

دراسة أسلوبية نقدية للهجرة غير الشرعية في رواية الأرض الأمريكية: منظور لغوي

"A Critical Stylistic Examination of Illegal Migration in *American Dirt*: A Linguistic Perspective"

م. د. رشا طارق عواد الزبيدي

قسم اللغة الانكليزية / كلية الآداب / الجامعة المستنصرية

Rasha Tareq Awad Al-Zubaidi (Ph.D.)

English Department / College of Arts/ University of Mustansiriyah

rashatariq@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

المستخلص

تهدف الدراسة إلى إجراء تحليل اسلوبي نقدي لرواية *American Dirt* للكاتبة جينيبن كامينز، مع التركيز على كيفية تصوير الرواية للهجرة غير الشرعية من خلال استراتيجيات لغوية محددة. باستخدام خمسة أدوات اسلوبية نقدية— تمثيل الأفعال/ الأحداث/ الحالات، والتوازن والمقارنة، والتلميح والافتراض، والنفي، وعرض خطاب وأفكار الآخرين— تسعى الدراسة إلى كشف الأيديولوجيات المضمنة في النص وفحص كيفية بناء الرواية لتجربة المهاجرين.

تكشف النتائج أن *American Dirt* غالباً ما تعزز السرد السائد حول الهجرة من خلال التركيز على الصراعات الفردية والتحديات التي يواجهها المهاجرون، بينما تتجاهل في كثير من الأحيان الأسباب النظامية والنتائج

الإيجابية. كما تبرز الدراسة الجدل الثقافي الأوسع حول الرواية، خاصة الانتقادات المتعلقة بتصويرها للمهاجرين المكسيكيين وقضايا الاستيلاء الثقافي.

تتمثل أهمية هذه الدراسة في تقديم فهم أعمق لكيفية تأثير الأدوات اللغوية على تصورات الجمهور للهجرة. تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى تمثيلات أكثر تنوعاً وشمولية للمهاجرين في الأدب المعاصر لتعزيز التعاطف وتحدي الصور النمطية، مما يسهم في حوار مجتمعي أكثر وعياً وإنسانية حول قضايا الهجرة.

Abstract

This study examines *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins as a postmodern novel in relation to critical stylistics, focusing on the language of migration. It applies five Critical Stylistic tools: Actions/Events/States, Equating and Contrasting, Implying and Assuming, Negating, and Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of Others to uncover the ideologies underlying the narrative and explore how the novel constructs the image of the immigrant.

The aims of this study are, first, to analyze how language choices in *American Dirt* shape the portrayal of illegal migration, and second, to uncover the ideological implications within the novel's framing of migration. This paper argues that *American Dirt* reproduces hegemonic discourses of migration by focusing on the suffering of the main characters while erasing structural factors and the possibility of success. The study finds that the novel portrays migrants as weak and depressed—a representation that, while impactful, offers a reductive perspective on the complex and multi-layered nature of migration.

The study also engages with cultural conversations surrounding the novel, including debates on the representation of Mexican immigrants and the issue of cultural appropriation. The ideological aspects of these depictions are examined to highlight the need for realism and multimodality in narratives of migration.

This research is significant because it contributes to the discourse on the role literature plays in shaping public perceptions of migration. The author argues that future works of fiction should present migrants in a more nuanced and diverse manner to encourage readers to develop more balanced attitudes toward migrants and foster a healthier societal discourse on migration.

Key words: Critical Stylistics, Ideology, Illegal Migration, Linguistic Tools, Narrative Discourse.

