



Crossing

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The Department of English and Humanities has organized an International Conference on “Language, Literature and Community” at ULAB with support from The American Center, Dhaka. We are very glad to be able to publish this volume of *Crossings* to coincide with the event.

This issue of *Crossings* has gone through rigorous reviews and edits to present articles truly worthy of publication. For the first time, the editorial team checked each article for plagiarism using a plagiarism checker and the results were gratifying. We turned down a few authors who did not pass the test and others were asked to rewrite. The editorial team felt this exercise was necessary as accidental or intentional plagiarism is rampant in our country and needs to be checked.

This volume has four sections: first, the Special Papers; second, articles on Literature; third, articles on Linguistics and Language; and fourth, Book Reviews. Of the two papers in the Special Papers section, Dr. Joseph Brooker’s is the product of a talk given at ULAB last December. The other author, Dr. Claire Chambers, is a plenary speaker at the international conference. We are grateful to both authors for their contributions to this issue.

The editorial team aims to disseminate this journal as widely as possible and it is hoped that the launch of this issue at the international conference will support that endeavor.



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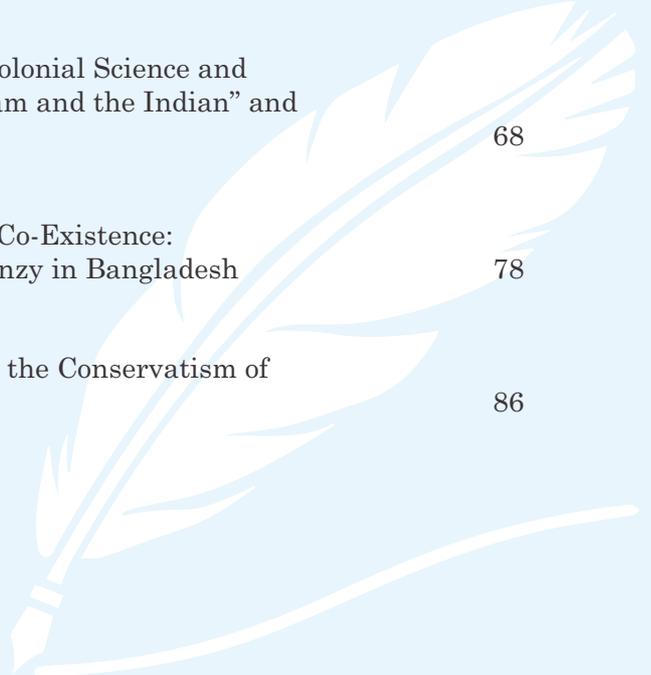
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C O N T E N T S



S P E C I A L P A P E R S



Waiting for Beckett

Joseph Brooker*
Birkbeck College

Samuel Beckett's best-known work begins with the following stage direction:

A country road. A tree. Evening.

At mid-twentieth century, we have come a long way from Victorian and Edwardian drama's detailed descriptions of furniture and setting. The sparseness of the setting is a Beckettian hallmark. And the sparseness of the play, *Waiting for Godot*, as a whole is one thing that made it revolutionary.

The Left Bank Can Keep It

The play was first staged in French, as *En attendant Godot*, on 3rd January 1953, in a theater that held 230 spectators, who watched the two protagonists Vladimir and Estragon wait by the tree and converse with those who come by. In one of these first performances, Lucky's monologue in the first act was greeted by whistling and hooting from twenty theatergoers. The curtain had to be brought down. During the interval, those who had been most angered by the play came to blows with those who defended it. They returned for the second act, to see the curtain go up. As the script tells us:

ACT TWO

Next Day. Same Time. Same Place.

Estragon's boots front centre, heels together, toes splayed.

Lucky's hat at same place.

The tree has four or five leaves.

Quite extensive instructions, compared to what we started with. Vladimir comes on, starts to sing a song. He is joined again by

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Estragon. They converse.

Vladimir: You must be happy, too, deep down, if you only knew it.

Estragon: Happy about what?

V: To be back with me again.

E: Would you say so?

V: Say you are, even if it's not true.

E: What am I to say?

V: Say, I am happy.

E: I am happy.

V: So am I.

E: So am I.

V: We are happy.

E: We are happy.

[Silence]

What do we do now, now that we are happy?

V: Wait for Godot.

[Estragon groans. Silence.]

Things have changed since yesterday. (55-56)

The groan must have been echoed by those Parisian spectators who had come back into the auditorium hoping for a change in the second Act. For them, to say 'Things have changed since yesterday' was a bad joke-which indeed it is supposed to be. Things had not changed at all. The play still consisted of these two men standing by a road, in front of a tree, waiting for Godot. Accordingly, twenty of the audience walked out, with the second half hardly begun.

Key works of literature often meet with such reaction. Shock, outrage, offence; the walk-out, the boycott. In the case of Irish drama, the theatrical riot was a twentieth-century tradition, most famously when John Millington Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, was staged at the Abbey Theatre in 1907. A section of the audience was already prepared to be affronted, convinced that the dramatist was doing Ireland down. When one character imagined the girls of County Mayo semi-naked before him, the word 'shifts' was enough to spark a riot. Policemen had to stand guard before the stage for the rest of the run: the play first played on a Saturday, and by the Thursday there were reputedly 200 policemen for 400 spectators. Protesters brought tin whistles to drown out the performance. Nineteen years later, the same place witnessed a replay of these scenes, when Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* affronted an audience who could not abide to see the Irish tricolor carried into a pub. W.B. Yeats climbed on stage as he had in 1907, and memorably proclaimed: "You have disgraced yourselves again."

¹ Samuel Beckett, *Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber, 1986). Subsequent references to this volume are given in the text as 'CDW' plus page number.

Samuel Beckett was asked, decades later, which writer had had the most influence on his drama. The answer was instant: Synge. He did not mean, of course, that he had been inspired by Synge's ability to start a riot in the theater. He was surely thinking of Synge's stagecraft, his musical dialogue, his use of Irish peasants and tramps as central figures. But it is true that, in its very different way, *Waiting for Godot* also shocked the theater – even in Paris, which liked to think of itself as much less easily affronted than Dublin. While *Godot* began to be translated and to appear around Europe in the early 1950s, its London debut did not come until 1955. It was directed by an unknown, Peter Hall, at the Arts Theatre Club. The character of Pozzo was played by Peter Bull. He has recorded his memory of the first night.

Waves of hostility came whirling over the footlights, and the mass exodus, which was to form such a feature of the run of the piece, started quite soon after the curtain had risen. The audible groans were also fairly disconcerting. [...] The curtain fell to mild applause, we took a scant three calls and a depression and sense of anti-climax descended on us all. (cited in Knowlson 414)²

In fact, the reaction to the first production could be much harsher than that. When one character remarked “It's not over,” groans were heard from the audience. At the interval, roughly half of the first-night audience left the theater. A newspaper headline the following day read: “THE LEFT BANK CAN KEEP IT.” When Estragon asked Vladimir for a bit of rope to hang himself, one spectator shouted “Give him some rope!” Perhaps the most memorable heckle of all was “This is why we lost the colonies!” – a comment which would bear some close interpretation (K 415).

It is impossible to imagine a major London production of *Godot* meeting a similar response today. Audiences are prepared for the play. Its legend is known; what turned the first punters away is now part of what people willingly pay to see. But just what was it that turned people away? What was so disturbing about Beckett? For most viewers, the offence was nothing dramatic. It was the absence of drama, the play's failure to fulfil their sense of what a play should be. *A country road. A tree. Evening.* Two men, talking to each other for one act, interrupted by an encounter with another pair, and then by a Boy. Why are Vladimir and Estragon here? Because they are waiting for Godot. Why can't they go? Because they are waiting for Godot. The play centers on what its title announces plainly enough: waiting. Beckett would tell his biographer that “All theatre is waiting” (K 380). Perhaps he was thinking of other plays constructed around the anticipation of a dramatic event. But his play is unlike most of those in that the event does not take place.

More than poetry, and more even than the novel, theater tends to be organized

² James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996). Subsequent references to this work are given in the text as 'K' plus page number.

around events. There is a recurring and widespread sense that things must happen, characters must change, plot must move through its stages, through crisis to denouement and resolution. Beckett's play seemed to refuse these principles. In a sense, the play does contain events. The arrival of Pozzo and Lucky is a large one, Estragon's eventual removal of his shoe less large. But the number of such events is overshadowed by the sense of what is not happening, by the larger fact of non-event. Central to the play's logic is the sense of the need to fill or kill time. Here are Vladimir and Estragon, immediately after Pozzo and Lucky have departed from the stage in the first Act:

Vladimir: That passed the time.

Estragon: It would have passed in any case.

V: Yes, but not so rapidly.

[Pause.]

E: What do we do now?

V: I don't know.

E: Let's go.

V: We can't.

E: Why not?

V: We're waiting for Godot.

E: [Despairingly] Ah!

[Pause]

V: How they've changed!

E: Who?

V: Those two.

E: That's the idea, let's make a little conversation. (CDW 46-7)

Making a little conversation is one way of passing the time. It is a kind of playing, as Vladimir says earlier when he asks "Come on Gogo, return the ball, can't you, once in a way?" (CDW 14). The characters on stage, and the audience, have just witnessed a quite extraordinary spectacle, including one man whipping another like a pack animal, the other voicing his otherworldly monologue and having to be held down by the rest of the characters. That too is treated with deadpan bathos: "That passed the time." As Estragon immediately points out: "It would have passed in any case." That's true – which could threaten to undermine the characters' commitment to pass the time. As time will pass whether we pass it or not, why should they do anything about it? By this logic, the play could be even more radically event less than it seemed.

In a significant sense, the play perhaps is more radically event less than it looks on the page. As we read, we follow the dialogue line by line, quite swiftly. We may well tend to overlook what punctuates so much of the dialogue: the stage directions *[Pause]* and *[Silence]*. The speech, as it is played out on stage, should alternate quite frequently with an absence of speech and absence of action. Characters simply stand, between lines, thinking about the last line, or thinking up the next one – or

thinking of something else entirely, or even, who knows, not really thinking at all. Perhaps it is this genuine inactivity that is most disturbing for an unsuspecting audience. The audience wants to be given something to respond to. To be given nothing is unsettling, perhaps because it throws the spectator back on him- or herself; perhaps because it, in turn, makes the spectator aware of all the others around them, undergoing the same experience. We edge towards the territory mapped in music by John Cage's 4 minutes and 33 seconds of silence. Such an extensive, willful use of silence and inactivity breaks an unwritten contract between spectator and theater. It would need, eventually, to be written into a new contract, in which both parties understand that this would happen.

Vladimir offers a reason for doing something rather than nothing: it makes the time pass faster. That is, it may be said, a fairly dispiriting reason for doing something rather than nothing. It does not give the actions themselves much value. Moreover, for time to pass faster means that we will be dead sooner; and to see this as a good rather than bad thing is an inversion characteristic of Beckett's writing. Some of the first spectators, though, must also have wanted time to pass faster, so that this wretched play would be over. In that sense, at least, they were in tune with the plight of Vladimir and Estragon.

Numerous moments in the text indicate this echoing relationship between stage and stalls. Here is one of the most explicit:

Vladimir: Charming evening we're having.

Estragon: Unforgettable.

V: And it's not over.

E: Apparently not.

V: It's only beginning.

E: It's awful.

V: Worse than the pantomime.

E: The circus.

V: The music-hall.

E: The circus. (CDW 34-5)

This is very close indeed to meta-theatricality: theater about theater. A moment later it becomes truly explicit as Vladimir runs from the stage in need of the urinal. Estragon advises him: "End of the corridor, on the left." Vladimir calls back: "Keep my seat" (CDW 35). Right at the beginning of his dramatic career, Beckett builds in to his drama comic reflection on its theatrical status, or more specifically here, a reflection of the audience's own potential behavior. This tendency for the text to reflect on itself was recurrent in his career.

That career would bring him fame, once *Waiting for Godot* had progressed from being an insult to the paying theatergoer to become the hottest ticket in contemporary metropolitan culture. Certain reviewers were crucial in that process. The London production seemed to have been a failure, until the praise of Kenneth

Tynan and Harold Hobson in the *Observer and Sunday Times* at the end of the week. After this, the actor playing Estragon recalled, the audience's silence became respectful instead of antagonistic. Kenneth Tynan judged that the play forced people “to re-examine the rules which have hitherto governed the drama; and, having done so, to pronounce them not elastic enough” (cited in K 387). These were the days when theater critics could carry such authority. When critics discuss change in the British theater of the 1950s, they have often looked back in admiration at John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* – produced in 1956 around the time of the Suez crisis, and provoking Tynan's famous remark that he could not love anyone who did not wish to see it. But many have also argued that it was Beckett's first play which would make the more significant revolution in post-war drama. They not only point to the fact that *Godot* appeared a year before Osborne's. They also note the radicalism of Beckett's form – a play upon non-event, a theater of silences and clowns passing time – against the naturalism in which Osborne cast his diatribes.

Some of the most significant dramatists of post-war Britain have been profoundly post-Beckettian. This is most clearly true of Harold Pinter who knew Beckett and showed him his own work. In plays like *The Caretaker* (1960), Pinter adapted Beckett's minimal situations, pauses, and rhythmically repetitive dialogue, to a dramatic world with at least a surface resemblance to post-war England. Tom Stoppard also commenced his career with what seemed an unavoidably Beckettian play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966), in which, as in *Godot*, two men on stage talk and pass the time, play games, and point to their theatrical context.

Beckett's influence on the modern theater is still broader than this. A great deal of drama has allowed itself to be more abstract, stylized, minimal, in accordance with Kenneth Tynan's observation. Modern Shakespearean production is a notable example – prompted in part by Jan Kott's book *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1966), which sought to read Shakespeare as a writer of the post-war, existential world, and saw in *King Lear* a distant forecast of Beckett. To this day, the most uncompromisingly avant-garde work in physical theater can be seen as working in a tradition established by Beckett, as his theater narrowed and clenched in on itself through the second half of his life.

Beckett's stature, influence, importance, then, are not in doubt. But let us now take a step back. How did he arrive at that country road, with a bare tree growing beside it? Where did Beckett, and his unique body of work, come from?

Ireland

Samuel Beckett, naturally enough given his preoccupation with misfortune and failure, was born on Friday the 13th. Befitting a writer who remained deeply knowledgeable about Christian lore and scripture, and fascinated not least by Easter and the crucifixion, it was also Good Friday. Reflecting on the scene of the

crucifixion, at which two thieves were crucified along with Christ, Vladimir makes the memorable judgement: “One of the thieves was saved. It’s a reasonable percentage” (CDW 13). That is what passes for optimism in Beckett’s world. The year of Beckett’s birth was 1906. This meant that he would grow up into the twentieth century; indeed his life nearly spanned the century.

The place of Beckett’s birth is equally important. He was raised in the Dublin suburb of Foxrock. He remained mostly in Ireland till his early twenties, then from the late 1930s he spent most of his life abroad. Some of his work directly mentions Ireland; much of it does not. This has made it difficult for readers and scholars to know what importance to assign Ireland in Beckett’s work. The question has changed over the years, as perceptions of Ireland itself have changed. For much of Beckett’s life, Ireland was widely viewed as a semi-developed country; primarily agricultural, relatively untouched by the industrial revolution; a damp sod of poets and donkeys. Beckett sometimes talked of it this way himself. James Joyce once called Ireland “an afterthought of Europe.” But Joyce’s work remained obsessed with Ireland, and it is possible to view Joyce’s work as a constant attempt to intervene in his country’s history. Beckett seemed to have less interest in changing Ireland than in leaving it behind.

We do not see Ireland in quite the same way nowadays. The Irish critic Declan Kiberd observes that where once the Irish traveler was liable to be viewed as a refugee from famine, an unreliable navvy, or the jovial bumpkin of the Stage Irishman, by the end of the twentieth century Irishness had somehow become the most enviable and marketable of global identities. Ireland itself had become part of the European Union and the electronic economy, as well as a desirable tourist destination. Even as the economic crisis of 2008 has hit the country hard, one great asset Ireland retains is its literary heritage. Walking Dublin’s streets and flicking through the guidebooks, tourists are pelted by the historic associations of Swift, Yeats, Synge, Joyce, and many others. Many note the irony that the very writers who now represent Ireland to the world were rejected and vilified when alive, and were often acute critics of the state of the country.

