characterisation, and the numerous techniques used in telling that sordid story".

Unfortunately, none of the arguments in these studies are based on any linguistic evidence from the novel. This article investigates the means by which the author constructs characters in the novel, as well as the ways in which impressions about these characters are created. The analysis will focus on the major character in the novel and Culpeper's (2001) checklist of textual cues for characterisation will serve as the framework for the analysis. The article will conclude by arguing that the writer's creativity in character construction can best be assessed through a stylistic study of the novel.

2   **Models of Characterisation**

Many distinguished scholars from within narratology and stylistics have addressed the issue of character and characterisation due to its significance in fictional narratives, and the studies undertaken are wide-ranging with regard to focus. The studies either trace and evaluate an Aristotelian tradition of enquiry into character traits (e.g. Abbott 2002, Chatman 1978, Rimmon-Kenan 2002, Margolin 2007, Toolan 2001), or discuss characterisation using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g. Bortolussi and Dixon 2003, Hoover 1999, Culpeper 2002, Walker 2012), or explore character's mind style (Leech and Short 2007, Mills 1995, Semino 2002), or analyse transitivity choices in character

representation (Mills 1995, Simpson 2004, Toolan 2007) and interpret interrelations between setting and character (Toolan 2001& 2007). More recently, interest in character has been extended to include the study of characters in other media discourses. Eder *et al.* (2010) comprises various articles on characters and characterisation in films, comic strips and computer media. The works listed above examine various aspects of the concept of character, thus informing the present analysis of character and characterisation. However, as Culpeper's model of characterisation underpins the analysis in this article, it will be discussed in more detail, in the following section.

3   An overview of Culpeper's (2001) model of characterisation

Culpeper first, reviews the positions of humanising and de-humanising approaches to character, and then proposes 'a mixed approach' (2001:255). He points out that the humanising view maintains that fictional characters are representations of people in the real world. Scholars holding this view argue that "we recognize, understand and appreciate fictional characters insofar as their appearances, actions, and speech reflect or refer to those of persons in real life" (Mead 1990:442, cited in Culpeper 2001:253). Mead's comments imply that both the physical and the intellectual aspects of characters represent those of humans.

In contrast to this vision, continues Culpeper (2001:254), a "de-humanising text-based view is that characters are not imitations of real people but text-based existents". Weinsheimer (1979:195 cited in Culpeper 2001:254) concurs with this view when he makes the following statement: "As segments of a closed text, characters at most are patterns of recurrence, motifs which are continually re-contextualised in other motifs. In semiotic criticism, characters dissolve". Based on this de-humanising view, characters can only come into being as a result of textualisation and contextualisation. As such 'characters dissolve'—they melt away into texts rather than striking a cord of association in the reader's mind between a literary figure and a type of real person the reader knows in real life. This is an extreme view of characters, ignoring some degree of correspondence between them and their prototypes in the real world. The limitation of such a view can be easily perceived. For instance, when commenting on Weinsheimer's claim that "Emma Woodhouse is not a woman nor need be described as if *it* were" (Weinsheimer 1979:187), Culpeper points out that the view "demonstrates how one can throw the baby away with the bath water. His use of the neuter third person pronoun borders on the absurd: Emma's female gender is an undeniable part of her character for any reader. Characters remain as words in the text only

when those words have no readers or listeners" (Culpeper 2002:256). Culpeper's comment on Weinsheimer's use of a neuter pronoun foregrounds a pervasive phenomenon: the linguistic means of referring to characters in fiction is identical or very similar to the way people are called in the real world. However, if this novelistic reference system indicates some plausibility of the humanising approach, an exaggerating version of the latter also exhibits a very simplistic tendency: "On the other hand, the extreme humanising view, that characters are actually real people, is, of course, naïve" (Culpeper 2002:256). Having identified the problems of both de-humanising and humanising approaches, Culpeper suggests an eclectic approach which he terms 'mixed approach', arguing for a combination of the polarised views. Methodologically, the mixed approach "considers both textual and psychological (cognitive) levels of description" (Culpeper, 2002:256).