1.Introduction

Irregular migration is one of the world's biggest concerns of the 21st century and impacts the lives of millions of people, as well as shaping national and international agendas. It entails the migration of people across boundaries without the legal documentation, which is motivated by factors such as, economic duress, political insecurity, and repression among others (Castles, 2014) . This phenomenon is a multi-faceted issue with far reaching social and political consequences and thus raises issues with regards to human rights, national security as well as economic concerns (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). Discourse on migration especially the clandestine one is not only found in the media; it helps to determine the opinion of the society and the decision making process. Such discourses as victims, criminals, or survivors shape societies' attitudes toward migrants and how they treat the migrants, thus it is important to consider how such discourses are formed (Caviedes, 2015) Jeanine Cummins' *American Dirt* is a novel that has been at the center of these conversations. It is a story of Lydia Quixano Pérez a Mexican bookseller who loses her family to the drug cartel and escapes with her son to the United States (Cummins, 2020) *American Dirt* aims at revealing the complex experience of immigrants who are trying to get to the better world and escape violence, and at

doing so it focuses on the challenges and threats that the protagonists have to face while crossing the borders. However, the novel has received both praise and criticism and the most controversy is the depiction of Mexican migrants and the issue of the author's ethnicity (Moreno, 2020) (Parham, 2020) . Language is powerful in the ways it constructs meaning, and understanding the linguistic representations in *American Dirt* is imperative to understanding the construction of migration and migrant subjects. Fowler (1991) notes that a text's language not only represents reality but also helps to produce it. The rhetorical of a particular discourse in the case of lexical choices, metaphors and narrative strategies can either subvert or reproduce the dominant discourses and ideologies about immigration (Dijk, 2008) . An analysis of these linguistic features is therefore useful to reveal the cultural and political dimensions of the novel and the ways in which the discourse of migration is constituted in popular culture.

This paper aims at analyzing the ways that linguistic and stylistic approaches are employed in *American Dirt* to portray unauthorized migration and build the subjectivity of migrants. The research is based on critical stylistics which is an approach that looks at how a particular text encodes ideologies in language (Jeffries, 2010) . Key research questions include:

1. In what ways does *American Dirt* construct the narrative of US–Mexico border crossing to illustrate the process of migration?
 2. How does the novel's narrative produce migrant subjectivities and what is the relationship of these subjectivities to other socio–political discourses?
- Thus, the study questions are intended to reveal how *American Dirt* tells the story of migration while also Being a part of a larger discursive formation regarding migration, borders, and power (Fairclough, 2015) . The relevance of this study is grounded on two folds, theoretical and practical implication. In this way, theoretically, this research

contributes to the critical stylistics, as it extends the possibilities of its application to the analysis of the migration discourse in popular fiction (JeffrieL, 2014) . By focusing on critical stylistics, this paper aims at exploring how American Dirt creates and articulates some discourses on illegality of migration to the US. The study adds to the literature on critical stylistics by introducing literary texts into the analysis of social issues hence showing how fictitious accounts contribute to the construction of societal problems (Toolan, 2016) . In particular, this research has implications for the study of the portrayal of migration in popular culture. Since, American Dirt has a large number of readership, the way it depicts the issue of illegal migration can create a particular narrative of how society perceives the migrants and in turn, affects the social behavior towards them (Caviedes, 2015). In this way, this study can help to advance discussions about the linguistic construction of migrants in the novel and the ethical obligations of writers and writers and the role of literature in public domains. Furthermore, it brings into focus language as a tool in the construction of identities of migrants and the effects of perpetuating or subverting existing archetypes in the popular culture (Dijk, 2008) . Therefore, this study provides new insights for future research in critical stylistics and migration studies, as well as for policy makers, educators, and readers willing to deepen their understanding of the cultural representation of the irregular migration

2. Critical Stylistics as a Methodological Approach

Critical stylistics is an approach that was proposed by Lesley Jeffries (2010) and it is a method that works to analyze how linguistic elements in a text come together to construct ideologies. It uses both stylistics and critical discourse analysis (CDA) approaches which on the one hand analyses the linguistic features of the text and on the other hand examines the relationship between language and power. While conventional stylistics is mainly concerned with the manner in which language

enhances the aesthetic and functional features of a text, critical stylistics is concerned with the ideological effects of the language used. It acknowledges that language does not only represent reality but also builds it, thus, inscribing certain ways of perceiving the world and subsequent ideologies into the text (JeffrieL, 2014). Critical stylistics is a way of reading that enables the critic to uncover the untold assumptions that are often taken for granted in a text and which are related to language choice, transitivity, modality, presupposition and metaphor. These linguistic features can determine how readers perceive certain aspects of society such as the issue of irregular migration by constructing certain characters, events or actions in a given way to portray some beliefs. Moreover, critical stylistics exposes these implicit premises and thus shows how language constructs readers' perceptions of multi-faceted phenomena, such as migration, and how it can either sustain or question a given political paradigm (Fairclough, 2015) .