Beckett himself has now fallen into that pattern. In 2006, the centenary of his birth, Dublin staged an extensive festival of events in his memory. This included not only productions of the plays, but evenings of music that was important to, or inspired by Beckett; numerous exhibitions of photographs and manuscripts; and galleries full of photographs of Beckett, and paintings of his characters. Down the quays of the capital city, the writer’s face gazed from vast black banners, as though he was running for President. If tourists could have voted, he might have won. Admittedly he is dead, but in Beckett’s world, that is not necessarily a hindrance.

In this context, Beckett’s Irishness seems firmly established. He joins the pantheon of other Irish writers whose provenance is now to be celebrated. But his Irishness was actually of a particular kind. Ireland was a colony, which England had ruled for

centuries but largely surrendered in Beckett's teens. The country was divided between a large Catholic majority who saw themselves as natives, and a small Protestant minority, descended from British colonists. This minority is known as the Anglo-Irish. Centuries on, they still held most of the wealth, land and power in Ireland, and were viewed as something of a class apart. It was to this class that Beckett belonged. In a poor country, his family was relatively prosperous; his father was a quantity surveyor, who had established the Beckett family in a very respectable Tudor-style house named Cooldrinagh. The place had an acre of land, large well-tended gardens, and its own tennis court. Beckett thus grew up in a religious and socio-economic minority, just as Catholic nationalism was coming to power in Ireland. On the train to school he would read a boy's weekly called *The Union Jack*, featuring the exploits of the detective Sexton Blake. At his private school he excelled at sport – a fact to surprise those who only know the exhausted, decrepit figures depicted in his writing. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, the academic home of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, which did not admit Catholics. Here he played rugby, tennis, and that game most associated with empire: cricket. He was part of a Trinity team which toured in England, losing badly to a Northamptonshire side: and so it is that he is the only Nobel Laureate to appear in the pages of *Wisden*, the cricket fan's almanac (K 62).

Perhaps the largest effect of Beckett's background was to put him at odds with the new Ireland which developed after the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Shorn of Protestant Ulster, the Free State was overwhelmingly Catholic. The Church took a growing role in public policy; organizations like the Catholic Truth Society lobbied for the ever stricter policing of behavior. Censorship became notoriously strict. After the censorship of the publications bill of 1929, much of world literature was proscribed in Ireland. If a citizen complained about a book, it would be sent to a five-member censorship committee and, quite probably, blacklisted. The Customs maintained a list of all such banned books. In 1934 Beckett wrote an article which attacked the new law with bitter sarcasm. He noted that it would have been better if the board had consisted of twelve, rather than five people: at least the writer would then have been guaranteed to sell twelve copies in Ireland. It was clearly with pride that he recorded his own number on the index of banned books: 465 (“Censorship in the Saorstat” 84-88).

That was for a book called *More Pricks than Kicks*, a volume of overlapping short stories that Beckett published in 1934. By this time he had already made a partial, hesitant break with the Ireland whose censorious climate increasingly disgusted him. He had spent two years in Paris. It was here that he came most vividly into contact with another culture, which he valued more highly. This was the bohemian world of what we would now call Modernism.

Modernism and War

Modernism is the name we retrospectively give to the burst of experiment in the

arts, not least literature, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Poets like T.S. Eliot and Mina Loy experimented with free verse and unconventional, uneven structures. Novelists like Virginia Woolf wrote from the inside of characters, giving their thoughts and feelings precedence over event and plot. What came to be called “stream of consciousness” has some pertinence to Beckett's fiction. Writers claimed a new sense of their vocation, not merely as storytellers or reporters of the world – but as artists, whose duty was to make works of art perfect in their own terms. Modernism was associated with difficulty. Eliot reckoned that “poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*” (65). It thus thrived, at the time, not with a large market of everyday book-buyers, but with small print runs, special editions, private performances, and readings. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, already banned in the English-speaking world due to the outrages at its serialization, was published in Paris in an edition of just a thousand. Beckett was of a younger generation: born 24 years after Woolf and Joyce, 18 years after Eliot. He was not so much one of the original creators of modernism, as one who discovered its riches in his youth, and sought to contribute to the next phase of this culture. He was convinced of the value of this advanced and experimental art, which he saw not as an evasion of reality but as a more honest encounter with it. He made that clear in an essay on “Recent Irish Poetry,” published under a pen-name in 1934. Here he bemoaned retrogressive Irish revivalists, fixated on the myths of Cuchulain and Tir Na Nog, and acclaimed those who, in the wake of Eliot, were writing a fragmented poetry of subjectivity (70-76). In other essays, too, Beckett explicated modernism in the 1930s. But he did it in a deeply idiosyncratic way, which could be as *difficult* to decipher as the modernist works themselves. He wrote a brief monograph on Marcel Proust. And he also wrote an essay celebrating one of the most obscure books ever written: James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, then known as *Work in Progress*.

Beckett's relationship with Joyce was his most important with a modern writer. He met Joyce in the late 1920s, and became virtually an assistant to the research and composition of Joyce's voluminous, multilayered last work. Joyce was an overwhelming figure. By the time Beckett knew him, he was surrounded by a circle of helpers, secretaries and admirers – of whom Beckett became one. Their admiration was not groundless. Joyce was the greatest writer of his age. Like Beckett after him, he too had exiled himself from an Ireland whose customs disillusioned him, and become a European modernist, though he wrote about nothing but Ireland. His masterpiece, *Ulysses*, was a book of such richness, complexity, variety, and innovation that for decades, those writers who could understand it were often intimidated by it. Critics wondered whether this culmination of the novel was also the end of the novel. The question is pertinent to Beckett, whose work is so preoccupied with endings, and with living on and writing on beyond the end.

Beckett's writing of the 1930s demonstrates his great intelligence and learning. Under Joyce's spell, he wrote a prose of great erudition and obscurity, playing on the

most recondite words he could find. But in retrospect, the tone of his writing in this period seems unsatisfactory. Often aggressive and brittle, it is also sometimes needlessly obscure, too smart for its own good. The Beckett whose work is most celebrated is different from this. This Beckett emerged from the European wreckage of the Second World War. He was leaving the voice of the 1930s behind, beginning to write a literature which was in some ways immensely rich and complex, but at the same time plain, direct, unassuming. One factor in this change seems to have been the war itself. At the outbreak of hostilities, Beckett was in neutral Ireland, for which the war would be called “the Emergency.” It is partly a measure of his view of Ireland that he preferred to be in France at war than Ireland at peace. He returned to Paris, and saw first-hand the behavior of the Nazis, as they persecuted Jews of his acquaintance. Beckett, and his French partner Suzanne, reacted by joining the French Resistance. They worked to inform the Allies of Nazi military movements. They came within minutes of being arrested by the Gestapo, escaping to southern France. The life Beckett now experienced – standing on country roads, waiting for messages from people you have never met, and trying to pass the time while not giving anything away to strangers – would surely find its way into his work.

After the war, he returned to Paris, and between the mid-1940s and early 1950s began what he called “a frenzy of writing” (K 358). What sparked this frenzy, and made it so different from his previous writing life, was a drastic decision. He stopped writing in English, and wrote instead in French. In a sense he was adopting the language of the country around him, the language that he heard spoken in the streets. But more importantly, he was deliberately breaking with the language in which he was most at home. There is an irony here. Numerous Irish writers have described the English language as one in which they are not at home. They have viewed it as the tongue of the conqueror, the language that displaced the Irish language. Thus Joyce's Stephen Daedalus, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), hears an Englishman speak, and reflects: “I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language” (205). Joyce's formation of the new, international language that comprises *Finnegan's Wake* is the ultimate destination of this disquiet.

But Beckett, we may note, does not really share this relation with English. He certainly picks up some of Joyce's relation to the language – “holds it at bay,” writes it in a strange way. But ultimately, Beckett's problem with English is that it is all too familiar. He worried that the Irish writer in particular was liable to slip into Irishisms, false badinage, the empty eloquence of the stage Irishman. He wanted to be a stranger in language. And so he set himself to composing whole, lengthy literary works in a language whose local idioms were still not natural to him. The critic Hugh Kenner has written on this process with particular insight, proposing that “[t]o write in a language one has learned in classrooms is to be committed to

vigilance, deliberation: to be aware of grammar, of syntax, above all of idiom, as it is difficult to be in a language one cannot remember not having spoken” (83). The practice produces a kind of self-alienation, and it helped Beckett to become a great writer rather than only a clever and talented one. The Beckett we read in English is mostly a translation back from the French, often with Beckett's involvement. The translations are not simply mechanical transcriptions of meaning; they are major new works in their own right. Beckett seems often to have taken as long over them as over the French versions that served as their sources. The result was, as Kenner says, something new in English prose.

The End

The most remarkable example of Beckett's postwar fiction is the trio of texts that he wrote in the late 1940s. *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable* are subtly interlinked texts, which were gathered together as *The Trilogy*. They are arguably the summit of Beckett's career, a remorseless confrontation with unbearable reality which retains fastidious precision and canny humor. But I shall take as my last example a more modest work that he wrote just before the Trilogy.

In 1946, Beckett wrote three stories, which he called *Nouvelles*. Like the Trilogy they seem connected, though perhaps by analogy rather than in sequence. Where the Trilogy's books plausibly follow one another, the three stories rather echo each other, playing out the same elements in different ways. One story is called *The End (La Fin)*. It is perhaps Beckettian to make the reader encounter such a title at the beginning of a text. What else about this story may be considered characteristic of Beckett?

“They clothed me and gave me money,” reads the first line. “I knew what the money was for, it was to get me started. When it was gone I would have to get more, if I wanted to go on” (9)³ *The End*, then, is written in the first person. This would become very characteristic. The whole of the Trilogy is likewise narrated by its protagonists. The use of the first person is a very basic decision. But it seems to have been a crucial one in the formation of Beckett's post-war fiction. Hugh Kenner comments: “We may even say that the discovery that freed Beckett to write his major fiction was the discovery, about 1945, of the first person; as simple as that, but no first-person novels before had so fully exploited the uncertainties of someone remembering, distorting, narrating” (16). We could say that the privileged Beckettian mode is not merely the first person, but the *monologue*. It involves a voice talking, relating, relentlessly, about its world and itself. We cannot escape the voice, or forget its presence; it is unmistakable and does not cease till the text is over.

Who is speaking? We are understandably apt to ask that about any monologue. We want to know the speaker's name and identity. The trouble is that in Beckett, he

³ Samuel Beckett, ‘First Love’ and Three Novellas ed. by Gerry Dukes (London: Penguin, 2000), p.9. Subsequent references to this work are given in the text as ‘FL’ plus page number.

probably wants to know it too. The Beckettian narrator does impart much data. But the information is not necessarily certain, complete, or helpful. For instance, we never learn the name of the narrator of *The End*. We must simply accept him as nameless. It is “him,” not “her”: a male narrator; most of Beckett's major characters are. A notable exception is Winnie, the woman who spends the play *Happy Days* being buried in sand while reminiscing about her life.

By Beckett's standards, the world of *The End* is quite recognizable. It is one in which a man is ejected from some kind of church hospital, and given clothes and a bowler hat to wear; and in which he must then make his way through the city as best he can. He walks the streets; waits beside a watering trough and watches the horses; attempts to gain accommodation, and is repeatedly refused; finds a basement lodging, from which he is soon ejected; takes a bus into the country; meets a man he knows who takes him to live in his cave by the sea; travels on to a cabin in the mountains; takes to the road again, and lies beside the road groaning when cars pass; returns to the city and becomes a beggar; flees a socialist orator who is addressing the crowd. Eventually he finds a large abandoned house by a river, enters the boathouse, and lies down in a boat. He is surrounded by rats, but does not get up again. His mind drifts off into a vision, in which he sails the boat out into the river, then the ocean, where he waits for it to sink.

That is quite a lot of event, for a 22-page story by Samuel Beckett. Reading through the text to write that story down, I am surprised by how many turns it packs in. Yet it is not an orthodox short story. For one thing, its world is unusually abstract. We read of “the city” – not of Dublin or Paris. In fact, it is difficult not to see Ireland glimmering behind this story: the city on a river, by the sea, with its lightship out in the bay; the surrounding countryside with its mountains, donkeys, and cows. Yet the text resists such identification even as it suggests it. The following paragraph is the best illustration of this:

In the street I was lost. I had not set foot in this part of the city for a long time and it seemed greatly changed. Whole buildings had disappeared, the palings had changed position, and on all sides I saw, in great letters, the names of tradesmen I had never seen before and would have been at a loss to pronounce. There were streets where I remembered none, some I did remember had vanished and others had completely changed their names. The general impression was the same as before. It is true I did not know the city very well. Perhaps it was a quite different one. I did not know where I was supposed to be going. [...] I came at last to the river. Here all seemed at first sight more or less as I had left it. But if I had looked more closely I would doubtless have discovered many changes. And indeed I subsequently did so. But the general appearance of the river, flowing between its quays and under its bridges, had not changed. Yes, the river still gave the impression it was flowing in the wrong direction. That's all a pack of lies I feel. (FL 12-13)

This is a determined attempt to describe location. The quays and bridges make one think of Dublin, especially as the rest of the text also suggests an Irish landscape. But the text refuses to be so explicit. It is as though something would be lost were the location to be named, rather than woozily described. This inexplicitness is part of Beckett's effect. The process of abstraction that Beckett would undertake has already begun here: vaguely describing what sounds like a real place, but leaving the text mysteriously detached from it, refusing the commerce with the real that would come with explicitness. That process will go much further. Through several of Beckett's other works, we again seem to be in Ireland, or sometimes France – but the evidence, the means to fix this claim, steadily diminishes. The world described grows more and more generic, less and less identifiable with anywhere in the world. So *Godot*, where we began: “*A country road. A tree. Evening.*”

In the passage above, what counts is not just that the location is not explicit. It is also the narrator's profound uncertainty about where he is. Whatever the relevant city may be called, he is not sure he is actually in it. The place in which he finds himself looks like the city he knows – but also unlike it. “Whole buildings had disappeared [...]. There were streets where I remembered none”: the change could hardly be greater. The next line, then, is surely comic: “The general impression was the same as before.” Perhaps it says that he was always lost, that the general impression was always disorienting, even when it was at its most familiar.

“It is true,” he continues, after all that detail, “I did not know the city very well. Perhaps it was a quite different one.” If true, this entirely undermines any attempt at recognition. But this is typical of Beckett. An attempt is being made to map the unfamiliar city around him onto a remembered one; but the narrator admits in the same breath that this whole project may be entirely misguided. “I did not know,” he adds, “where I was supposed to be going.” Indeed. What we are encountering is a fundamental Beckettian trope: doubt, uncertainty, ignorance. If René Descartes' one certainty was that he existed, the Beckettian narrator's one certainty seems to be his own uncertainty; the knowledge that everything he has just said is provisional, and may be wrong and worthless. There is an unexplained compulsion to narrate and describe, but also a conscientious insistence on the unreliability of what is being said. As the climactic last line above says: “That's all a pack of lies I feel.”

It is not just knowing that is difficult. Most actions are tricky and burdensome to undertake. When the narrator lies down and tries to groan at passing cars, he finds that he cannot do it: “My hour was not yet come and I could no longer groan” (FL 22). Accordingly, these actions – tipping his hat or holding a begging jar – are often described in unusual, pedantic detail, demonstrating the narrator's surprise that he can manage them at all. Beckett's world is one of incapacity, a steady diminution of the ability to do anything whatsoever. A character who starts a text as a tramp or vagrant will finish it in such a state that his initial condition seems impossibly

luxurious and capable. The man who starts off walking has to crawl, and eventually can only lie still. This is the movement in the *Trilogy*, from *Molloy* through to *Malone Dies*, where the narrator is immobile in bed. By part three, the narrator barely seems to have any body left at all. This fiction of decline, decay, and entropy describes the running down of the body, and a continually ingenious attempt to adapt to endlessly worsening conditions.