The above bi-directional focus embodies a reconciliation of a text-based view of character and a humanising view of one-to-one correspondence between character and real people. Culpeper's model is a multi-layered structure organised with five hierarchically ordered units of operation. They are, from top to bottom: control system, prior knowledge, situation model, text-base, and surface structure. Control system is synonymous with a fundamental regulating mechanism, which coordinates a reader's effort to construe the linguistic representation (surface structure) of 'propositional content' (text base) regarding people and their actions in a scenario (situation model). With these constituent elements, the control system is operational when the reader's past experience and knowledge stored in his or her long-term memory (prior knowledge) is activated. Within this framework, control system, prior knowledge and situation model present themselves as schema-related conceptual apparatuses, while text base and surface structure are linguistic units.

Culpeper states that the main focus of his model is on "how we form impressions of characters in our minds – not just characters themselves or their personalities" (Culpeper, 2001:2); yet, his model incorporates a 'surface structure' of 'the particular linguistic choices attributed to characters' (Culpeper, 2001:37), which represent 'textual cues' (Culpeper, 2001:163) to characterisation. He makes a distinction between explicit, implicit and authorial cues. It is this part of the model that will guide the analysis in this article, because it provides a checklist of specific categories under which textual cues can be analysed, even though some scholars have suggested modifications of the model.

McIntyre (2014:156) for example, has suggested a modification of the model, pointing out that Culpeper's classification of characterisation cues into implicit, explicit and authorial is problematic. He argues that all textual cues for characterisation are authorial in nature, since

they originate from the author. It would, therefore, be more accurate to describe them as authorial and specify the discourse level at which they operate; be it the level of author-reader, narrator-narratee or character-character. In a similar vein, Walker (2012:53) also suggests a modification of the model to account for the presence of a narrator in prose fiction, by adding narratorial and charactorial cues.

However, Leech and Short (2007:297) have pointed out that, "as with literary criticism, most of the stylistic work on characterisation so far has been on dramatic text, it is not difficult to apply the type of analysis developed for the stylistics of drama to character interaction in prose texts". Therefore, some of the items on the checklist provided under the explicit and implicit cues would also be relevant for the analysis of characterisation in this article. The next section will analyse character and characterisation in *Witnesses to Tears* based on the explicit and implicit textual cues described above.

4   Textual Cues in characterisation: Explicit Cues

Explicit cues are those where "a character ... provides explicit information about him or herself [or] ... about someone else" (Culpeper, 2001: 167). Based on this definition, explicit cues are sub-divided into 'self-presentation' and 'other presentation' (Culpeper 2001:167). While these types of cue appear to be straightforward, Culpeper notes that "… the validity of presentation may be affected by strategic considerations." (Culpeper 2001:168). Thus, Culpeper further categorises 'self-presentation' into self-presentation in the presence of others, and self-presentation in the absence of others.

Culpeper's explicit/implicit distinction corresponds to Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's classification of textual indicator of characters into 'direct definition' and 'indirect presentation'. 'Direct definition' she says, defines a character trait by "an adjective, an abstract noun, or possibly some other kind of noun or part of speech" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:36). *Witnesses to Tears* is a third person narrative; hence, the absence of 'self-representation' in the narrative and very minimal occurrence of 'direct definition', which is carried out by the narrator and realised through abstract nouns and adjectives.