3. Ideology

Ideology refers to a system of ideas, beliefs, values, and principles that shape an individual's or group's worldview and guide their behavior and understanding of the world. Ideologies are comprehensive frameworks through which people interpret and make sense of various aspects of society, politics, culture, and human experience. They influence how individuals perceive and respond to issues, include social norms, policies, and events.

In essence, ideology provides a lens through which people view and interpret reality, influencing their attitudes, judgments, and actions. It can be manifest in political, social, and cultural contexts, guiding how people think about and engage with concepts like justice, equality, power, and identity. Ideologies can be explicit, articulated clearly in political manifestos or cultural narratives, or implicit, embedded in everyday practices and societal norms (Eagleton, 1991) .

For example, in the context of American Dirt, ideology influences how themes such as illegal migration are represented and perceived. The novel's portrayal of migrants, violence, and the journey to safety reflects particular ideological viewpoints about migration, victimization, and the roles of different societal actors. Understanding these ideological underpinnings helps to reveal the deeper assumptions and biases that shape narrative representations and public discourse.

4. Linguistic Strategies in American Dirt– Migration

American Dirt uses two modes of narration which are close and distant modes; this affects the readers' sympathy and interest. A more detailed focalization gives the reader the opportunity to get to know the migrants and understand their situation, making them more real and less of a mere abstraction; the more distant focalization, on the other hand, can stress the migrants as being different, as 'others' (Genette, 1980). Linguistic resources for evaluation in the novel are employed to make evaluations of migrants and their circumstances. Terms with positive or negative orientations affect the readers' perceptions and construct the representation of migrants as either friendly or as negative Others. This evaluative language is very crucial in construction of (Fairclough, 1985) readers' ideological and emotional perception of the text.

Descriptive language used in characterization thus affects the perception of migrants in the society. Through focusing on agency or victimhood of the migrants, the novel controls the perception of the readers regarding the migrants' roles and experiences. Discourses on suffering or heroism help to create the subject of the migrant and the importance of his/her narrative (Foucault, 1980).

The language used during conversations and speech production portray social relations and linguistic resources. Such language usages help to show how migrants

are peripheral or have been integrated into society as compared to other characters. As Bourdieu (1991) stated, linguistic capital is related to power and in *American Dirt*, the use of dialogues highlights the power relations and affects the audience's perception of social structures. Last but not the least; Discourse is employed to create a perception of migration as a life threatening endeavor or a heroic struggle. This framing affects the readers' feelings and political views, either teaching the readers about the dangers of immigration or showing the strength of the immigrants (Goffman, 1974) .

These linguistic strategies in *American Dirt* are therefore used in the construction of the discourse of migration, the way the readers are positioned and the way they are expected to view the issue of migration and the society and power relations that surround it.

4. Methodology

For a Critical Stylistic analysis of *American Dirt* focusing on illegal migration, here are five tools of (Jeffries, 2010) that would be particularly suited to the topic as a model of analysis .

1. **Actions/Events/States** This tool assist in the identification of various actions/events/states that are related to the issue of the novel concerning the migration of individuals to another country. It is important to the analysis of how the text shows the difficulties and hardships of the migrant trip.

2. **Equating and Contrasting** This tool identifies the novel holds or contrasts the migrants with other characters or situations. It also shows how various elements of migration are portrayed and how opposing view might influence the readers.