Fidelity to Failure

Compared to most major authors, Beckett produced few manifestos. He spent little time writing opinions on the state of the novel. But over the years he did make remarks and replies which described what he thought he was doing. Shortly after the war, he published a short set of dialogues with the critic Georges Duthuit. They discussed painting, but it is hard not to apply Beckett's words to his sense of his own writing. He announces that “to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail,” and commends a “fidelity to failure.” He asks from art: “The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express” (125, 103). He is thus seeking a maximum negation, an art which denies all the demands and values placed on it, while just doing enough to announce its negation rather than fall into oblivion. Beckett gave a more explicit description of his own work in a 1956 statement about Joyce:

The more Joyce knew the more he could. He's tending towards omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with impotence, ignorance. There seems to be a kind of [a]esthetic axiom that expression is achievement – must be an achievement. My little exploration is that whole zone of being that has always been set aside by artists as something unusable – as something by definition incompatible with art (K 772).

A statement like this seems eloquently to describe Beckett's art. But it leaves some ambiguity. When he says he is “working with impotence, ignorance,” we can certainly agree that these are central to his stories, its major contents. But does that mean that the artist himself must be impotent and ignorant? Beckett wrote about failure and decay; but it does not automatically follow that his work should be a decaying failure. It is possible to describe failure with great finesse – indeed, with great success. It is hard not to think that this is what Beckett did. The sentences of *The End*, for instance, remain lucid even as they describe the character's growing uncertainty and collapse. If you seek fidelity to failure, can you be too successful for your own good?

Perhaps it was to resolve this ambiguity that the texture of Beckett's work altered in the last three decades of his life. His writing had reached its most expansive point with the voluminous *Trilogy*, and with *Godot* – which, while alarmingly static by conventional standards, is remarkably action-packed and upbeat by Beckettian

standards. From the late 1950s on, his art shrank. Both his novels and plays became steadily shorter. The prose works tended to be made up less of proper sentences, more of fragments and half-articulate voices – as though carrying the theme of incapacity from the content of the work into its form. One play, “Breath” (1969), simply describes the sound of two cries on stage, before the curtain descends again. It is one page long. In such works Beckett reduces and contracts to a degree that makes *Godot* look very traditional. He seems to be trying to realize a small, brief event, as though doubtful of his ability to do any more. The gradual shrinkage of his work seems also to actualize his vision of an art of negation. The work comes as close as it can to not actually existing, while still existing enough to be noticed as almost not existing. Not all readers love this kind of writing as much as they do *Godot* or the *Nouvelles*. But this is the direction in which Beckett increasingly went, as the twentieth century wore on, toward his death in late 1989.

Beckett's late drama carries an irony worth remarking. I began by suggesting that Beckett's laconic setting of *Godot's* scene was a move from explicitness and detail toward a stark minimalism. But if you study the stage directions of Beckett's late plays, they can be, in their own way, more elaborate than the fussiest Edwardian drama. Beckett produces not merely directions but whole diagrams showing where figures and lights should be. He spent much of these last decades directing his own work, and compared to most theater people, was deeply uncompromising. It can seem that his idea of directing was explaining to the actors what to do, and correcting them till they did it. Since his death, the production of his plays has been carefully monitored by the Beckett Estate. There have been controversial episodes in which productions have been ceased because they did not meet with the Estate's view of what the author wanted. Therefore, the writer who declared his art to be one of ignorance and incapacity did not let it fall to pieces, or happen randomly. To the end, and to this day, these visions of collapse, negation and next-to-nothingness can only be staged with obsessive attention to detail.

In late 1969, nearly 17 years after *Godot's* French premiere, it was announced that Beckett was to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He received a card from a very real Monsieur Georges Godot of Paris, which apologized for keeping Beckett waiting (K 571-2). Beckett sent this stranger a card in return, saying: *Not at all – thank you for revealing yourself so promptly.*

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The Baloch Who Is Missing: Representations of Balochistan in Anglophone Prose Writing

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In April 2015, Pakistani entrepreneur, arts patron, and human rights campaigner Sabeen Mahmud was shot and killed by unknown assassins. Sabeen was accompanied by her elderly mother, the redoubtable educationalist Mahenaz Mahmud, who took two bullets but survived. They were leaving an event in Karachi entitled “Unsilencing Balochistan” that the 40-year-old had organized at her arts space The Second Floor, widely known as T2F. It may be mere coincidence that Sabeen was killed immediately after the controversial talk about Pakistan’s explosive southwest province. However, not long before, the Lahore University of the Management Sciences (LUMS) had been halted from hosting “Unsilencing Balochistan.” Sabeen too received threats after stepping in to prevent the event from being cancelled altogether. While a culprit has supposedly already ‘confessed’ to the murder (Tunio n. p.), it will be years before the truth emerges about the circumstances surrounding this tragic murder. I didn’t know Sabeen, but many of my friends in Pakistan and its British diaspora knew her well and always spoke warmly of her. Her legacy is immense – but at what cost to her and her loved ones? Until April, I always thought I would go to T2F and meet her one day. The realization that this is now impossible set me on a path to find out more about Balochistan, its literary representation, and the reasons why the province needs “unsilencing.”

The Balochis have long been known for their “strong national consciousness” (Dashti 341), inter-clan rivalries, and practice of forming short-term alliances against a common enemy. During the Raj period, this made it easier for

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the British to exercise their classic tactics of bringing particular leaders into the fold, excluding others, and exercising divide and rule to accelerate the splintering of various factions. Not quite a princely state, officially a protectorate, the Khanate of Kalat (comprising the majority of Balochistan) was a loose federation of tribes and their *sardars* or chiefs. In one of Rudyard Kipling's least impressive poems, a piece of woman-hating doggerel entitled "The Story of Uriah" (1886), the British colonizers' attitude towards what they called the hill tribes is adumbrated. The poem centers on a hapless colonial administrator, Jack Barrett, whose superior officer banished him to what is sarcastically described as "that very healthy post" of Quetta (10). The officer was having an affair with Jack's wife in the verdant hill station of Simla and wanted him out of the way. Within a month of his enforced transfer, Jack died and his body was interred in a "Quetta graveyard," whereupon Mrs. Barrett "mourned for him | Five lively months at most" (10). Writ large in this poem is the sneering British attitude towards the important strategic base of Quetta as a remote, backward, and disease-ridden outpost.

There is scant more affection for the hilly landscape around Quetta in Bertram Mitford's *The Ruby Sword* (1899). Subtitled "A Romance of Baluchistan," this is a *fin-de-siècle* colonial adventure story by a scion of the aristocratic Mitford family. Its civilian hero Howard Campian is on his first visit to the region. He regards it as bleak, lacking in flora except uniform juniper bushes, and occasionally battered by vicious floods. Campian finds the landscape difficult to read; vast, indifferent, and alien:

Here a smooth, unbroken slab of rock, sloping at the well nigh precipitous angle of a high-pitched roof – there, at an easier slant, a great expanse of rock face, seamed and criss-crossed with chasms, like the crevasses on a glacier. No vegetation, either, to relieve the all pervading, depressing greyness, save where a ragged juniper or pistachio had found anchor along a ledge, or fringed the lip of some dark chasm aforesaid. No turn of the road brought any relief to the eye – any lifting of the unconscious oppression which lay upon the mind; ever the same hills, sheering aloft, fearsome in their dark ruggedness, conveying the idea of vast and well nigh untrodden fastnesses, grim, repellent, mysterious. (16–17)

Here Campian translates the sharp tilt of a Balochi cliff into the comforting domestic image of Britain's sloping rooftops, and cools down the desert heat with a glacier simile. Despite these attempts to make the landscape familiar, the featureless landscape depresses the spirit, troubles the eye, and afflicts the mind, with its "fearsome [...] dark ruggedness." This sort of portrayal chimes with intrepid British travel writer Harry de Windt's 1891 book *A Ride to India Across Persia and Baluchistan*, in which he claims that it is a "standing joke" that Balochistan only contains one single tree.

In Mitford's novel, Campian settles down to an enjoyable Anglo-Indian routine of hunting, drinking "pegs" while having "gup" with other ex-pats (56, 30), and engaging

in directionless flirtation with a pretty young army belle. He quickly abandons these activities after a chance encounter with his ex-fiancée Vivien Wynier. The novel is really about the rekindling of Campian and Wynier's love, but this is pinned onto a preposterous but enjoyable plotline of the quest for a precious sword lost in Balochistan decades earlier. Hook-nosed, brutal Baloch characters pop up from time to time, almost always intent on murdering our hero. The "Pathan" servant Bhallu Khan is portrayed as brave and loyal, but with the authorial proviso that one never quite knows where one stands with "Mohammedans" (82, 160). The unlikeable British character Bracebrydge is overtly racist towards the Balochis and Pashtuns, calling them "niggers" and sanctioning the use of unprovoked violence on them (97). Yet even the more sympathetic British characters such as Campian and his host John Upward view the Baloch's "religious fanaticism" and "utterly fearless, utterly reckless" nature as pathological (21). This opinion accords with the racist martial race theory to which most colonizers subscribed. In his 1933 work *The Martial Races of India*, Sir George MacMunn lumped Balochis together with Pashtuns as having innately "sporting, high-spirited, adventurous" personalities (239).

Asked to explain Balochistan's post-1947 situation to British friends who know little about it, I use two analogies. The first compares the Balochis' tripartite scattering between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran with that of their relatives, the Kurds, between Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. Kurds and Balochis can be seen, to adapt Luigi Pirandello (1954), as two peoples in search of a homeland. Another inexact parallel is between Balochistan and Bangladesh. Both regions were subsumed under the Pakistani nation-state following the 1947 Partition, but each had proudly distinct cultural heritage, language, and loyalties. Whereas India eventually threw its weight behind the Bangladesh War of Liberation in 1971, Pakistan's hostile neighbor has never openly aided the Balochi struggle. Yet in her 2014 book *Capitalism: A Ghost Story*, Arundhati Roy claims that India covertly funds the rebels in Balochistan (88). Unlike the Bangladeshis', the Balochis' 1970s nationalist struggle did not meet with the same support or success. The bloody insurgency that lasted between 1974 and 1977 caused the deaths of approximately 5,300 ethnic Baloch and 3,000 Pakistani military personnel (Dunne n. p.). Both Bengal and Balochistan had the misfortune of being overpowered by an alliterative Butcher in the shape of General Tikka Khan, who wrought terrible atrocities on both nations in the 1970s. As with the loss of Bangladesh, volatile Balochistan continues to trouble the idea of Pakistan.

In 1947, Balochistan was promised the status of an independent state, but after just nine months the first of four post-Second World War Balochi uprisings took place. Its consequence was that the Khan of Kalat signed an instrument of Balochistan's uneasy accession to the Pakistani state. After a revolt in the early 1960s that was partly influenced by Marxist-Leninist politics, there was a more serious struggle in the western borderlands between 1973 and 1977. Even Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's niece Fatima Bhutto admits in her book *Songs of Blood and Sword* that there was "no

larger problem” in her admired uncle’s tenure as Pakistani prime minister (between 1973 and 1977) than the repressive role he played in Balochistan, “a province blighted by Pakistan”(115). The official government line, by contrast, is that the insurgency was the work of a few miscreants manipulated by powerful *sardars*.

It is the fractious period of the early 1960s to early 1970s that Jamil Ahmad examines in his *The Wandering Falcon*. Ahmad finished his collection of loosely interlinked short stories around the time that the major Balochistan conflict started in 1973. The book was not published for almost three decades until 2011, when the region was again roiled by state violence against separatists. From a Balochi perspective, Ahmad might appear just as much of an interloper as those earlier British authors Kipling, Mitford, and de Windt. Yet because he worked for many years as a civil servant in the western borderlands and Northern Areas, his fiction has insight and texture. For example, Ahmad’s characters convey a different view of the topography than the three Britons’ impressions:

the land – their land – had seen to it that beauty and colour were not erased completely from their lives. It offered them a thousand shades of grey and brown with which it tinted its hills, its sands and its earth. There were subtle changes of colour in the blackness of the nights and the brightness of the days, and the vigorous colours of the tiny desert flowers hidden in the dusty bushes, and of the gliding snakes and scurrying lizards as they buried themselves in the sand. To the men, beauty and colour were rampant around them. (21)

Rather than the “depressing greyness” (16), which is all Mitford’s Campian can see in Balochistan, the locals’ trained eyes can make out hundreds of earthy hues in the parched landscape. Flora and fauna add still more color to the vista.

Suffused with this understated iridescence, Ahmad’s first story “The Sins of the Mother” is set near Balochistan’s Siahpad Tribal Area. It concerns a young couple who elope from Kurd Killa and are eventually slain in an ‘honor’ killing. Locations of other stories include a waterhole belonging to the Mengals (a Brahui tribe) and the cross-Af-Pak routes of the nomadic Kharot tribe. The story collection loops northwards as it progresses, following the progress of Tor Baz and a shifting cast of other characters into Waziristan, a frontier area near Peshawar, then up to Chitral, dropping back down into the nomadic Gujjars’ trekking routes, and ending in the Swat Valley. The third story “The Death of Camels” is set in 1961, when the Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan (first established in 1893) was officially closed. This had a deleterious impact on the Kharot nomads, “whose entire lives were spent in wandering with the seasons” (37) and who are now required to procure travel documents if they wish to traverse the frontier. The Kharots allow one of their women to advance towards the border soldiers carrying a Qur’an on her head, since their Ryvaj tribal code dictates that this gesture will cause a cessation of violence (Ahmad 59; Lieven 353). This is disregarded by the soldiers, and “[m]en, women and children died. Gul Jana’s belief that the Koran would prevent tragedy died too” (60).

The shooting of the woman bearing a copy of the Qur'an also metaphorically indicates that Pakistan's creation myth as a state designed to protect the region's Muslims of all different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds is a hollow promise. Ahmad's narrator criticizes the Pakistani government for its harsh treatment and corrupt manipulation of the Baloch and Pashtuns, as when twin brothers from the Wazir tribe are compelled to commit a crime in order to pay a 2000-rupee bribe extorted by government officials (88). Yet, in this remarkably even-handed collection, Ahmad also conveys without judgement the Balochis' macho factionalism and their strong, corrosive sense of dishonor. The rough justice meted out by their jirga (assembly of leaders) has a particularly devastating impact, especially on women, adulterers, and minority ethnic and religious groups.

In 1983, Salman Rushdie published his novel, *Shame*, which in his memoir *Joseph Anton* (2012) he describes as "the second part of the diptych in which he examined the world of his origins" (6). Following the triumphant publication of the mostly Indian-based *Midnight's Children* in 1981, *Shame* focuses on a country that is "not Pakistan, or not quite" (29). Rushdie eventually gives his fictional land the name Peccavistan, from the apocryphal declaration supposed to have been made by General Charles Napier (1782–1853), "Peccavi," meaning "I have Sindh/sinned" (88). Although Rushdie penned this novel in the early 1980s, the principal decade it examines is the 1970s. As several critics have noted (Almond 1146; Ben-Yishai 195; Strandberg 144), Rushdie explores the adversarial relationship between Zia-ul-Haq (Raza Hyder in the novel) and his predecessor Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Iskander Harappa). Less commonly recognized is the emphasis that the novel places on the "genocide in Balochistan" (70) between 1973 and 1977.

Much of *Shame* is set in the border town of Q., which, despite the narrator's insistence that "Q. is not really Quetta at all" (29), has clear parallels with the frontier outpost depicted in Kipling's "The Story of Uriaah." As with the nineteenth-century poem, Rushdie portrays the city in purgatorial terms, as "some borderland of hell" (14) that is "near the very Rim of Things" (22). Plagued by earthquakes like the one that tore apart Balochistan in 1935, Q. is fringed by the Impossible Mountains and the fiercely sought-after gas fields of the Needle Valley. The unforgiving "noonday insanity of the sun" (12) in this region causes Zoroaster, the father of "peripheral hero" (126) Omar Khayyam Shakil's first love, to lose his wits. Zoroaster lives out his days as a customs officer, stark naked among the broken mirror shards and bollards that mark the border he is supposed to be guarding. Q. itself is shaped like a dumbbell: that is, it comprises two ellipsoids, one the white Cantonment area and the other the "higgling and piggling edifices" of the South Asian area (11), with only the slightest point of tangency in between.