As pointed out by Leech & Short, (2007:273), narrators have various linguistic means at their disposal, in order to create a value picture of a character, of which adjectival descriptions are some of the most fundamental. These descriptions can be simply the physical appearance and behaviour of a character or the more complex dimensions of a character's personality. Thus, adjectives play an evaluative role in the text through labelling

a person. This pattern is a fairly common mode of characterisation which is discernible in *Witnesses to Tears*. The following extract exemplifies this point:

> Serah was a very **versatile** girl, both in and out of school. (1) Her fellow students and the school's instructors alike knew her well. (2) She had an **openness and cheery personality** that made her easily absorbable into any company. (3) […] like a butterfly, she was **colourful** and did not feel any inhibition to hide it. (4) Some boys misjudge her to be a **flirt,** while some girls thought her to be maligned by pride: (5) To them, she was no more than a peacock, her feathers being a composite of her **beauty** and upper class family background. (6) To Serah herself, the way she was, was the way she saw life. (7) Life, she used to say, was meant to be lived and not to be carried, like some burdensome load… (8) Serah was therefore, always in **high spirits** and she had no qualms about it (9). (p18).

This is a description of Hussaina's friend, Serah. As pointed out in the abstract nouns and adjectives highlighted in sentences (1), (4) and (8), she is characterised as beautiful, sociable, friendly, simple and easy-going. This explicit characterisation is interrupted with the narrator's evaluation in sentences (5) to (8), although, the narrator tries to eschew overt evaluation by attributing the evaluation to 'some boys', 'some girls', 'to them' and 'to Serah'. A few lines further, Hussaina is contrasted with Serah:

> Not so Hussaina. (1) Not that she was **downcast**. (2) She was simply **reserved**, some would say. (3) Others thought her **shy** to the point of being withdrawn. (4) Except when in class, she was, she was rarely seen in company of more than three. (5) To some, she was a **dull** character, perhaps **disagreeable**, though none ever had concrete cause to say that. (6) Some high society girls among her fellow students simply concluded that she had some hang-ups, some **inferiority** complex. (7) Most agreed that the only thing Hussaina had in common with Serah was **beauty**. (8) In every other aspect, each appeared the reverse of the other. (9) (*Witnesses to Tears*: 18-19)

The extract begins with a negation 'not', in sentence (1), to indicate the contrast in the character of Hussaina with that of her friend, Serah. It is repeated in (2) to emphasise the contrast. The adjectives used to describe her are highlighted in sentence (1) to (7). Distance is created between the narrator and an overt evaluation by delegating the evaluation to others in sentences (3) to (7); '…some would say', '…others thought', 'to some…', 'some

high society girls…' However, the delegation of negative evaluation to others, while positive evaluation are delegated to the narrator, as seen in the subordinate clause in sentence (6), and to a communal voice in (8), points to the subjective opinion of the narrator. Hussaina is thus, characterised as beautiful, reserved, friendly and respectable. Further still, these positive qualities are emphasised in the following excerpt:

> Her friends sometimes found her difficult to understand. (1) But they had **profound** respect for her. (2) She often spoke little, but whenever she does, she always ended with smiles, **beautiful serene** smiles. (3) She was **gentle** and most people admitted it. (4) Not a single person either among her fellow students or her instructors could ever point to a single stain of mean act on her (5). (20)

In the second sentence, the quality of being respectable is intensified by the adjective 'profound'. Her smiles are also qualified by the adjectives highlighted in sentence (3). The evaluative adjective with which she is qualified in sentence (4), is attributed to a communal voice, 'most people' and emphasised in (5), but the narrator attributes the communal voice to a more specific group of people; 'fellow Students' and 'instructors'.

So far, in this section, the focus has been on explicit characterisation; the descriptive statements which identify and evaluate characters and it is realised by abstract nouns and adjectives. However, there are situations whereby the narrator evokes the reader's reaction to characterisation without resorting to overt description or evaluation of a character's personality or psychology; the implicit mode.

5 Implicit Cues

The second textual cues in characterisation, which Culpeper refers to as "implicit cues", correspond to Rimmon-Kenan is "indirect presentation" as a mode of characterisation. This mode of characterisation involves setting forth characters through representations of their speech and behaviour, including psychological states. A checklist of implicit characterisation cues provided by Culpeper include accent and dialect, lexical, grammatical, conversational, paralinguistic, non-verbal and contextual features. However, the present analysis will focus only on grammatical, lexical and conversational features, which are considered relevant to characterisation in fictional prose.