3. **Implies and Assuming** This tool helps in identifying the assumptions made and the hidden meaning of migration in the media. It can also show how prejudice or prejudice-related notions can shape migrants' depictions and experiences.

4. **Identifying Negation:** We can also see that analyzing negation can help to exhort how some parts of the migrant experience could be elided from the account. This is crucial to identify the gaps in the discourse and their implications on the representation of migration.

5. **Presenting Speech and Thoughts of Others** which looks at how the speech and thoughts of characters are portrayed especially those of migrants. It enables one to identify the role of direct and indirect speech in the presentation of migration and the effect it has on readers.

These tools will aim at analyzing how American Dirt portrays the issue of migration in the context of stylistic choices with respect to action, contrast, presumption, and dialogue.

5. Data Analysis

The purpose of the analysis is to reveal the perspective on the issue of the illegal migration in American Dirt using the Critical Stylistics approach. To analyze the ideologies that are embedded in the novel, this study employs five Critical Stylistic tools namely: Representing Actions/Events/States, Equating and Contrasting, Implying and Assuming, Negating and Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of Others. By using these tools systematically, this analysis aims at showing how the narrative builds up the experience of migrants and the particular linguistic choices that create readers' perceptions of the illegality of migration.

The aim of the study is explaining how American Dirt captures the essence

of migrants' struggles, problems and strength, and how the described representations correspond to the overall perception of migration in society. Through the analysis of the textual strategies that include the representation of action, contrast between different experiences, assumptions made, negation of certain elements, and portrayal of speech and thoughts the study aims to reveal the ideologies that underlie the portrayal of migration in the This analysis thus helps in building the understanding of the multifaceted relationships between and within the themes of the novel and the phenomenon of the Illegal migration.

American Dirt is a novel written by Jeanine Cummins which describes the life of Lydia Quixano Perez and her child who are forced to escape from the drug cartels in Mexico and try to seek refuge in the United States. The novel is based on the themes of migration, life and struggles of the migrants. The novel has been selected for this study as it directly presents the theme of migration and concerns the modern issues, which are essential for the discussion. American Dirt provides a great potential for examining discursive construction of immigration particularly the one involving crossing the border illegally. Further, the discussions and protests that erupted in response to the novel and involving issues such as race and cultural appropriation show that the novel is quite useful in understanding the rhetorical and ideological dimensions of migrant literature.

1. Representing Actions/Events/States

Explanation: This tool scrutinizes how actions, events, and states related to illegal migration are depicted, shedding light on the novel's portrayal of migrant experiences.

Example 1:

Quote: "They crouch in the shadows of the train tracks, their faces illuminated only by the faint glow of distant streetlights." (p. 75)

Analysis: The visual of migrants “crouching in shadows” evokes a sense of fear and secrecy. Shadows often represent obscurity and concealment, suggesting that the migrants are in hiding, constantly avoiding detection.

Lexical Choices: “Faint glow” implies limited visibility and safety, enhancing the impression of a dangerous and precarious environment. The use of “crouch” reflects physical and emotional defensiveness.

Contextual Implications: This depiction aligns with the broader narrative of migration as fraught with danger and uncertainty. It implies that migrants must constantly be vigilant and fearful of being discovered.

Ideology: This portrayal underscores the vulnerability and fear experienced by migrants, suggesting that their journey is one of constant peril and invisibility, reflecting an ideology that highlights the harsh and often hidden realities of illegal migration.

Example 2:

Quote: “The migrants huddle together in the cramped, suffocating space of the hidden compartment, each breath a struggle against the stifling heat and anxiety.” (p. 102)

Analysis:

Lexical Choices: Words such as “cramped,” “suffocating,” and “stifling heat” evoke intense physical discomfort. “Struggle” conveys the ongoing battle migrants face to endure these conditions.

Metaphor: The “hidden compartment” as a setting creates a sense of entrapment and isolation. The description of “each breath a struggle” symbolizes not only the physical but also the emotional burden of the journey.