It is in the "no-man's-land" (41) between Cantt and bazaar that the Shakil family live: Mr. Shakil, who dies on the novel's opening page; the "isolated trinity" (13) of

his daughters Chhunni, Munnee, and Bunny; and their shared son Omar Khayyam. As in the colonial texts, there are few mentions of the south-west's indigenous peoples. When they do come, the initial references are ominous and homogenizing: these "thin-eyed, rock-hard tribals" (23) belong to "a culture of the edge" (24). The only individuated Balochis that readers encounter are the widow Farida and her brother Bilal Balloch. They are stereotypically bent on revenge for the death of their loved one, the handyman Yakoob. He is suspected to have been poisoned by the Shakil sisters after building the women and their son a dumb-waiter to allow them perfect seclusion. The Balloches' attempt at garlanding Omar Khayyam with a necklace of shoes is thwarted, and instead they accidentally festoon the apparently devout postman Muhammad Ibadalla with the insulting string of footwear. Soon afterwards, we learn that, unbeknownst to each other, both Farida and her best friend Zeenat Kabuli enter into affairs with Ibadalla. Conforming to the received image of the Balochis' ruthlessness and penchant for blood feuds, the affairs end with Ibadalla, Bilal Balloch, and Zeenat's husband all dying in a knife fight. Not unduly dismayed, the two women "shack [...] up together instead" (45) and disappear from the narrative.

Rushdie's portrayal of Balochistan and its "suspicious tribals" (5) therefore has many continuities with the nineteenth-century tales of the wild-eyed, feuding Baloch. But as a South Asian, Rushdie is simultaneously alert to the "need and desire in primal fantasies" (Bhabha 118) that are at play in such stereotypes. He is also struck by the tragedy that, in Pakistan, religion is incapable of "bind[ing] together peoples (Punjabi, Sindhi, Bengali, Baloch, Pathan) whom geography and history had long kept apart," so that he perceives the country with its broken wings as a "misshapen bird" (Rushdie *Anton* 60). Finally, Rushdie writes with sympathy, albeit in the abstract, about "the guerrillas in Baluchistan" and castigates the Pakistani government's "draconian punitive measures" against them in the 1970s (28, 101). Omar Khayyam's younger half-brother Babar Shakil goes off to join these separatists, convinced as he is by a Balochi's speech to him in a bar about the Pakistani government stripping the province of its food, minerals, and gas, and "screwing [the Balochis] from here to eternity" (131). Babar's end is swift, as he is cut down by Raza Hyder's bullets, whereupon in anticipation of the "angelicdevilish" theme of *The Satanic Verses* (5), he is transformed into a seraph. Rushdie's portrayal of Balochistan culminates in the unveiling of 18 shawls created by the scorned wife of Iskander Harappa (Bhutto's alter ego), on which are stitched the shameful details of his presidency:

What he did for the sake of no-more-secessions, in the name of never-another-East-Wing, the bodies sprawled across the shawl, the men without genitals, the sundered legs, the intestines in place of faces [...] I have lost count of the corpses on my shawl, twenty, fifty, a hundred thousand dead, who knows, and not enough scarlet thread on earth to show the blood, the people hanging upside down with dogs at their open guts, the people grinning lifelessly with

bullet-holes for second mouths, the people united in the worm-feast of that shawl of flesh and death (194–5; emphasis in original)

In her field-defining book *Resistance Literature* (1987), US academic Barbara Harlow includes a short discussion of “The Case of the Baluch” amidst exploration of the Palestinian, Sandinista, Mau Mau, and other liberation struggles. At the time of writing, under General Zia’s 1977–1988 dictatorship, there existed an uneasy truce between the Pakistani Army and the Balochis, part of Zia’s policy of “non-provocative firmness” towards this region (Dunne n.p.). Yet the 1980s was also the decade in which vast numbers of refugees, fleeing the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, crossed the porous border with Pakistan to seek sanctuary in Balochistan and the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). This caused diplomatic wrangling, resource squeeze, and ethnic and religious tensions between Baloch, Pashtun, and Hazara, Sunni and Shia (Shaikh 56; Dunne n.p.). Harlow perceives in Balochi poetry “a sadness engendered by an ongoing struggle, a struggle not yet consummated”(41). Through readings of poems by Balach Khan, whom she terms a “Baluch resistance poet”(43), Harlow makes the case against Punjabi hegemony and the stripping of the region’s natural resources. The more positive part of her argument is in favor of the Balochis’ right to territorial self-determination. But Balochistan is no Palestine; it has had little experience of self-governance. What is more, unlike the Bengalis and Kurds, there isn’t an established Balochi middle class or a history of political activity. Writing in 2011, Anatol Lieven argues that independence would only bring “a Somali-style nightmare, in which a range of tribal parties – all calling themselves ‘democratic’ and ‘national’ – under rival warlords would fight for power and wealth” (357).

Perhaps a solution can be found in between Harlow’s resistance and Lieven’s pro-army stance. The creation of a semi-autonomous Pakistani Balochistan in which only its currency, defense, and foreign affairs are the responsibility of central government might go some way towards assuaging the Balochis’ grievances. Their complaints are mostly about unequal distribution of the region’s rich resources, of gold, copper, zinc, oil, and natural gas. Balochistan is easily Pakistan’s largest province, but it has the least numerous, poorest, and most undereducated population. A new bone of contention is the deep sea port of Gwadar, which from the early 2000s onwards was being developed as part of Sino-Pakistani collaboration. Many Balochis feel that the port has generated another invasion of Punjabis to the area and is doing nothing to help indigenous uplift. As Babar Ayaz writes, “For over six decades Balochistan has been exploited. This has now convinced many Baloch leaders that nothing short of independence would solve their problems” (77).

The nationalist view that Balochistan is being colonized by outsiders has become more convincing since 2005. That year a woman doctor called Shazia Khalid was allegedly raped by a Pakistani army officer in Dera Bugti District (Cowanjee n. p.). Her assault sparked an angry Balochi uprising to which the government responded

with force. Since then Balochistan has been in something approaching a civil war situation. For the first time, nationalists have been subjected to enforced disappearances. Sometimes they are released but are so badly tortured and frightened that they refuse to speak of their experiences (Human Rights Watch 43). However, increasingly, they are being murdered and their bodies dumped in public places, purportedly often by or at the behest of Pakistan's intelligence agencies or the paramilitary Frontier Corps.

In 2013, Pakistani novelist and journalist Mohammed Hanif wrote a short, generically-indeterminate book for the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. He conducted interviews with relatives of the disappeared and wove them into the six loosely connected, laconic, hard-hitting true stories that comprise *The Baloch Who Is Not Missing and Others Who Are*. From the father who is overwhelmed by paperwork when his son disappears in "The Baloch Who Is Not Missing Anymore," to the sister who puts her personal life on hold as she protests for her brother's release in "A Sister's Vigil," voices tell of the Kafkaesque bureaucracy and callous authorities these families are up against.

One story, "The Journalist who Became a Uniform Contractor," is about Mohammed Bilal Mengal who ekes out a living covering local events for a small newspaper called *Independent*. Through his journalism contacts, Bilal and his 22-year-old son Khalid make a little money on the side sewing uniforms for soldiers at Noshki Fort. One day Khalid is forced to disappear by their previously friendly army employers. A soldier named Naib Subedar Ramzan had gone into the city without permission, perhaps to have a tryst with a woman, and was injured in a firing incident. Bilal, and then Khalid, come under suspicion of having orchestrated the attack, even though neither man fits the physical description of the assailant. One Frontier Corps official tells him frankly, "Their man was ambushed in the city, what were they supposed to do? Sit quietly and tell their bosses they didn't know who attacked their man?" (22-23). Needing an arrest, the soldiers detain the nearest people to hand: "their own tailoring contractor and his son" (23). Whereas Bilal is soon released, the younger Khalid has been in detention for over a year, his whereabouts unknown. Neither man takes much of an interest in politics; certainly, they are not the violent separatists portrayed by the military. For being from the wrong ethnicity in the wrong place at the wrong time, they can be punished like this with impunity. The 2011 Human Rights Watch report, "We Can Torture, Kill, Or Keep You for Years," supports this account of the Balochistan situation: "Those responsible for enforced disappearances [...] have not been held accountable" (5).

Taken together, Hanif's rendering of the 2010s 'kill and dump' policy, Rushdie's depiction of the mass killings of the 1970s, and Ahmad's portrayal of both governmental and inter-tribal violence in this lawless region in the 1960s, show the severe and longstanding human rights problem in Balochistan. However, it is worth considering the poignant rhetorical question Kamila Shamsie poses of academic

Mushtaq Bilal in his forthcoming book of interviews with Pakistani authors, “Where is the English language novel about Baluchistan?” (n.p.). Although Balochistan was a popular setting for colonial writers such as Kipling and Mitford, until recently Balochis were missing from Pakistani prose writing in English. This may partly be accounted for by censorship (whether from the state or self-restraint). As the narrator of Ahmad’s story “A Point of Honour” observes,

There was complete and total silence about the Baluchis, their cause, their lives and their deaths. No newspaper editor risked punishment on their behalf. Typically, Pakistani journalists sought salve for their conscience by writing about the wrongs done to men in South Africa, in Indonesia, in Palestine and in the Philippines – not to their own people. No politician [...] would [...] expose the wrong being done outside their front door. (33)

In the 1970s Ahmad made the bleak observation that the dead of Balochistan “will live in no songs; no memorials will be raised to them” (34). This is starting to change. Although the songs are currently being sung by only a few weak voices and the memorials are makeshift and puny, they nonetheless create an impact. An increasing number of writers are turning their attention to this war-torn nation. Perhaps more will join their ranks in the wake of *littérateuse* Sabeen Mahmud’s tragic murder.

In her 1988 essay, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak famously argues that academics must not “speak for” subalterns (303), but rather “learn” from them, recognizing their “heterogeneity” (Young 210, 215). In *Shame*, Rushdie similarly complicates his own legitimacy, as a diasporic outsider, in speaking for the indeterminate border region of Quetta, and doing it in “Angrezi” to boot (38). “You have no right to this subject,” he chides himself, only to counter this with the questions, “is history to be considered the property of the participants only? In what courts are such claims staked, what boundary commissions map out the territories?” (28). It is certainly disappointing that very little Balochi Anglophone fiction exists, but it is heartening that an increasing number of non-Balochi Pakistani writers are venturing into the territory of this “insufficiently imagined” (Rushdie 87) province. In 1971, Cara Cilano published a monograph about representations of the 1971 war in Pakistani writing. It is my hope that one day a scholar will find enough material to do the same for Balochistan.

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L I T E R A T U R E



Strategic Madness: Critiquing Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* from the perspectives of Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*

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Abstract

To deconstruct the cultural perversion of the African-American ethnicity, Toni Morrison deploys "madness" as grand metaphor in *The Bluest Eye*. The "mad-self" metaphorically liberates the hidden oppressed self to be expressed which can be explained as a resistance. In comparison to black male characters in *The Bluest Eye*, the ideologically problematic stereotyping of female characters 'triple nonentities – that is, "being black," "being woman," and "being mad" will be criticized in this study. Toni Morrison's strategy in using madness to argue if and how female madness questions or strengthens patriarchal and racial representational politics is also examined. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar imply that a woman writer must examine, assimilate, and transcend the images of male authors generated for her. Women must deconstruct the aesthetic ideal that patriarchy has trapped them in art. From this perspective, despite the use of madness as a liberating agent, "madness" in *The Bluest Eye* appears to be an extension of the female characters' marginality, patriarchal domination, intra-racial status, and being the "other" among the others.

Keywords: Patriarchy, racism, madness, stereotype

Toni Morrison's endeavor to demonstrate the proper scenario of African-American slavery-affected women might enlarge the dominance of patriarchy that stereotypes women as irrational and lead the mad self from existence to non-existence. Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* always "experimented with methods of endurance" (*The Bluest Eye* 32). She wishes "Please, God, Please make me disappear" (*The*

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Bluest Eye 33). She even regrets that her imaginary friend is not recognized by people. Morrison focuses on the fact that the black women characters suffer through the patriarchal construction in a radicalized society. Apart from the madness, Toni Morrison sketches all the exercises of patriarchy in *The Bluest Eye*. But this representation can be counted as diseased and infected by the sentences of patriarchy where John Ruskin affirmed in 1865 that the woman's "Power is not for rule, not for battle, and her intellect is not for invention and creation, but for sweet orderings" of domesticity (qtd. in *The Madwoman in the Attic* 24). We see this reflection in economically independent woman Pauline who "liked, most of all, to arrange things" (*The Bluest Eye* 86). The socially constructed looking glass makes her concerned about physical beauty and even she denies the motherly affection to her little, "ugly" child Pecola. She beats Pecola severely for being raped by her father. Pauline as a "mother" or "woman" does not show any sympathy to Pecola. She behaves in the same way that the patriarchal society judges women and punishes them. Through this attitude, Pauline herself becomes the tool of patriarchy. Another character, Geraldine, "had made soufflés in the Home Economics Department, moved with her husband, Louis, to Lorain, Ohio. There she built her nest, ironed shirts, potted bleeding hearts, played with her cat, and birthed Louis Junior" (*The Bluest Eye* 67). She is also corrupted by the idea of "cleanliness" and insulted Pecola as she is disgusted by her own skin color. She discriminates between colored people and niggers. She hates blacks as the whites do. She does not allow her son Junior to play with niggers: "She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud" (*The Bluest Eye* 67). As she is obsessed with the idea of "cleanliness," she prefers the clean, blue-eyed cat to her son Junior: "It was not long before the child discovered the difference in his mother's behavior to himself and the cat. As he grew older, he learned how to direct his hatred of his mother to the cat, and spent some happy moments watching it suffer" (*The Bluest Eye* 67). By denying her motherly affection to her son, she is denying her own color and her belong in her own race.

Toni Morrison tries to project her voice for the exploited who are suffering from the complexities and stereotyped roles against their own will within the context of the African-American slavery and reconstruction periods. Morrison posits Claudia to voice against society's idealization about beauty and the role playing of the "mother." In a patriarchal society, this is the only role that a woman can play. She destroys all the white, blue-eyed dolls and questions "what was I supposed to do with it? Pretend I was its mother? I had no interest in babies or the concept of motherhood" (*The Bluest Eye* 13). Women always perform the way society wants them to. Women's voices or opinions have no validity. As Claudia says, "I did know that nobody ever asked me what I wanted for Christmas" (*The Bluest Eye* 14). But still Morrison challenges the complexities and stereotyped roles imposed by the society. When Pauline was hospitalized for delivery, the doctor commented that

"They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses" (*The Bluest Eye* 97). This dehumanization hurts Pauline a lot and she stares back at that male doctor who was compelled to drop "his eyes and turned red" (*The Bluest Eye* 97).

Racism, sexism, classism creates the binary for the center and marginal self of African-American black women. They are broken and lose their selves amongst the oppressive mesh of race, gender, and class. The full version of submissiveness is sketched by making the protagonist Pecola "mad." Nobody likes Pecola at school. The white immigrant storekeeper, Mr. Yacobowski, shows his disgust of Pecola: "She holds the money towards him. He hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand" (*The Bluest Eye* 37). She is also denied by her mother. When the pink little white baby asked Pauline "Who were they, Polly?" she said, "Don't worry none, baby" (*The Bluest Eye* 85). Her own father raped her twice. Even little Junior trapped her: "You can't get out. You're my prisoner" (*The Bluest Eye* 70). Geraldine, instead of blaming Junior, blames Pecola for the death of the cat. She rebuked her by saying "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house" (*The Bluest Eye* 72). And finally, Soaphead Church cheats her. He uses Pecola to poison the dog, Bob. This is how Toni Morrison reveals each and every stage of marginalization that makes Pecola vulnerable for "being black," "being woman," and "being mad." But the lost self is a matter of debate to understand the redefinition of the mad self as it is presented, the notions behind this presentation of the disordered self, and the long-term effects of this traumatic female black self as an extension of marginality.