5.1 Grammatical Features

Culpeper (2001:202-3) has acknowledged the importance of grammar to creating impression about character, when he says,

> …fictional texts, whether in dialogue or monologue, have exploited what appears to be schematic relationship between syntax and cognitive organisation, such that the more simple [sic] the syntax, the more simple–minded the character, and vice versa.

Therefore, the sentence structures, the tone, the parts of speech, vocabulary, etc, used by a character in speech, all have a bearing on our impression about that character. The following is a case in point as Hussaina advises her husband, Lahab, when he unconsciously voices out his thoughts about losing his position as acting Vice Principal, after the return of the substantive Vice Principal from an overseas course.

> "Why do you bother about what people say? (1) You can't prevent people from talking, and attempting to throw mud at you. (2) But I think the important thing is for you to be satisfied that you've done your best. (3)The money episode could have got you into real trouble. (4) But you came out creditably. (5) It's all God's test for you… It's like basketball game. (6) When a time out is called for you to take some rest, don't insist on going back to the game, especially after a good performance. (7) The crowd may not be so impressed thereafter to applaud". (8) (*Witnesses to Tears*: 95)

All the sentences in the extract are presented in the simple present tense with the exception of (4), which is in the simple past. The mood of the sentences is also declarative, except the interrogative sentence in (1). The mundane tones of her sentences contribute to her characterisation as simple-minded. Syntactically, however, the speech contains a variety of sentence structure: simple sentences in (4), (5) and (8), complex sentences in (3) and (7), as well as compound sentences in (2). The simple sentences give emphasis to the point she is trying to make, as well as give vent to her feelings concerning her husband's growing affluence since his appointment as acting Vice principal. This is particularly so, when later the narrator reports that, "she loved him and would not want to upset him" (p103). In addition to displaying some sophistication in grammar, the diverse sentence structures as well as allusion to basketball game to defuse the topic, in sentences (6) to (8), suggest a character that is persuasive, reasonable and tactful. These characteristics can also be attributed to her education and parental background; being an orphan and an only daughter, who spends a lot of time with her enlightened father, she is likely to have imbibed these qualities from him.

Furthermore, Hussaina's character is inferred through the grammatical features of not only her speech, but her psychological state.

> In spite of everything, Hussaina loved spending most of her time at home, playing the faithful housewife. (1) At times though, she felt she had to do some little job to learn just a few kobo - of her own. (2) She knew her husband was very rich and could meet all her needs. (3) But she valued something of what her own sweat could earn for her. (4) It was more than just freedom. (5) She couldn't pin down exactly what it was, but she felt some great inner peace at being able to do things her own way – very modestly, without grandeur. (6) She loved remaining herself; in full control, well, almost in full control of herself. (7) (P 121)

This extract presents her inner state as she decides to take a part time job, when her son is about to start school. Even though Hussaina's inner state is revealed by the narrator through the free indirect thought mode, it contains similar grammatical features to that of her speech. The sentences are grammatically complete and devoid of colloquialism. Again, most of the sentences are presented in a simple declarative mood, with the exception of sentences (1), (6) and (7), which are complex. But unlike the sentences contained in the speech, which are in the present tense, the sentences in this extract are in the past tense; typical of free indirect discourse. All these features indicate that Hussaina is composed and her thought is well co-ordinated. Sentence (1), for example, gives an impression of a devoted and caring housewife, while sentences (2), (3), (4) (5), give the impression of a character that is selfless and desirous of economic independence, in spite of her husband's riches. Hussaina's humility and aversion for flamboyance is indicated in sentence (6). This extract foregrounds a major feature that critics have associated with Gimba's characterisation: the portrayal of women as characters with stable personality and determination for self-fulfilment (see for example, Kabir, 2005, Babajo, 2011, etc).