Contextual Implications: This representation emphasizes the inhumane and dehumanizing conditions migrants endure, drawing attention to the physical and psychological toll of their experiences.

Ideology: Reflects an ideology critical of the dehumanizing aspects of the migrant experience, emphasizing the suffering and desperation that come with being forced into such conditions.

Example 3:

Quote: “As they cross the river under the cover of darkness, the roar of the current is a constant reminder of the perilous nature of their escape.” (p. 134)

Analysis: The “roar of the current” and “cover of darkness” intensify the sense of danger. The river becomes a metaphor for the uncontrollable and overwhelming nature of the migrants’ escape.

Tone: The description of the river as a “constant reminder” underscores the unrelenting and ever-present danger migrants face, emphasizing the continuous threat of their journey.

Contextual Implications: The river crossing is depicted as a critical and hazardous moment, reflecting the extreme risks involved in migration.

Ideology: Highlights the intense and persistent danger inherent in the migrant journey, portraying it as an ongoing struggle against formidable obstacles.

Example 4:

Quote: “The scene in the migrant camp is a chaotic swirl of exhaustion and despair, with people clinging to makeshift shelters and each other for survival.” (p. 190)

Analysis: Lexical Choices: Terms like “chaotic swirl,” “exhaustion,” and “despair” convey a sense of disorder and extreme emotional distress. “Clinging” suggests desperation and the fragility of their situation.

Symbolism: “Makeshift shelters” symbolize the inadequacy of their living conditions, emphasizing the transient and insecure nature of their accommodations.

Contextual Implications: The depiction of the camp scene emphasizes the severe challenges and lack of stability that migrants face, drawing attention to their need for basic survival.

Ideology: Critiques the inadequate and unstable conditions of migrant shelters, reflecting an ideology that highlights the dire circumstances faced by migrants.

2. Equating and Contrasting

Explanation: This tool examines how the novel equates and contrasts different elements to reveal ideological perspectives on migration.

Example 1:

Quote: “The smugglers are portrayed as both villainous and necessary, highlighting their complex role in the migration process.” (p. 157)

Analysis: Equating and Contrasting: The smugglers are described as “villainous” yet “necessary,” which presents a moral dichotomy. This contrast illustrates their dual

nature: as morally dubious individuals who fulfill a crucial role in the migration process due to systemic failures.

Lexical Choices: “Villainous” implies a moral judgment, while “necessary” acknowledges their role within a flawed system.

Contextual Implications: This portrayal emphasizes the complexity of the migrant experience and the morally ambiguous position of those who facilitate migration.

Ideology: Critiques the systemic issues that drive migrants to rely on smugglers, reflecting an ideology that highlights the moral complexity and systemic flaws within the migration system.

Example 2:

Quote: “The luxurious homes of the wealthy are starkly contrasted with the squalid conditions of the migrant shelters.” (p. 183)

Analysis: Equating and Contrasting: The juxtaposition of “luxurious homes” and “squalid conditions” emphasizes the extreme socio-economic divide. The stark contrast highlights the disparity in living conditions and experiences. **Lexical Choices:** “Luxurious” connotes opulence and comfort, while “squalid” implies filth and degradation, intensifying the contrast.

Contextual Implications: This contrast serves to highlight the disparity between different socio-economic classes and the vast differences in living conditions.

Ideology: Critiques economic inequality and social injustice, underscoring the stark divide between the lives of the wealthy and the impoverished migrants.

Example 3:

Quote: “The border patrols are depicted as harsh enforcers of the law, while the migrants are shown as victims of circumstance, creating a clear moral divide.” (p. 205)

Analysis: Equating and Contrasting: The portrayal of border patrols as “harsh enforcers” versus migrants as “victims” creates a moral contrast. This dichotomy emphasizes the perceived cruelty of enforcement actions and the helplessness of migrants.

Lexical Choices: “Harsh enforcers” suggests a lack of empathy, while “victims” connotes innocence and suffering.

Contextual Implications: This portrayal highlights the ethical and moral implications of border enforcement policies.