Published in 1970, *The Bluest Eye* reveals the African-American cultural perversion through the story of Pecola Breedlove, an impoverished little African-American girl raised in the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of her parents' turbulent household in Lorain, Ohio. Pecola obsessively measures her distance from the white standards, ultimately reinforcing her own self-perceived ugliness. The catastrophic story of Pecola explores notions of gender identity in the context of crafting a self within a marginalized racial minority. She is powerless to reject the unachievable values esteemed by those around her and finally descends into insanity. If it is racial and social class conflict, then the question is why Pecola? Why not Cholly? Or Pecola's brother? Or Soaphead Church who are in the same position? Cholly is presented as a sympathetic character allowed to show his emotions through his actions. Pecola's brother runs away several times. But Pecola is destined to be mad. But the question remains: Why does Morrison imply strength in the self "that is no self"? Why can't repressed desire be expressed without madness? Why girls only? Why are girls abandoned? Why do they fail to flee? These are the boundaries that are still to be addressed and transgressed.

In case of female madness, it is more crucial. In a society with a traumatic experience and memory of slavery, "madwomen" are categorically and characteristically different from "madmen." Gendering makes mad women more vulnerable to ridicule and destruction than men. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar explain it, "The distinction

between male and female images of imprisonment is – and always has been – a distinction between, on the one hand, that which is both metaphysical and metaphorical, and on the other hand, that which is social and actual” (86). The meaning of madness or sanity varies for women in different historical, political, and cultural contexts. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, for instance, “explores the tension between parlor and attic, the psychic split between the lady who submits to male dicta and the lunatic who rebels” (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 86). In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is shown to be submissive to the social standards of beauty and her mad, silent, dissatisfied self as expressive and satisfied by mimicking the society. The search for identity, equality, and authority by maintaining a large and serious audience, Morrison tries to deal with the menace of contemporary reality and portray the collective psyche.

In fact, *The Bluest Eye* interrogates preconceived notions of racism and the construction of identity. Pecola seems to perpetuate the white dominance by submitting to their conception of beauty. Subsequently, by mimicking their standards and expectations, Pecola becomes part of the society that is rejecting her. Pecola's story illustrates the aggressive and devastating effects of rejection as an African-American, as a female, as a member of the supposed “lower classes.” But Gilbert and Gubar earnestly mention that “For the female artist the essential process of self-definition is complicated by all those patriarchal definitions that intervene between herself and herself” (17).

While Emily Dickinson knew that “Infection in the sentence breeds,” she also knew that the cure for female despair must be spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as social (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 92). Toni Morrison succeeds in getting out of this infection by creating another black female character, Claudia, who is the only one in the novel that consciously makes an attempt at deconstructing the ideology of the dominant society, seen through her dismembering of the dolls. And it can be said that “Her battle, however is not against her (male) precursor's reading of the world but against his reading of her” (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 49).

Thematically, stylistically, aesthetically, and conceptually, Black women writers manifest common approaches to the act of creating literature as a direct result of the specific political, social, and economic experience they have been obliged to share. Toni Morrison's strategic implication of madness reflects the acceptance rather than construction of practice. She defines her practices by thinking of a new self-expression for women. The representational dimension of women as mad in the socio-political pressure of identity crisis, moreover doubly marginalized as non-existent without self-recognition of them, is a matter of concern. Morrison must obviously focus her efforts upon chronicling the doings of white men and the mishandling of Black women writers by whites. Through her black female characters, Morrison portrays the collective experience of black women in America as shaped by the past experience of slavery and by the patriarchal capitalist American society.

For Morrison, “all good art has been political” (qtd. in Irfan 10) and the black artist has a responsibility to the black community. She thinks that one characteristic of black writers is “a quality of hunger and disturbance that never ends” (10). Her novels “bear witness” to the experience of the black community. Her work suggests who the outlaws were, who survived under what circumstances and why, what was legal in the community as opposed to what was legal outside it.

For literary recognition, Black women have been defined and categorized in dehumanizing terms employed to attack the essence of black women's sense of personal integrity and self-worth. Dr. Jenifer Maher in her essay, “The History of Black Feminism and Womanism” focused on various writers' arguments that historically black women have been stereotyped as sex objects and breeders, and that black women's personal growth has been impeded by the continuing myths of the black matriarchy, a myth accusing black women of emasculating black men.

Black women are powerless to alter either their political or their cultural oppression. The intra and interracial conflict destroys the most vulnerable mind of a young black female character, Pecola, who is the bearer of the mass hysterical insight of her community, whose madness in this novel is the capital to show the intensity of oppression. But the traumatized Cholly, who lost his manhood when two white forced him to make love with Darlane, regained his manhood through the rape of his own daughter. At the end of the novel he liberated himself from all binding not through madness but by leaving or abandoning all the social and family bonds. He frees himself by running away from home. On the other hand, Pecola who is portrayed as the mad self, is shown to be liberated when she becomes insane. She has already lost her value or social position in her community as an ugly, black, raped woman who reaches the existential death through insanity.

If we unearth the deep tendency behind this representation of her writing, we will find her efforts actually redefine American history and identity through a multiplicity of voices and cultures. Morrison, without vacillation, defines herself as a black woman writer. And for this reason, her exercise of presenting the protagonist in *The Bluest Eye* as mad connotes her own background, female position in that time and the representational room they received and exercised, and the possible reasons behind the continuity of this exercise that Morrison extends in her novels.

In the African-American slave-oriented society, Pecola's attitude may be the normal reaction to an abnormal society. Self-sufficiency and independent of hysteria, Pecola overcomes the social pressure and leaves as sufferer. Toni Morrison's revisionary struggle, therefore, often becomes a struggle for what Adrienne Rich has called “Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction ... an act of survival” (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 49) So, Pecola's madness may be identified as the means of rescue and alternative means of re-living the pain. That is, madness is shown as the solution. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is the mirror against whom others define their beauty. The

ironical ugliness that separates her from others shows the ugliness of the society. As Claudia marks, all the waste of society has been dumped on her and she has absorbed it; and all of our beauty, which was hers (Pecola) first, she has given to us.

Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* emancipates herself from fantasy and trapping by over fantasizing: it happens when she goes beyond social control by creating an imaginary self. When madness is voiced, that is, when a mad woman speaks, it reveals the dominant inside of the social structures. The hidden, suppressed, inexpressible self is expressed, laid bare. A mad woman can be seen as a de-centered subject that mimics the fixed or unified identity that mocks at the hegemonic modes of behavior. What can be explained as madness *undoes* patriarchal discourse by *overdoing* it.

Madness is potential liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death. In case of Pecola, in *The Bluest Eye*, her desire for “the Bluest Eye” becomes fulfilled with her imaginary friend. Her mad self in that sense turns into the healing potential of her disturbing sexual and cultural assault. The whole black community is diseased with the ideology of Pecola's pregnancy and she becomes the symbol of cultural discontent. The colonial and patriarchal overriding creates self-loathing among the black and female selves who have lost their possible strength of subverting all the symbolic structures that chained them.

Pecola's madness can be shown as the protest against the constraints of “the prescribed gender role of the female” (Caminero-Santangelo 3). Elaine Showalter describes Morrison's canonical incorporation as “Woman's escape from the bondage of femininity into an empowering and violent madness” (qtd. in McNeal 59). The gaze that makes Pecola the “other” as ugly, poor, black, and raped female makes her lose control over herself but she liberates her desires and aspirations with the imaginary second self.

Thus “madness” can be the difference, a sign of the creative, life-asserting female. Its enclosure, its silencing becomes the paranoid defense of a whole structure of domination. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola's mad self restores humanity to her African-American community people who are deprived from any sense of agency to rebel against and change the system that oppresses them. The intergenerational transmitted traumas of rebuff and racial self-loathing, the omnipresent internalized white gaze infects people and makes Pecola different from them. The mental-emotional state of Pecola now becomes blended with the definition of madness to keep the society safe from unmasking the repulsive face of it. The barren or “unyielding” soil (*The Bluest Eye* 77) hints at the outcome of prolonged oppression, the psychic barrenness of a community whose vitality and resourcefulness have been sapped by the constant pressure and stress of a hostile environment. But Pecola overcomes the pressure by liberating her thoughts, attitudes, and enormity that was obsessed with the intrusion, constriction, repetition, and disassociation of her surroundings. Especially for Pecola's parents,

this defensive splitting and dissociation of the self is what originally helps them to cope with the painful and frustrating life experiences.

To destabilize the dominant order and to highlight its constructed nature, madness may be a significant strategy but there must be a continuous employment of women as mad asserting itself against what patriarchy has relegated women to. With Julia Kristeva's sturdy view about female power, we would like that women should not invent a totally new discourse to liberate themselves. Instead they have to challenge those which already exist. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison admits that she wrote to hit the raw nerve of racial self-contempt. Morrison seems to highlight the unbridgeable gap between the socially validated reality of white families and the grim denigrated reality of black families neglected by society. Morrison does testify for Pecola as Jerome Bruner commented. Morrison seems to carry out her difficult mission of making language “speak the unspeakable” and capture “the uncapturability of the life it mourns” by avoiding a comforting sense of closure (qtd. in Irfan 32). Thus, on behalf of traumatized victims, she performs the important narrative function of testimony and defiance, which is necessary to claim and reconstruct their selves.

Madness, if presented as the weapon for political response, can be viewed as moving from silence into speech for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side, a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life, and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of “talking back” that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of moving from object to subject, that is the liberated voice. But this liberated voice gets its voice when it has lost its normalcy. Instead of grounding the voice more strongly, the madness makes the position of women still seem defenseless.

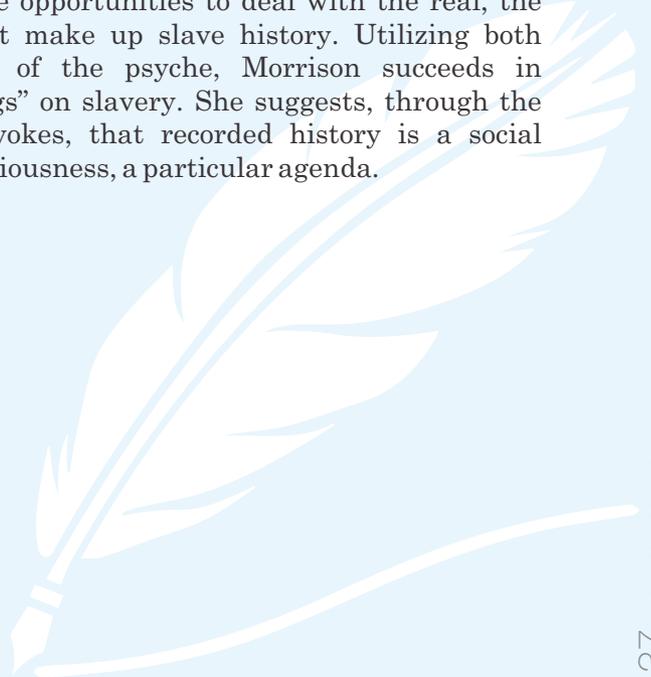
Some female writers and theorists rejected the notion that any power could be gained in assuming the façade of a madwoman. Show alter maintained that a faux power move such as becoming the madwoman could only lead to powerlessness – defeating the intended purpose suggested by other feminists. Assigning a diagnosis of madness to a woman as a means of controlling and forcing her to fit into a prescribed societal role is a practice traceable throughout several pieces of literature. Madness is capitalized. With the racial oppression, the dominance of the patriarchal society branded the chance for the “gaze” that reduces this female mad self from subject to object in order to sustain control over them. The possible manipulative potentiality expressed by the mad voice of Pecola threatens the society's horrible sores to be revealed. So, society, culture or politics will all be against the strength of it and happy to see the stereotyped condition of women as they were before.

Morrison scholar Laurie Vickery contends that Morrison is “concerned with the relation between social power and individual psychology” and works to “give voice to those who are traumatized by oppressive social and familial forces” (Davies 91). Within this prescribed configuration, the female is theoretically able to depend

upon her male counterpart for sanctuary, structure, and sustenance; the woman is to submit to and supply the progeny of that union. Mutual enslavement helped to destabilize the opposition between slaves and the free as reified categories.

Morrison arises from an erroneous assumption that to write about gender is to ignore race, or, in the words of some theorists, the discourse of race and the discourse of gender are mutually exclusive. All of Morrison's novels have been written for a culturally diverse audience. While each work is situated within the black American community (US or Caribbean) and focuses almost exclusively on African-American characters, her books seem to appeal to a wide spectrum of readers as evidenced by domesticity, submission, nurturance, and sexuality. In the female black experience, the rebellion is against these norms and the slave consciousness of maternal sacrifice and enslavement to the family. Furthermore, she limits herself only to the portrayal of experience and effects, not in the construction of the restoration of the strength without madness and cannot go beyond the stereotyped women as mad and the celebrations of the arts that show the confinement of women as abnormal or insane that even reduce them from double-nonentity to entity-less. If, indeed, African-American literature as a whole is to present a truthful, recuperative vision of black people, then surely the crazy-making circumstances and consequences of black life in America need to be represented. Yet the madwoman is “different” while mad. She enters an ontological state of being that is set apart from normalcy by more than an arbitrary set of medical definitions.

Morrison's narrative strategy that the structure of psychoanalysis acts as a conditional operative offers her creative opportunities to deal with the real, the fantastic, and the possible events that make up slave history. Utilizing both Western and African interpretations of the psyche, Morrison succeeds in destabilizing stereotypic “re-memberings” on slavery. She suggests, through the multiple meanings her narrative provokes, that recorded history is a social construction reflecting a particular consciousness, a particular agenda.



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True Blue: Continuum of the Fourth Reich Culture

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Abstract

Most people, anywhere in the world, are obsessed with fair complexion, blue eyes, and blonde hair. Those who are educated are aware of the politics behind this even if they have a fascination for fair skin, consciously or unconsciously. This obsession does nothing good to mankind. It creates a kind of inferiority complex which hinders the ultimate development of human civilization and because of this many individuals fail to achieve success despite their potential. The imposed ugliness on Pecola Breedlove finally leads her to insanity in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. This paper critically analyzes how Pecola's insanity ultimately represents the miserable condition of the larger part of the population trapped in an inferiority complex on account of this myth of "gaze" and politics of white ideologies. It shows how the "Fourth Reich Culture" is nurtured throughout the world even after the defeat of the third German Reich. No doubt that the British have spread this concept of White supremacy through their process of colonization but if a deep analysis is done then it will be seen that they took up this concept mainly from the Germans who claim that they are the true blue blood and, in consequence, this is nothing but a continuation of the "Fourth Reich." The Germans have been defeated in World War II but they are alive and kicking in spreading and establishing their concept of Aryan supremacy.

Keywords: gaze, panopticon, Fourth Reich, racism, true blue, beauty and ugliness

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Introduction

This paper deals with the age-old obsession with the supremacy of white skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes, and its adverse effect on the individual psyche. Discrimination within human societies created along with its development, which reached its peak in the recent past among the Germans as “Blue eye aristocracy,” is persistent throughout the world (Marrs 6). This White supremacy, which apparently was an outcome of British colonization but is ultimately the result of the German Reich and can be termed as the “Fourth Reich,” prevails strongly throughout the world even after the defeat of Hitler and his followers, the Nazis, in World War II. There is a long-standing conflict between the oppressed and oppressors where the latter always use the ideology of aristocracy to take advantage over the former. This aristocracy exists in different societies in different forms and hinders the development of humanity. The concept of Blue Blood has such a deep-rooted influence on the human mind and works so powerfully that a large number of people become entrapped within it knowingly or unknowingly. And, in most cases, this entrapment brings immense sufferings. In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, we see the damnation of Pecola Breedlove due to her obsession with blue eyes. She has been told too many times in her life that she is ugly and she can never come out of this complex because she sees others praising the Whites for no better reason than that they are “White” (Morrison 14). This obsession makes her overlook the main factors which establish the Whites as the superior. Pecola is only an example but there are too many Pecolas around the world who believe they are ugly and inferior as they do not have fair skin, and this complex brings nothing good in their life. This paper will deal with the politics of White ideology, also termed as the Fourth Reich Culture, and how this culture causes a permanent psychological damage in human beings.