So far, the discussion has been on how the grammatical features of a character's speech and psychological state can suggest certain characteristics. The next section will focus on the role lexical features play in shaping the reader's impression about characters.

5.2 Lexical Features

Culpeper (2001:172) outlines a checklist of lexical features that are significant in inferring character. They include a consideration of whether the word-form has a Germanic or Latinate origin, formality, surge features, lexical richness, social markers and keywords. He

argues that these lexical features are significant indicators of character's personality. Thus, the type of lexis attributed to characters can persuade readers to perceive or feel things in particular ways; they can evoke the reader's admiration, sympathy or despise. The following example is taken from a scene where Hussaina tries to convince Lahab to allow her take charge of bringing up their son without his interference.

> She knew she would be in charge. (1) She nonetheless felt much happier that he was going to let her be in charge of bringing up Sagiir. (2) She had feared he would interfere, and prayed that he did not, it seemed God has answered her prayers. (3)
> She had feared because, of late, she had been growing more and more uneasy about her husband's life style. (4) Lahab had become very rich, much to her discomfort. (5) How could a Vice-Principal, despite his investment foresight, ride into such affluence as her husband has now found himself? (6) She began to suspect that Lahab had been playing his cards in too fast a fashion. (7) But she had no basis with which to substantiate her fears. (8) However, even that notwithstanding, her husband's growing love for money worried her. (9) That element alone was evil enough. (10) She feared he might infest little Sagiir with his pecuniary passion. (11) She was prepared to turn Sagiir away from this avaricious tendency. (12) Partly because of this, she turned down his offer of a partnership in a contracting business. (13)
> (P115-6)

The extract presents Hussaina's thought in the free indirect mode. It contains a number of lexical items relating to what Culpeper terms, 'personal affect'; words expressing emotions, feelings, etc. The following words for example, "...happier" in sentence (2), "feared" in (3), (4) and (11), "uneasy" in (4), "discomfort" in (5) and "worried" in (9), reveal her state of mind concerning her husband's affairs, and are suggestive of a sensitive, concerned and caring wife. The repetition of "feared", several times in the extract, emphasises her apprehension about Lahab's acquisitiveness, hence her insistence and desire to shield little Sagiir from his father, so that he doesn't get "infested" with greediness. The negative evaluative lexis, like, "evil", "pecuniary passion" and "avaricious tendency", with which Hussaina describes Lahab's materialism in sentences (10), (11) and (12), further indicates her dislike for Lahab's materialistic tendencies. Yet, she does not even express her fears to him, much less confront him, because "… she had no basis with which to substantiate her fears" (8). This gives the impression of Hussaina as a rational, sensitive and courteous

character, who, in spite of her worries does not want to rush into conclusion without any evidence. This situation is also likely to evoke the reader's sympathy and admiration for her.

5.3   Conversational Features

Conversational features in Culpeper's model take into consideration, turn-taking and floor holding, the number of turns, topic control, as well as other paralinguistic features, such as non-fluency features, loudness and voice quality, which can lead to impressions about emotional states and personality of a character. Although these features may be more relevant in plays, they are also useful in considering the interaction between characters in prose fiction. Below is part of a conversation between Hussaina and Lahab when he comments on their son's resemblance with his maternal grandfather.

> Hussaina grinned and paused. Then as if thinking aloud, she said, "the best resemblance is the resemblance of character. (1) I hope to bring him up in Dad's fashion". (2)
> "Ridiculous" (3)
> "what? Why"? (4)
> "Your dad lived at a different time and different environment. You can't…" (5)
> "What do you mean, she quickly interrupted, "by you can't? (6) Nothing is impossible. (7) It may be difficult. (8) Extremely difficult. (9) But with efforts and determination… (10) By the way, what d'you mean by 'different environment'? (11) I shall be his environment in his formative years… (12) Sorry, we shall be. (13) You and I. (14) We both know Dad's environment. (15) And for the question of time, I think certain qualities transcend time. (16) Like honesty and humility for example. (17) Teach a man these qualities, he can live in any age – past, present and future." (18)
> "I don't understand your argument". (19)
> "I'm not arguing. (20) It's an exposition…" (21) (P 114)