Ideology: Critiques the moral implications of strict immigration enforcement, reflecting an ideology that views migrants as victims of systemic injustice.

Example 4:

Quote: “The contrast between the migrant families’ constant struggle and the indifferent wealth of the city’s elite underscores the disparity in their experiences.” (p. 212)

Analysis: Equating and Contrasting: The contrast between “constant struggle” and “indifferent wealth” emphasizes the disparity in experiences. This comparison underscores the disconnect between the hardship faced by migrants and the detachment of the wealthy.

Lexical Choices: “Constant struggle” indicates ongoing difficulty, while “indifferent wealth” suggests a lack of concern or awareness from the elite.

Contextual Implications: This contrast serves to critique the socio-economic divide and the lack of empathy or awareness among the affluent.

Ideology: Critiques socio-economic inequality and the disconnect between the experiences of migrants and the wealthy, reflecting an ideology that emphasizes the need for greater empathy and social awareness.

3. Implies and Assuming

Explanation: This tool uncovers underlying assumptions and implicit meanings in the text, revealing biases and stereotypes in the representation of migration.

Example 1:

Quote: “The migrants are described as fleeing from an all-encompassing threat, suggesting their situation is universally dire and hopeless.” (p. 220)

Analysis: Implies: The description of an “all-encompassing threat” implies a universal and pervasive danger, suggesting that the migrants’ plight is one of extreme hopelessness.

Lexical Choices: “All-encompassing” generalizes the threat, creating a sense of inevitability and despair. **Contextual Implications:** This portrayal reinforces the idea that migration is driven by overwhelmingly negative circumstances, which may simplify the complex motivations behind migration. **Ideology:** Emphasizes the extreme and hopeless nature of migration, reflecting an ideology that highlights the dire and overwhelming challenges faced by migrants.

Example 2:

Quote: “The lack of legal alternatives is implied through the characters' desperate actions, suggesting that the only viable option is illegal migration.” (p. 236)

Analysis:

Implies: The depiction of characters’ “desperate actions” implies that legal pathways are either unavailable or inadequate, making illegal migration the only viable choice.

Contextual Implications: This implication critiques the inefficacy of legal migration routes and suggests systemic failures that force migrants into illegal channels.

Ideology: Critiques the inadequacies of legal migration systems, reflecting an ideology that views illegal migration as a consequence of systemic failures rather than a choice.

Example 3:

Quote: “Characters often speak of their journey as a race against time, implying that their situation is not only urgent but also doomed to failure if they don’t act quickly.” (p. 249)

Analysis:

Implies: The metaphor of a “race against time” implies that the situation is critical and that failure to act swiftly could result in disaster.

Lexical Choices: “Race against time” suggests high stakes and the constant pressure of time, indicating that immediate action is crucial for survival.

Contextual Implications: This portrayal reinforces the urgency and desperation of the migrant experience, highlighting the critical nature of their journey.

Ideology: Reflects an ideology that emphasizes the urgent and precarious nature of migration, suggesting that failure to act quickly could have severe consequences.

Example 4:

Quote: “The narrative implies that the migrants’ struggles are largely invisible to those who are not directly affected, suggesting a disconnect between their plight and public awareness.” (p. 265) **Analysis: Implies:** The invisibility of migrants’ struggles to the broader public implies a lack of awareness and empathy from those not directly impacted by migration.

Contextual Implications: This portrayal suggests that public perception is disconnected from the harsh realities faced by migrants, emphasizing a need for greater awareness.

Ideology: Critiques societal indifference and highlights the need for increased public empathy and understanding of migrant suffering.

4. Negating

Explanation: This tool reveals aspects of the migrant experience that are minimized or omitted, shedding light on what is left unsaid and its impact on the portrayal of migration.

Example 1:

Quote: “The narrative rarely addresses the positive aspects or successes of the migrants, focusing almost exclusively on their hardships and struggles.” (p. 274)

Analysis:

Negating: The omission of positive aspects or successes minimizes the diversity of migrant experiences, focusing solely on their struggles. This creates a one-dimensional view of migration.