Weapons of White Ideology and its Victims

This section will isolate and examine extracts from *The Bluest Eye* to show how white ideology operates in different ways by using the media and the education process as its weapon to create inferiority complex among non-white people and hinder their progress. By analyzing these extracts, it will be easier to describe how the concept of white beauty leads Pecola Breedlove to insanity and establish the main argument of this paper.

The novel starts with a primer which the children memorize in their childhood as a part of their learning process. The primer gives a description of a happy family which consists of two loving parents, father and mother and two children, one of them with blonde hair and blue eyes. From the very beginning of the life, children start to have the idea that a happy family is always a white family and they long for this “white happiness” (Morrison 1). They unknowingly start to hate their own blackness. Not only the primer but also the icon of Shirley Temple and Mary Jane contribute a lot to damage to the children's psyche. To Pecola, eating Mary Jane

candy is a kind of transformation which brings her one step nearer to fulfilling her desire to be like Mary Jane. It shows that she accepts white superiority in every sense. To Pecola, “To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane” (Morrison 38).

The adults are also trapped within this politics of the white domination. There are a lot of examples in this novel. It is seen that Mr. Henry uses the name of Greta Garbo and Ginger Rogers, two white American female actresses to praise Claudia and Frieda. He says, “Hello there. You must be Greta Garbo, and you must be Ginger Rogers” (Morrison 10) in their first meeting. Beauty or goodness is always judged in the scale of dominating white concepts and the black people help them to do so. The parents always present their children with dolls that are white and have blue eyes, blonde hair. So, from the very beginning of their life they are taught to believe that white is beautiful, white is adorable, and white is superior through these white icons like Greta Garbo, Ginger Rogers, Betty Grable, or Shirley Temple (Morrison 10). It is seen that Claudia does not like this praise or appreciation for the whites but she cannot do anything without destroying the white dolls as the majority of the society accept White as superior. She says,

I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs – all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. (14)

But a deeper analysis shows that the ugliness or inferiority complex is created by those who are economically powerful and impose this ugliness upon the other only to subjugate them (Ryan 45). Domination upon them is working both economically and psychologically:

They lived there because they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly. Although their poverty was traditional and stultifying, it was not unique. But their ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly. (Morrison 28)

This ugliness entangled them so powerfully that they start to believe they are ugly. They do not even have any confusion or question in their mind regarding this. They accept their lower positions as though they deserve it and they are not worthy of any better position. It is actually the power of the social structure or ideology (Barry 157) which shapes the ugliness in the Breedlove family and their belief in that ugliness. They take this ugliness as their clothing. The movie, advertisements, and everything in the society praise the White as beautiful which proves to them that they are ugly:

Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction . . . they had each accepted it without question. The master had said, “You are ugly people.”

They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. “Yes,” they had said. “You are right.” (28)

Movies change the life of Pauline Breedlove completely. She fantasizes her world with the idea of romantic love which she sees in the movies and also learns to believe that only the white are beautiful. She becomes so obsessed with whiteness that she cannot love her own daughter. She would rather love the baby of the white family where she serves as a servant. She wants to escape from her blackness and so

[S]he went to the movies instead. There in the dark her memory was refreshed, and she succumbed to her earlier dreams. Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another – physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. ... She was never able, after her education in the movie, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen. (Morrison 95)

When Pecola sees that everyone around her hates her because she is black, and therefore not beautiful, she becomes obsessed with white beauty, especially with blue eyes. The shopkeeper, though he himself is a marginalized person, does not look at Pecola for her exceptional ugliness and hesitates to touch her. Pecola wants the attention and love of the people, and wants to get rid of this reluctance. She starts to believe that if she could have blue beautiful eyes, nothing bad would happen to her or in front of her. She thinks that

[I]f her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights – if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. ... If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, “Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.” (34)

She will be able to see the beauty of the world through her beautiful eyes and for her nice eyes everyone will call her a beautiful girl. Pecola does not get her mother's attention and love because of her blackness. Her blue eyes will give it to her. So she starts to pray for blue eyes and wants a miracle to happen.

Pecola sees herself through others' eyes. She believes that she is ugly as the Other sees her as ugly and she wants to be seen as beautiful by the Other. It is the gaze which creates one's identity. Pecola is obviously a victim of “White Gaze.” This white gaze dominates the concept of beauty completely. It works so powerfully that those who have questions about this standard also become confused after seeing the attitude of society. Societal discipline binds them to believe that they are not white; they just do not have the standards for being beautiful. In the novel, it is seen that Claudia is not obsessed with white beauty but still, she has to place herself among

the “lesser” (57). From a structuralist's point of view, every meaning is created through the binaries. But the problem is that in the politics of binary, one becomes superior or positive and the other becomes lesser (Tyson 224). It raises a question in Claudia's mind:

We were lesser. Nicer, brighter, but still lesser. Dolls we could destroy, but we could not destroy the honey voices of parents and aunts, the obedience in the eyes of our peers, the slippery light in the eyes of our teachers when they encountered Maureen Peals of the world. What was the secret? What did we lack? (57)

The acceptance and obsession of white beauty makes Pauline a permanent slave of the white people and leads Pecola to insanity. Claudia does not accept it but the discipline and structure of the society confuse her. Cholly Breedlove and Sammy accept the ugliness and become violent in their behavior. The black schoolboys who tease Pecola ultimately want to hide their hatred for their own selves by teasing her. So, it is clear that almost all the characters suffer because of the white ideologies of the society. But instead of questioning these ideologies, they accept them and instead, turn their hatred of blackness onto themselves.

True Blue: A Means of Domination

History of mankind is the history of survival, fighting against inimical animals, nature's adversity, and other existing enemy groups or tribes. With the growth of civilization, the first two factors have decreased greatly. But the enmity against a group of people arising out of racial, religious, regional, or linguistic differences are still very much existent and dangerously persistent in the modern world. The Fourth Reich culture is the outcome of racism, religious vindication, and extreme nationalist ideology (Marrs 57-58). During World War II, the Nazis, under Hitler's leadership, in the name of German nationalism led the so-called True Blue Conception to its culminating point. The term “Ethnic Cleansing,” though coined recently, was evident throughout history (Marrs 327-328). This term was much used to talk about the recent past political scenario of East Europe but in contemporary history, the perfect example of “Ethnic Cleansing” is the Nazis' activities in World War II under Hitler who, perhaps most desperately and in the most hateful way, initiated upholding the so-called conception of True Blue (Marrs 184). But this concept of the Aryan race is used by the British colonizers; also later on by America and many other countries (Marrs 25).

Nazis were strongly influenced by Darwin's theory in his book *On the Origin of Species*. He suggests that human beings evolved from more creative creatures and some races have developed further than others (Francis 44-45). It gives a scientific mask to the concept of race distinction and at the same time gives space to question the equality of all human beings. James Joll explained the relationship between Darwinism and racism in his book *Europe Since 1870*:

Charles Darwin, the English naturalist whose book *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, and *The Descent of Man*, which followed in 1871, launched controversies which affected many branches of European ... The ideas of Darwin, and of some of his contemporaries such as the English philosopher Herbert Spencer ... were rapidly applied to questions far removed from the immediate scientific ones... The element of Darwinism which appeared most applicable to the development of society was the belief that the excess of population over the means of support necessitated a constant struggle for survival in which it was the strongest or the 'fittest' who won. From this it was easy for some social thinkers to give a moral content to the notion of the fittest, so that the species or races which did survive were those morally entitled to do so. (102-103)

Being influenced by this theory, Nazi German started to expand the idea of aristocracy and Hitler focused on issues like “natural selection,” “selective mating,” and “the struggle for survival between the races,” which are used dozens of times in Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (Francis 29). Hitler's wish was to fill Germany with people who were “white-skinned, blue-eyed, fair-haired, or pure Nordic people” (Marrs 20). He believed that the Aryans are the master race and they are the true Germans. Hitler said that one of the main reasons behind Germany's defeat in the First World War was that the pure German race had been weakened through marriage between Aryans and non-Aryans.

After a lot of bloodshed, the Allies defeated the Axis powers in World War II and the Third Reich was dissolved. But what change this result has brought is really very complicated. The Allies won a victory against the concept of the Aryan Race with the intention of abolishing white supremacy. But the result has been the opposite. The United States emerged as the foremost superpower. The United Kingdom also practiced its power through colonization. Both of these powerful countries have adopted the concept of Aryanism to dominate others and its effect is more devastating than the other three Reich. This is the “Fourth Reich,” which destroys or hampers too many lives in different ways (Marrs 329-330). By using their hegemonic power British colonizers have established that White is superior to any other race, only White is beautiful, adorable, and attractive (Barry 158). It is not that ethnic cleansing has been abolished or that war and bloodshed are uncommon in this modern era, but with the power of ideology, politics of language, and mainly through media, these countries cause so many disasters throughout the world that its effect is no way less horrible than the actual war.

Examples can be seen everywhere in the world. In almost all religious books and myths, the gods and goddesses are described as beautiful and all are fair in complexion. The education system is also completely based on white ideology. Books and art also reflect the white ideology. Not much material from the non-whites' perspective can be found. In *The Bluest Eye*, it is seen that the children are memorizing the primer which has no similarity with their real life. From a very

tender age, they start to believe that white is happiness, white is nice. This results in self-hatred and inferiority complex among them.

Media is the most powerful weapon which is used by the Whites against the non-whites. Nowadays, it is very common to see advertisements which foreground the ideas that, with fair skin, one can get lucrative jobs and have a successful career. This is a newer form of persuasion as previously, the focus was only on being well-liked. Billboards, movies, even candy and mugs, bear the icon of white beauty. It is almost impossible to imagine any beautiful person who is not white. This representation of white beauty in movies and in other media causes psychological damage in such a way that later it becomes quite impossible to come out of this. Pauline Breedlove becomes detached from her family due to her obsession and turns into a permanent slave in her mind (Morrison 95). As there is appreciation only for the whites, the non-whites have no other option but to accept it. Claudia does not like it, and yet she understands that she can do nothing against her family members' beliefs or against society (Morrison 34).

There are many reasons behind the expansion of the idea of white supremacy and aristocracy, the main one being domination. The powerful countries use this concept to secure their power and it is helpful for them if the subjugated people themselves start to believe that they should be dominated, that they should be in a lesser position. The powerful countries also want to dominate others for their own economic interests. The media also have an economic interest in expanding the idea. Different types of beauty products which are used to attain a fair complexion are directly related to this business strategy (Marrs 210-211).

In this modern period, domination is carried out in different ways, ways that cannot be identified so easily. Pecola desires the bluest eye; she and her mother become obsessed with white beauty and believe that whites are superior; they are praised only because they are white. But Pecola and Pauline fail to see the reality that the economic status, the social structure, and the submissive nature of non-white people make the whites superior. But it is not their fault: they are brought up to think like this (Ryan 47). Herein lies the politics of white supremacy.

Conclusion

Pecola is a portrait painted by Morrison – only one of the victims from among millions. But she is not the lone one. She represents the class that has been suffering from the impact of the so-called idea of aristocracy that emerged out of the conspiracy to exploit a majority people by a minority group. This idea of aristocracy has a very deep-rooted origin in the history of mankind. American and British colonizers actually carry out the blue blood concept of the German Reich in more elaborate ways and more successfully. This success is ultimately the success of Germans whose concept has been adopted worldwide even though they were themselves defeated. But the only sorrow of mankind is that this success causes the doom of humanity, human equality, and human development in a greater sense.

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Robert Lowell's "Benign Possession" in Revisiting Traditions

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Abstract

Robert Lowell's poetry is saturated in intertextuality and returns frequently to contemporary and past authors of many nationalities for deep infusions of strength in poetry that is neither a recapitulation nor a replica, but something new — a new incarnation in an enriched context. Lowell's experimental attitude towards poetry, seen in his constant revision of various forms of tradition, establishes his professionalism as well as his aspiration to create a distinct position in the literary world. It likewise suggests the lineaments of Lowell, the composite figure of various traditions, whose inner eye looks toward British and European literature while being consciously stimulated by interior matters. Lowell's imagination treats all of time, place, and person as fluid for his poetry, and recognizes no borders. The capacious cosmopolitanism of Ezra Pound and the Anglo-Americanism of T. S. Eliot were authoritative standards of the high modern poetry that Lowell respected throughout his working life and the two remain in view as separate cases of influence. This paper discusses various influences on Robert Lowell and his poetry as an amalgamation of various traditions which serve to identify his cosmopolitanism.

Keywords: Tradition; Influence; Imitation; Cosmopolitanism; Intertextuality; Revision

Robert Lowell's impulsive absorption of varied traditions steers most of his oeuvre. Lowell's poetry often dramatizes his poetic "I" in the role of a full-time, professional poet equal with the best, yet one who expands that conception by taking from other writers, living and dead, with eager hands until he grows to be not a poet

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but the poet, a construction that includes as it transcends all preceding poets, assimilating them, their words and works into his own unprecedented poetic authority (Walcott “On Robert Lowell” 28). The enduring values of Lowell’s poetry rest upon his “benign possession” of the works of his predecessors and contemporaries. His self-conscious treatment of previous literary works displays the power of literature to change under the pressure of a vision that makes them new by seeing them as if for the first time. In fact, the *New Critical* incentive would be sufficient for a quality in Robert Lowell that is noted by many critics, and for which they claimed that “Lowell writes poetry to *get even*.” For Lowell, “competition is the sole inspiration” which guides him to possess an “astonishing ambition, a willingness to learn what past poetry was and to compete with it on its own terms” (Jarrell *The Third Book of Criticism* 333). It is the very basic instinct through which he endeavors to exhume “the highest conception of the poet’s task” (Axelrod *Essays on the Poetry* 53). Moreover, the sheer quantity and variety of intertextuality in Lowell’s poetry counters Bloom’s theory that belated poets feel threatened by, and then in maturity outgrow, their father’s influence. Hate, envy and fear are not detected much in Lowell’s treatment of precursors, whom he celebrates in early and late poems while bidding to outdo them.

All of Lowell’s work shows interest in continuity with Western canonical writers while it hungers for a domestic difference. He nourishes this particular aspect, following such learned literary mentors as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Allen Tate, and John Crowe Ransom. Lowell and these teachers were what nowadays some slur as WASPs (notwithstanding the periods Lowell and Tate spent as Catholics). Yet, although he had a contrariety of feelings about his New England legacy, Lowell tried more persistently than any of the others to accumulate a mixed poetic world revised from both the European and American traditions – without ever declaring definitively which qualities he wanted to revise from each tradition and which he was discarding. Moreover, Pound was an ingenious and inspirational figure for Lowell, although no other poet inhabited his cultural imagination as Eliot, and a strong personal and professional relationship grew between them when Eliot, as director of Faber and Faber, published Lowell’s *Poems 1938-49* (1950) in Britain. But Lowell was a postmodern poet, in the simplest sense of literary history, who wished to be not just after, but well after Pound and Eliot, responding to but not dominated by their influence.

The European influence of original translation and literary imitation motivated Lowell to publish all his dramatic works, four lyric collections, and many single poems in which he imaginatively remodels others’ finished texts by speculative rewriting. This line of work was significant in regenerating Lowell’s output throughout his life, even though it usually brought him more adverse criticism than appreciation, especially from those who thought that the only way to show respect for an original was in a close translation accurately rendered. Lowell repudiates adverse reaction in advance through self-conscious and highly directive editorial

apparatus (prefaces, headnotes, epigraphs, endnotes) openly declaring both his sources and the new vision in his revision. In fact, he was schooled in types of poetry created out of recreation by Tate and Pound, who approached their translations primarily as poetic masters of their own language, not as linguists or scholars. Tate's emphasis on "recreation of style" in "Translation or Imitation" is central in Lowell's adaptations, imitations, and translations which follow the Classical and English Augustan mode of compositions within the prerogative of an individual talent (Tate 198).