In terms of number, this conversation consists of twenty-four turns altogether, shared almost equally between them (Lahab has thirteen turns, Hussaina has eleven). This indicates non-dominance of one speaker over the other. Despite having a structure, the conversation is quite informal. This informality is indicated by the ellipsis in sentences (5), (12) and (21), as well as the contraction in (6), (20) and (21). The use of informal lexis in speech gives the impression of a simple and straight-forward character that prefers things to be put in simple language. This can be supported by Culpeper's (2001:182) suggestion that, "the tendency to use formal

lexis may give the impression that someone is aloof or pompous, informal lexis that someone is 'down to earth'." In spite of the informal features of the conversation, a distant relationship between them is revealed by the absence of any proximal social deictics to indicate that it is a conversation between husband and wife; a distance created by the husband in his effort to cover up his avaricious activities from the wife.

In addition, aspects of Hussaina's character are revealed in her responses to Lahab's attempt to dissuade her from being over protective of little Sagiir. Her use of repeated interrogatives in (4), (6) and (11), imperative 'shall' in (12) – even though, it is immediately followed by the politeness strategy of apology and the first person singular pronoun 'I' immediately replaced with the plural 'we' in (13) and emphasised in (14) to include Lahab – as well as the value-laden statements in (1), (17) and (18), characterise her as firm, determined and conscientious character.

The discussion so far, has concentrated on how characterisation can be inferred from the linguistic choices and behaviour of the characters. As pointed out by Culpeper (2001), characterisation effects can also be derived from what he terms "Authorial Cues", which he defines as, "cues over which the character notionally has no power of choice" (Culpeper, 2001: 229), because they are closely associated with the author. The most common authorial cues from which vital characterisation information can be derived are the author's choice of names for characters and the stage direction in plays. Names can convey information about characters' gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, etc. Stage directions too, can provide descriptions of characters. As noted by Culpeper, "[…] this kind of direct authorial (or narratorial) character information would be even more common in narrative description in novels, particularly in third-person narration" (Culpeper 2001:164), yet, because Culpeper's focus is on drama, he only discusses authorial cues in relation to play texts and not prose fiction. Therefore, no further information about such cues is provided.

6   Conclusion

This article has examined character and characterisation in Gimba's novel, *Witnesses to Tears* drawing upon Culpeper's (2001) textual cues for characterisation. The textual cues are classified into Explicit, Implicit and Authorial cues. The explicit mode of characterisation describes the physical appearance or personality of the characters and the implicit cues provide character information that has to be inferred by the reader from the speech or behaviour of the characters, including psychological states. The analysis has focused on the protagonist to illustrate how characterisation can be inferred from the discursive patterns of

fictional texts and how these patterns can contribute to the appreciation of characters. The analysis shows that explicit characterisation is realised through abstract nouns and adjectives, while implicit characterisation can be inferred from other grammatical, conversational and lexical choices. Authorial cues have been overlooked though, because the article is concerned with textual cues. Going by Culpeper's idea of names of characters and stage direction or narratorial descriptions as the commonest Authorial cues, the readers schematic knowledge have to be activated in order for them to be able to infer character; and this can pose a problem to those who are from a different background, or even those who read texts with a different experience. Moreover, this article has demonstrated that the writer is concerned with characterisation as much as he is, with the themes, but his creativity in that regard can best be explored through a stylistic study of the novel.

References

Abbott, H .P. (2008), *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative.* (2nd edition), Cambridge University Press.

Babajo, A.K. (2011), *The Novels of Abubakar Gimba,* Kaduna: Pyla-mak Services Ltd.