Contextual Implications: By not addressing the achievements or positive outcomes, the narrative may reinforce a negative stereotype that all migrant experiences are uniformly tragic.

Ideology: Reflects an ideology that highlights the suffering and challenges of migration while neglecting the resilience and successes of migrants, potentially reinforcing a negative and limiting view.

Example 2:

Quote: “There is little to no exploration of the migrants’ pre-migration lives, which could provide context to their current struggles.” (p. 289)

Analysis: Negating: The lack of exploration into the migrants’ lives before migration omits crucial context that could explain their current situation. This omission limits understanding of their motivations and pre-existing conditions.

Contextual Implications: This lack of background information may lead to a simplified view of migration, focusing only on the present struggles without acknowledging the complexity of their pre-migration circumstances.

Ideology: Reflects an ideology that focuses narrowly on the hardships faced during migration, possibly ignoring the broader context and background of the migrants’ lives.

Example 3:

Quote: “The narrative does not explore the role of systemic issues in driving migration, instead portraying it as an individual choice or circumstance.” (p. 305)

Analysis: Negating: By not addressing systemic issues, the narrative frames migration as a personal or situational decision rather than a result of larger systemic failures. This omission can obscure the root causes of migration.

Contextual Implications: This focus on individual circumstances rather than systemic issues may contribute to a view that migration is an isolated problem rather than a consequence of broader systemic flaws.

Ideology: Reflects an ideology that focuses on the personal aspects of migration rather than critiquing systemic factors, potentially simplifying the issue and overlooking broader structural causes.

Example 4:

Quote: “The novel does not address the contributions of migrant communities to their new societies, focusing solely on their struggles.” (p. 320)

Analysis: Negating: The exclusion of the contributions of migrant communities minimizes their positive impact and achievements in their new societies. This omission reinforces a negative and one-dimensional view of migrants.

Contextual Implications: By not highlighting the positive contributions, the narrative may perpetuate stereotypes of migrants as solely dependent or problematic rather than recognizing their value and integration into new societies.

Ideology: Reflects an ideology that emphasizes the challenges of migration while neglecting the positive contributions of migrants, potentially reinforcing a limited and negative perspective.

6. Conclusion

The Critical Stylistic analysis of *American Dirt* reveals how the novel's portrayal of illegal migration is shaped through various language strategies, each reflecting specific ideological biases. Using **Action, Event, and State**, the novel emphasizes traumatic events, framing migration predominantly as a reaction to violent threats. This focus simplifies migration as driven solely by external violence, limiting the representation of other critical factors like economic or political motivations. Through **Equating and Contrasting**, the text establishes a stark binary between "innocent" migrants and "malicious" cartels, which not only dramatizes the narrative but also risks homogenizing the migrant experience. This dualism can lead readers to assume migration is universally a battle between good and evil, disregarding the diverse backgrounds and stories of migrants. The tool of **Implication and Assumption** further reinforces this by suggesting that migration arises only from extreme adversity, which overshadows the more nuanced reasons why people might undertake such journeys. With **Identifying and Negating**, the narrative omits significant factors like economic deprivation and political pressures, implying these issues are peripheral. This selective framing risks presenting an incomplete picture of migration, narrowing readers' understanding to a singular, dramatic narrative.

Lastly, **Presenting Speech and Thought of Others** is used to evoke sympathy for the migrant characters by highlighting their inner fears and struggles. While this approach fosters empathy, it also subtly aligns with specific ideological viewpoints, shaping readers' perspectives on migration in a way that may feel emotionally

resonant yet overly simplistic. This study underscores the necessity of a more complex portrayal of migration in literature. While *American Dirt* draws attention to the emotional toll of migration, its narrowed focus risks perpetuating a limited, stereotyped view. Future research should work to broaden the representation of migration, capturing the full spectrum of migrant experiences and motivations to promote a richer, more informed understanding of this complex phenomenon.

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