Rewriting Originals: Lowell's Revisionary Impulse

Lowell thought, with Pound, that the quality of literature of a particular time is correlated with the quality of its translations: "A great age of literature is perhaps always a great age of translations; or follows it" (Pound 232). Attitudes of critics in post-World War I America to imitative examples and styles of creative writing were influenced, for and against, by the poems Pound wrote between 1917 and 1920, particularly *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, which caused a great deal of offence even though Pound tried to make clear there never was any question of "translation" (Davie 71). Lowell did not develop the courage of Pound's convictions until he published *Imitations* (1961), but vacillated before and after that. There is edgy hostility in Lowell's frequent editorial protestation, perhaps anticipating charges of plagiarism, that he rewrites originals in his own way to make imaginative new poems. He mentions in *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946), "When I use the word *after* below the title of a poem, what follows is not a translation but an imitation which should be read as though it were an original poem" ("Note" to *Lord Weary's Castle*). But his authorial reluctance to discriminate does not settle critical ambivalence (or drive out honest confusion) about his intentions with this kind of revisionary activity. The "Appendix" in *Day by Day* (1977) claims generic coherence in its title "Translations." Yet the first poem "Rabbit, Weasel, and Cat" bears the legend "(Adapted from La Fontaine)," and the second, "George III" has the Headnote "(This too is perhaps a translation, because I owe so much to Sherwin's brilliant *Uncorking Old Sherry*, a life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan – R.L.)." Of the three poems in "Appendix," only the third, "Arethusa to Lycotas," is correctly credited as a translation ("Propertius," Book IV, 3). In fact, Lowell's apologies, slippery vocabulary, and misleading presentation of the status of his "Appendix" might shake confidence in the integrity of his close work with other authors, distract from his achievements, and seem to present a classic case study for the influence theorists.

Indeed, Lowell's free adaptations are a conscious form of creative renewal, celebrate the past in modernizing it, are collaborative, not subservient, and welcome, not fight

¹ The seemingly arbitrary assortment in "Appendix" holds thematic interest for Lowell's oeuvre. La Fontaine's alternation of line lengths begins a loosening of the poetic line which leads to the *vers libre* of nineteenth-century France so admired by Eliot and which Lowell came to favor.

back, many authors in different literary periods. The compelling values of his practice are dramatized and corroborated in the cartoon images of two starkly contrasting national leaders (George III and Nixon) juxtaposed in “George III.” Those who respect the past, like George III, can reject the idea of linear history as time (“how modern George is”), and since they are connected to, yet not browbeaten by the past (“unable to hear/ his drab tapes play back his own voice”), remain free to reverse it, as George did by anachronistically playing back his tapes (Day by Day 135). Lowell reverses and honors his sources by rewriting and redirecting past literatures. All senses of reverse are appropriate somewhere in his revisionary practice. He changes meaning to its opposite, redirects the past as an inevitable part of the present, brings the future forward, and claims his own creative originality in re-versing. While “George III” is a satirical elegy for George III, Nixon and the United States Constitution, it is also one of Lowell’s many celebrations of the language of poetry as he reverses both biography and constitutional history.

Lowell as a Cosmopolitan Figure of Tradition

Lowell’s ambition as a poet is explicitly defined when the poems of *Lord Weary’s Castle* are read in full context, where the poet displays and distinguishes himself as a cosmopolitan figure of tradition among many international poets. The collection quickly raises the question of the different cultural layers in Lowell’s consciousness and his friendly relation to literatures of many Western nationalities. “The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket” (*Lord Weary’s Castle* 10) places a tradition with a complex pedigree running directly through Milton in the way of exploring an American, particularly New England Puritan, experience. For the young Lowell, Milton, a source of his “piratical” energy, helped him “develop his distinctive persona and tone, one that could sound at once authoritative and iconoclastic” (Burt 337). The poem, in parallel with “Lycidas,” makes cogent revisions of past poetic conventions in a manifold allusive combination of formal features. The work’s length, the complexity of its loose, rhymed verse paragraph structure, and elegiac genre, assimilate Milton’s English, Italian, and Classical influences for pastoral lament, those succeeding commemorations of marine tragedies and dead poets indebted to Milton – “Adonais” (1821), Shelley’s poem on Keats’ death, “Thyrsis” (1866), Mathew Arnold’s monody on the death of Arthur Hugh Clough, Hopkin’s “The Wreck of the Deutschland” (1877), and hazily but indisputably, much English nineteenth-century literature.

“Mr. Edwards and the Spider” (*Lord Weary’s Castle* 58-59), which was first printed in *Kenyon Review* VIII (Winter 1946), is another composition in which the poet’s vaunting intellectual ambition is revealed in deep cultural scholarship, and which combines new with old worlds, although with less aggressive attitude than the longer poem. Lowell uses an intricate variation of the formal unity of the Spenserian stanza, “one of the most remarkably original metrical innovations in the history of English verse,” both for sharply drawn description and narrative snapshots, and to

build up expressively rich emotional effects (Preminger 266). It provides a link to Spenser through Donne, whose use of reiterated rhymes in the stanzaic structure smoothed the verse order illustrated in "A Nocturnall Upon St. Lucies Day"; and hook up a tie with the English Romantics, whose elevated estimation of the stanza as a principle vehicle is represented by Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," Keats' "Eve of St. Agnes," and Shelley's "Adonais." Poets have seldom written in the stanza since the middle of the nineteenth century; Lowell's use provides a rare case in the twentieth century and is emblematic of his view of himself as an innovative American poet already equal in stature to such as Spenser, Donne, and the Romantics (Preminger 266-67).

However, in opposition to the Americanism advocated by Whitman and Williams (I am "a United Stateser" was one of William's artistic battle cries), Lowell keeps his American poetry open to interpenetration by previously ascendant cultures. His pervasive propensity to think and create in revision, along with the salience of intertextuality in the book, are obtruded in authorial instruction ("When I use the word *after* below the title of a poem, what follows is not a translation but an imitation which should be read as though it were an original poem") and information given in the introductory headnote and individual epigraphs. Lowell identifies his source for the volumes title (the traditional Scottish ballad "Lamkin," the moral tale of a house of ingratitude, crime and punishment) and literary and pictorial influences that inspired about a quarter of the poems. The multi-cultural spread in his ambition and revision is readily apparent from even a few poems, such as "War (After Rimbaud)," "The Ghost (After Sextus Propertius)," "The Shako (After Rilke)." But his direction on how to read an imitation "as though it were an original poem" puts an erudite demand on general readers as if they were all part of his classically educated literary circle and privy to his ambitious mind. He first asks them to conceive his understanding of two genres (after meaning "not a translation but an imitation"), and then encourages them to be literary critics. His audience is to have enough sophisticated knowledge of his original's reputation, and precedent of imitations of it (such as Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius*) to share Lowell's confidence in his originality. Readers must be innocent of preconceptions about the work called to mind to avoid obstruction in reading his "original English poem."

Tradition and Its Continuance

One of Eliot's earliest and most widely known statements of poetic principle fills in some theoretical foundation for Lowell's use of prior poetry. Eliot's whole thinking and feeling about writing poetry, and his practice of creating it, mature early, give

² *Lord Weary's Castle* vii. Lowell begins a practice of identifying some, but not all, sources which is a familiar feature of later books; except that by 1973 he probably felt that his widespread revision of others was well enough known and from then on he omitted directive editorial comment from his collections.

³ "The Blind Leading the Blind" in *Lord Weary's Castle* 63 is added to those poems "after," since it is inspired by Breughel's painting *Das Gleichnis der Blinden* (1568) – rendering Matthew XV 14 – and indebted to Auden's "Musee des Beaux Arts" ("In Breughel's Icarus, for instance") in Auden's *Selected Poems*.

weight throughout to “stealing” from previous writers and remain true to his early discourse in “Tradition and the Individual Talent”:

And the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence ... This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his own contemporaneity. (Selected Essays 14)

One of Eliot’s points is that the living poet achieves “his complete meaning” by setting himself among “the dead” writers for “[h]is significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists” (15). We might call to mind Yeats, Crane, Stevens, Pound, Eliot, Auden, among those who also practice what Eliot preaches in his two discriminating propositions above. Whereas Yeats, Crane, and Stevens have usually escaped serious censure for their learned intertextuality, Pound was vilified for disrespecting the dead poet in *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (finished in 1917, partly published in 1919) and Eliot is not universally admired for a different kind of so-called over-familiarity with the tradition. He has been most frequently criticized, even among those who hold a high opinion of his art, for the fact that so much of his poetic verbal stock is host to the ghosts of dead and living writers. Conrad Aiken, in his first sympathetic review of *The Waste Land*, complained in vexation that Eliot created “a literature of literature’ ... a kind of parasitic growth on literature, a sort of mistletoe” (91). In America, the cultural and literary learning supporting Eliot’s creative work has had a deleterious effect on some American poets, who feel intimidated by the worst kind of aggressive conservatism in modern poetics, as they see it. For instance, Williams felt acute creative anxiety and paralysis as an American before Eliot’s abstract sense of culture; Karl Shapiro believed Eliot’s elite bookishness was so stultifying to native development it needed to be opposed outright (Shapiro “T. S. Eliot: The Death of Literary Judgement” 35-60).

Jarrell was alert to the extent and value of the claim Lowell makes on a full cultural heritage in his “contemporaneity” when he commends his “thoroughly historical mind. It is literary and traditional as well; he can use the past so effectively because he thinks so much as it did” (Jarrell *Poetry and the Age* 214). Steven Gould Axelrod views:

From the beginning of his career, Lowell sought to create his poetic identity out of an involvement with history. His development as an artist in the shadow of the Modernist giants only confirmed his historicism, his sense that, as T.S. Eliot put it, in penetrating the life of another age “one is penetrating the life of one’s own.” (Essays on Poetry 18)

Lowell speaks in an open manner to those men and women who helped him to define himself, personally and poetically – the writers, and especially poets, living and

dead, who helped him in immeasurable ways throughout his life (Clark 10). Some of these writers he knew personally, while others wrote poems through which he could enter into dialogue with them, with Sappho and Milton and Coleridge, and thus come to know them, and thus come to know himself. *Imitations*, in which Lowell reworks, rather than just translates, the great European poets, from Homer to the present, can be viewed as an effort to fuse with and join the great tradition of his poetic ancestors. He talks to the dead poets, and they talk back to him, and some of their fruitful dialogues are represented in these poems. In the essay "*Imitations: Translation as Personal Mode*," Ben Belitt says that "translation may serve the translator as a form of surrogate identity" (117), and Jay Martin clarifies how the poet creates that identity: "[i]n *Imitations*, a single mode of the imagination predominates: the poet confronts and understands himself through engagement with all that is not-the-self" (Martin 24).

However, contrary to Eliot in his earlier years, Lowell's statements on literary principles in the 1940s were sparse, although he imitates, whether consciously or not, Eliot's practice of defending his own poetics in critical appreciation of others. His commendation of one feature of *Four Quartets* in a 1943 review endorses the values seen in *Lord Weary's Castle* when it appeared three years later.

The quotations have other functions besides the capture of a richer and more inspired texture than the poet could sustain on his own. They vary the tone, argue for the continuity of artistic tradition, and make for a semblance of anonymity, so that even the most confessional passages appear impersonal. *Four Quartets* is something of a community product. (Sewanee Review 51: 434)

Capturing "a richer and more inspired texture than the poet could sustain on his own" shows Lowell in 1943 thinking mostly of craft and technique, more timid about freedom with sources than he is in the *Lord Weary's Castle* headnote, and less sure on the matters of principle and practice from which subsequently he never deviates in his poetry. He may have drawn early encouragement from Eliot's mischievous dicta on thefts by good and bad poets.

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it is torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest. ("Philip Massinger" Selected Essays 206)

Lowell was not bound to Eliot's alternatives; he never thought of himself as just a good poet, but only as equal with the best, and we can admire the bare-faced cheek when he revises Eliot to best him, as he responds to a question on the frequency with which he makes a poem "after" someone, "that every writer has to be a thief. He has

to be childishly ambitious and even say to himself, like Racine, what would Sophocles think of this?" (Meyers 30)

Tradition and Influence

Many conventionally allusive modern writers are silent, evasive, or deliberately deceptive regarding some or all of the sources that have helped them most. It is assumed that Vladimir Nabokov vehemently refuses to own reading of much Freud and Joyce when several of his novels are full of allusions to their works. But Lowell is in diverse and honorable company regarding the contribution of his poetic ancestors. Though he does not openly honor Milton or Spenser, he expects some readers to feel the value of thefts behind "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" and "Mr Edwards and the Spider" to comprehend the force of his poetic statements as an immensely ambitious poet, and at the same time, to enhance his fiercely independent status. In fact, Lowell grapples with a self-contradictory and impossible demand on himself by electing to profess the power of his own poetic mind through reversing Milton's "Lycidas" in the twentieth century context. Yet it has been argued that "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" and Lowell's other poems in Lord Weary's *Castle* experience the "intertextuality" and "influence" on which they depend as usurpation and imposition, strongly verifying Milton, in Bloom's terms, as Lowell's "giant inhibiting precursor." That postulate has some value, but seems too easy and simple to remain unqualified in the face of the ensuing objections to influence theory, particularly to the small room it leaves for the active and positive choices generated in Lowell's cognitive processes of revision. Even so, one might suspect an underlying "anxiety" about influence of others, and a struggle to "overcome" it, lurking under Lowell's pedagogic editorial tone in the *Lord Weary's Castle* headnote. Every "belated" poet is after his "precursors" in the most obvious way, since he revises in an inevitable and endless cycle where the old becomes new and the new becomes old. So influence is inescapable when the "belated" poet rereads literature for (as he goes after, in search of) its new meaning and value to him. He then shows his originality by revising in his current work congenial materials and features found in earlier writers (a community which comes to include his own past poetic self or selves). Influence theory asserts that "precursors" have exhausted all the possibilities of writing great original poems (a claim impossible to prove beyond reasonable doubt) and that they leave an ever-diminishing legacy of "strong" imaginative possibilities. But instead of seeing his intrinsic position as a "belated" poet inevitably "burdened" with creative impoverishment, Lowell adopts aggressive tactics – not the "defensive tactics" the theory prescribes – that encourage definitions of his original work against the achievements of a whole library of predecessors. Then what might be the reason that impedes him from not giving his models in English open credit similar to that

⁴Bloom's theories do not submit themselves to brief summaries or extraction of representative phrases, but in this paragraph the attention to his concepts is highlighted through the quotation of some of his keywords.

given to foreign writers. As he writes with so much at his fingertips, he has the confidence to follow the custom of his “strong precursors.” In his best poems and “The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket,” for instance, which repays its thefts with interest, and “Ulysses and Circe” in *Day by Day* – he does not search for originality. One side effect of Lowell’s headnote stimulates us to think about what Milton did to create “an original English poem” and what the “belated” poet has done that is similar and different in “The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket.” The work of past poets forms part of the *lingua franca* of poetry, serving as a medium between different religions, nations, continents, languages, and times, that inspires Lowell to write and rewrite his own poetic origin and personality, genealogy, and heritage.

Imitations: A New Vision in Revision

Donald Carne-Ross has said of *Imitations* that the poems create a “probing encounter between two linguistic and cultural mediums” that gives us “the uniquely liberating experience of living within two areas of reality, two systems of reference” (169). Lowell’s interest in the cultural parallels gives him a distinct poetical platform to share experiences and revise. However, *Imitations* is Lowell’s most publicly conspicuous assertion of ambition and most visibly concentrated, concrete insistence on the values in Eliot’s “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” of “the timeless as well as the temporal together” which makes “a writer traditional” and at the same time “most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.” Lowell again contributes to the category of perplexity as he demurs about the kind of work he has done, but insists on his poetic originality: “I believe that poetic translation – I would call it an imitation—must be expert and inspired, and needs at least as much technique, luck and rightness of hand as an original poem.” Through “as an original poem” he distances himself from non-poet academic translators, such as those he baits and bludgeons (his words) for their failed attempts to render Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* into English (*Collected Prose* 152-60). Lowell’s revisions in this collection are part of a self-conscious program to secure his own value for posterity. In the preface, Lowell acknowledges his “reckless [ness]” with “literal meaning” in the interests of “get[ting] the tone” of the originals and making “alive English” out of them (*Imitations* xi); he shows a fundamental distinction in his attitude between the revision by imitation of foreign poems in contemporary English idioms that enrich literature in English, which is how the English Augustans understood the practice, and the complete re-envisioning of a poem like “Lycidas” in “The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket” (*Lord Weary’s Castle* 8), which absorbs over three hundred more years of culture and experience than were available to Milton.