Bortolussi, M. and Dixon, P. (2003), *Psychonarratology: Foundations for the Empirical Study of Literary Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Chatman, S. (1978) *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in fiction and film*, London: Cornell University Press.

Culpeper, J. (2001), *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts*. London: Longman.

Culpeper, J. (2002), "Computers, Language and Characterisation: An Analysis of Six Characters in Romeo and Juliet", in: U. Melander-Marttala, C. Ostman and Merja Kytö (eds.), *Conversation in Life and in Literature: Papers from the ASLA Symposium*, *Association Suedoise de Linguistique Appliquee (ASLA)*, 15. Universitetstryckeriet: Uppsala, 11-30.

Eder, J., Jannidis, F. and Schneider, R. (2010), *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Being in Literature, Film, and other Media*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Fajenyo, E. (2008), "An Introduction to Gimba's Writings", in Isma'ila, A. and Fajenyo, E. (2008). *Abubakar Gimba: Perspectives on his Writings and Philosophy.* Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.

*Gimba, A. (1987), *Witnesses to Tears*. Enugu: Delta Publications.

Hoover, D. (1999), *Language and Style in The Inheritors*, Oxford: University Press.

Isma'ila, A. (2008), "A Synopsis of Gimba's Background" in Isma'ila, A. and Fajenyo, E. (2008). *Abubakar Gimba: Perspectives on his Writings and Philosophy.* Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.

Kabir, A. (2006), "Gender in the Novels of Abubakar Gimba: A Critical Analysis of the Representation of the Contemporary Muslim Woman in Gimba's Sacred Apples in Ahmad, S. B. aand Bhadmus, M. O. (eds), *Writing, Performance and Literature in Northern Nigeria.* A Proceedings of the 3rd conference on Literature in Northern Nigeria.

Khan, Z. (1992), "Sensibility, Rhetoric and the Voice of Vision in Gimba's   *Trail   of Sacrifice* and Melville's *Moby-Dick"* in Okome, O. (ed) *ASE: Calabar Journal of Contemporary Poetry.* Ibadan: Abi print & pak Ltd. Vol.1   No.2.

Leech, G. N. and Short, M. H. (2007) (2nd ed), *Style in fiction: A Linguistic Introduction   to English Fictional Prose.* London: Longman.

Margolin, U. (2007) "Character", in D. Herman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 66-79.

McIntyre, D. (2014) "Characterisation" in Stockwell, P. and Whiteley, S. *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics,* Cambridge University Press.

Mills, S. (1995), *Feminist Stylistics.* London: Routledge.

Mowah, F.U. (1992), "Dimension of Sacrifice: Abubakar Gimba's vision of order and Dislocations", in Okome, O. (ed) *ASE: Calabar Journal of Contemporary Poetry.* Ibadan: Abi print & Pak Ltd. Vol.1 No.2.

Okome, O. (1992), "The Banker as Writer" in Okome, O. (ed.) *ASE: Calabar Journal of Contemporary Poetry.* Ibadan: Abi print & Pak Ltd. Vol.1 No.2.

Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2002), *Narrative Ficiton: Contemporary Poetics.* (2nd ed) London: Routledge

Saje, U. (2010), "Religious Morality and Nationalism in the Novels of Abubakar Gimba. An unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of English and French, Bayero University, Kano.

Semino, E. and Culpeper, J. (eds.) (2002) *Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Simpson, P. (2004) *Stylistics: A Resource Book for students*. London: Routledge.

Toolan, M. (2001) *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction to Stylistics*. (2nd ed). London: Routledge.

Toolan, M. (2007) 'Language.' In D. Herman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 231-44.

Walker, B. (2012) "Character and Characterisation in Julian Barnes' *Talking It Over*: A Corpus Stylistic Analysis". An unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the Department of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University.

*All Page references are to the 2006 edition published by Kraft Books Ltd, Ibadan, Nigeria.