Lowell rewrote sixty-three poems of eighteen European poets in *Imitations*, from Homer to Boris Pasternak (none of whom wrote in English), of different temperaments and periods, to suggest his indifference to originality as well as his claim on prominence in such company. In a characteristic inspiration of book design,

Lowell frames his poems within the ancient epic device of the voyage of self-discovery, creative self-improvement, and self-advancement. His first and last verse lines are, “Sing for me, Muse, the mania of Achilles” and “miraculously multiplied by its mania to return,” linking Homer to Rilke in repetitions with disparity, in a pattern which accumulates equivalences and also implies relationships that these authors create in other poems in and outside the book. The meaning of the arrangement of poems thus implicitly expands the material in the book and increases exponentially Lowell’s strength and status as a contemporary figure (“miraculously multiplied” and “miraculously multiplied by his mania [for poetry]”) *Imitations* freely renders models and sanctions thought derived from tradition, in Lowell’s unique voice.⁵ Although he succeeds in remaking most of his originals into contemporary poems, some revisions fail because they become too “Lowellian” in the restricted sense, most often seen in his earliest poems, of their self-conscious stretch for modern idiom. Baudelaire’s “The Swan,” for example, suggests a lampoon, with thick strokes and lapses of skill, as that in the penultimate stanza.

I think of people who have lost the luck
they never find again, and waste their powers,
like wolf-nurses giving grief a tit to suck,
or public orphans drying up like flowers ... (*Imitations* 59)

The first simile is related to the original meaning—“Et tettent la Douleur comme une bonne louve” which is literally, sucking on grief like a she-wolf—but insistence on “tit” reveals “linguistic and poetic insensitivity,” in Geoffrey Hill’s phrase (“Robert Lowell: ‘Contrasts and Repetitions’” 190). In this instance, Lowell heavy-handedly departs from his sure touch with wit, his aptitude for setting phrases in movable type, for hinting rather than asserting, which is particularly effective when applied to the perilous state of existence that lurks behind many of his lines. But the line reflects Lowell’s youthful fascination with sound over sense, with menace too knowingly indicated.

Basically, all translations and imitations are considered as a form of homage to the traditions that support the present. Yet in presenting the collection to the public, Lowell seems to court critical hostility through the bold solipsism of his “Introduction” which speaks grandly of “my originals,” “my Baudelaires,” “my licenses have been many,” “my Montales,” explaining his hope “for a whole, to make a single volume, a small anthology of European poetry [which does] what my authors might have done if they were writing their poems now and in America” (“Introduction” to *Imitations* xi-iv). But in the oxymoronic possessive “my Baudelaires,” he does no more, perhaps, honestly express a truism: all serious poets yearn for the ideal state that would be uniquely circumscribed by their self-authoring, self-aggrandising originality, but each finds his or her own voice only through others.

⁵ “The Killing of Lykaon” *Imitations* 1-2, “Pigeons” *Imitations* 149.

As a result, many critics tried to refute the concept of “contemporaneity” supporting the anthology with examples of whole or parts of poems thought to be offending because they introduced negative aesthetic effects alien to the text. A composite review would find all original authors compromised by, as one critic put it, “egregious distortions” (Simon 134). The temptation to score limited points was not entirely resisted. Norma Procopiow thought that “The Voyage,” one “Lowell Baudelaire” dedicated to Eliot, “contains stanzas so reminiscent of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and *The Waste Land* that they seem parodic” (97).

[I] magination wakes from its drugged dream,
sees only ledges in the morning light.
What dragged these patients from their German spas?
Shall we throw them in chains, or in the sea?
Sailors discovering new Americas,
who drown in a mirage of agony!

The worn-out sponge, who scuffles through our slums
sees whiskey, paradise and liberty
wherever oil-lamps shine in furnished rooms—
we see Blue Grottoes, Caesar and Capri. (*Imitations* 66)

Procopiow presents her term depreciatively, without reflecting whether any part of the parodist’s art, and any degree of distortion, could be appropriate. She might have added that the “Unreal City” passage in *The Waste Land* begins and ends with allusions to Baudelaire (as Eliot notes in his comments on lines 60 and 76) as part of the poem’s purpose in speaking in a composite of tongues, before wondering if this is relevant to *Imitations*. Lowell’s practice of showing intimacy through his lines with the voices of great literary predecessors is central to his knowing, understanding, and writing in the multi-racial language of poetry. But Lowell is not atypical in this, which is clarified through the examples of Derek Walcott, who applauds himself as “the mulatto of style” (*The Fortunate Traveller* 8) – a Caribbean multi-lingual, multi-cultural, postcolonial, direct heir and mimic of Joyce, as he shows in Ormeros – and Berryman echoing Yeats in his boast, “— I am a monoglot of English/ (American version) and, say pieces from/ a baker’s dozen others: where’s the bread” (“Dream Song #48” 52)?

Walcott responds tenderly to the “sunlit sanity” of *Imitations* in his 1984 commemoration of Lowell’s career; he is fascinated with the book and comes back to it several times in his essay, rejecting, incidentally, the most common attacks on Lowell for violating the past (the well informed 1968 review of John Simon, “Abuse of Privilege: Lowell as Translator,” convicts as charged in his title, with some heavy prosecutions: “an act of poetic vandalism”: “At what point does an act of “imitation” become an immoral act?”) (Simon 137). Walcott describes Lowell’s poetry as a kind of international community where exchange is free and poems are the opposite of property. In eulogizing “his openness to receive influences,” Bedient talks of Walcott

too, illustrating temperamental similarity and their shared possession and dispossession, neither inside nor outside the European and American traditions, but each one creating his own.

In taking on the voices of poets he loved and unashamedly envied, he could, in rewriting them, inhabit each statue down the pantheon of the dead and move his hand in theirs. It was high fun. But it is also benign possession. He did it with living poets too: Montale, Ungaretti. He becomes Sappho, Rilke, Pasternak, and writes some of his finest poetry through them, especially Rilke. His imitation of “Orpheus and Eurydice,” [sic, “Orpheus and Eurydice and Hermes”] to me, is more electric than its original. This shocks scholars. They think that Lowell thought himself superior to these poets. He was only doing what was a convention for the Elizabethans, often improving certain lines by imitation, heightening his own gift. ... He had the honesty to know his own greatness, to make the great his colleagues (Walcott *New York Review of Books* 31: 28-9)

He shows some of Lowell’s tendency to slide among terms, moving easily between “rewriting,” “possession,” “writes through,” “imitation.” Walcott has a remarkable “possession” of Eliot’s “historical sense” (“a feeling that the whole of literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence” (Eliot *Selected Essays* 14). Lowell imitates the Elizabethans as he realizes what imitation can do, giving Rilke simultaneous existence with poets and musicians back to the Hellenistic age – those who have taken the Orpheus and Eurydice theme to characterize the image of the poet who communicates what is silent and unites what is divided — thus demonstrating, as Eliot says, “his own contemporaneity.”

Walcott’s “high fun” connects Lowell once again through echoes of “Lycidas” (“What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore”) to the earlier poetic self of “The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket” (“ask for no Orphean lute/ To pluck life back”). “Orpheus, Eurydice and Hermes,” more electric than Rilke’s original, begins in imitation and finds variance and supplementation, justifying Lowell’s term “my Rilke” as both descriptive and possessive, a free re-vision in his American voice, as we see in this

“The mature Walcott speaks in Lowell’s Youthful *Lord Weary’s Castle* voice in his poem “Old New England,” part of the first section “North” of *The Fortunate Traveller*, when Walcott follows in his precursor’s footsteps through poetic geography mapped by the American. Calvin Bedient sees the poem as a prime example of Walcott’s debt to Lowell and his new found desire (in 1981, four years after Lowell’s death) to speak as a sort of self-naturalized U.S. citizen. Walcott echoes “The Quaker Graveyard” in an obvious similarity of subject matter and renewal of its attitude recoiling from human brutality and the violence of the war, this time the Vietnam conflict.

Black clippers, tarred with whales’ blood, fold their sails
Entering New Bedford, New London, New Haven.
A white church spire whistles into space
Like a swordfish, a rocket pierces heaven
As the thawed springs in icy chevrons race
Down hillsides and Old Glories flail
The crosses of green farm boys back from Nam. (*The Fortunate Traveller* 3)

segment from the first half of the poem.

It was as though his intelligence were cut in two.
His outlook worried like a dog behind him,
now diving ahead, now romping back,
now yawning on its haunches at an elbow of the road.
What he had heard breathed myrrh behind him,
and often it seemed to reach back to them
those two others
on oath to follow behind to the finish.
Then again there was nothing behind him,
only the backring of his heel,
and the currents of air in his blue cloak.
He said to himself, "For all that, they are there."
He spoke aloud and heard his own voice die. (*Imitations* 101)

The last line is one of those Lowell statements replete with significance for his writing. When one poet sees what he can take from others, he blesses himself in their voices to keep his own voice alive; just the thought of his breath dying appalls him.

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Time and Narrative in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*

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Abstract

The account of narrative temporality has a propensity to give impetus towards an absurd complexity. Cosmological and phenomenological collision of time gives rise to this absurdity. Philosophical tradition views the cosmological time as a succession of 'nows.' On the other hand, phenomenological time is seen as an embedded structure. The concept of time as succession is rendered inoperable by the knowledge of time as co-existence. This paper intends to examine time and narration in Samuel Beckett's plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* which always play a vital role in the turns and twists of the plot structure, characterization, environment, stage, and, above all, on the audience. The treatment and treatise of time from an ontological and epistemological viewpoint, which is seen through the scope of Narrative Theory, will certainly add more insight to the subject, and hence will explore beyond the mere philosophical/metaphysical boundaries of 'time' to the more practical aspects of it in Beckett's plays.

Keywords: Time, narrative, memory, consciousness, temporal structure

Throughout his writing career of forty-five years, Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) had been concerned with epistemological and ontological implications of time consciousness. Thomas Postlewait asserts that time is the heavy medium through which the body and the mind move. Most of Beckett's characters move through it with difficulty, hence they crawl and their immobility increases (Postlewait). But what is absent in his discussion are the features of time and the narrative process that

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makes the Beckettian characters immobile. Though Postlewait's discussion encompasses the stream of consciousness in the present (tense and moment) as self-descriptive language, it never clarifies the ontological, linguistic, and phenomenological characteristics of time and narrative that drives the narration of Beckett as a dramatist. It is to be noted that, though in his article Postlewait mentioned the narrative techniques of Beckett, a large and vivid discussion on relation to time with the narrative technique remains in the shadow. As we know, narrative development is considered on three axes, viz., form (visual representation), story (emotional involvement), and history (authenticated cultural content). The conceptualization of the form, which contains the visual aspects of a narration, will remain in the dark if the correlation among the abstract contents, such as time, space, and motion, is not clearly discussed. While reading any play by Beckett, the mind of the reader takes Beckett as a narrator who tells the story and describes the play including its settings, the stage, the appearance of the characters, the dialogues, and so on. If we closely examine the narrative features of Beckett, we will find that his form of narration goes from minimum utterances to extended story in time and space. His narration encapsulates shifting tenses in order to exhibit the mind's struggle to determine the location of the matter, manner, means, and function of being. If Beckett's characters are seen through the narrative lens, we find them chained in time and space. Hence, there is enough scope to analyze a play using the Narrative Theory.

The concept of time and its experience plays a significant role in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957). Along with some philosophical interpretations, time has some linguistic features that enable the author to create absence through a withdrawal process. This withdrawal process works through two stages. The first stage makes an environment for the author to create the absence of presence and the second stage results in the presence of absence. This Beckettian imitation of absence is created by the depiction of the contrary witnesses which has been possible for the inherent linguistic and phenomenological features of time. If we take Vladimir's repeated utterance, "Nothing to be done" in *Waiting for Godot*, for example, we will see that the word "nothing" is opposed by the presence of "to be" (Beckett 43). If we want to experience "nothing," the essence of nothingness must be present. It means that the presence of absence must be present to feel the absence. The narration of Beckett develops a spectacular *reduction ad absurdum* of his phenomenological paradigm – because, for Beckett, the chief object existing in consciousness is the lack of object. So when Vladimir says, "Nothing to be done" (43), it concludes that the foremost object of consciousness is nothing. As a result, the consciousness can never be distinguished from a void. This is a narrative style where an evacuation of an object of consciousness from the consciousness occurs. In Beckett's play, the basic metaphors by which we conceptualize time have both immediate and long-term consequences on the

fundamental cognitive domain of experience. Lera Boroditsky rightly said, “How people conceptualize time appears to depend on how the languages they speak tend to talk about time, the current linguistic context and also on the particular metaphors being used in the moment” (333). The notion of measuring time renders us as being measured by time which is clear in Hamm and Clov’s speculation in *Endgame*:

HAMM: (gloomily) Then it’s a day like any other day.

CLOV: As long as it lasts.

(Pause)

All lifelong the same inanities. (Beckett 30)

The conflict between disintegrating body and the questioning mind get caught inexplicably in time while we slowly move toward death. The perception of motion and time entangles and influences the audience and the characters of a play from different aspects of language and cognition. The result of this predicament is the detemporalizing of time, wherein time continues but without the succession of before and after which is its defining property. The outcome of this continuation of time without succession is Haam’s and Clov’s inability to dig out the meaning of “yesterday” in *Endgame*:

HAMM: Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday!

CLOV: (violently) That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use the words you taught me. If they don’t mean anything anymore, teach me others. Or let me be silent. (Beckett 29)

The narrative in Beckett’s play also stands upon the language of the society. Each and every human being in the society is encapsulated with language and the linguistic feature of time which gives him/her the reality of existence as Jeffrey Nealon puts it:

In postmodern society, it is precisely in the social bond of language and language games that we can legitimate our own society....Postmoderns look to themselves and their communicational interaction in society to legitimate their existence. (525)

If we dive deep into the play *Waiting for Godot*, we will discover that Vladimir and Estragon are trapped by their “modernist nostalgia” to legitimize the existence of Godot. Beckett leads us to know that the perceptual dilemma of leaving or “moving on” of the two tramps is not created by any invisible omniscient power, rather it is created by the Derridean inefficiency of meaning in a language.

Moreover, it is interesting to find out that Beckett’s negative emotion toward time, though it directly influences cognitive reflexes, has been exposed by Pozzo’s agonized answer to Vladimir’s question in *Waiting for Godot*:

VLADMIMIR: Dumb! Since when?

POZZO: (suddenly furious) Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! (Beckett 146)

Beckett's characters are thrown out of the stream of successive life events and this occurrence creates a kind of illusion of a flux of time and stops the characters in a single moment, opening up the static and infinite world of absurdity. The characters are enchained to this flux of time. Though Hamm in *Endgame* says, "Enough, it's time it ended, in shelter, too," it really never ends (Beckett 3). It is a cyclical process. Even this cyclical process hinders Hamm to dive back into his memory. He forgets what he has done just five minutes earlier. The structural narration of the play made the characters stop in time and space where time holds them up in an invisible prison. When time loses its only property – the delusion of fluidity, life seems to make no sense at all when Clov asserts, "Then one day suddenly it ends, it changes, I don't understand, it dies, or it's me, I don't understand it either" (Beckett 52). When the remote past of the characters is filled and the immediate past becomes the present, time flows slower and slower. Time breaks into smaller fragments and blocks the sense of perceiving time and makes all characters prisoners of a never-ending path. Hamm's speculation of time proves the enchained experience of the futile waiting of human beings:

HAMM: Moment upon moment, pattering down, like the millet grains of ...

(...)

... that old Greek, and all life long you wait for that to mount up to a life.

(...)

Ah let's get it over!

(...)

What? Neither gone nor dead? (Beckett 45)

Beckett, in his writing, showed us that we are disturbed by awareness of the fluidity of our memory. Our older memory can suddenly rise while the immediate can sink into total oblivion. The self becomes an unstable entity if we become what we remember. It is because the advancement of the sense of time keeps pulling us forward. Memory, which is the absolute creation of time, presents what is physically absent. By representing particular experiences, the Beckettian narrator tries to show us the primary structures or laws of the mind which is manipulated by how a narrator narrates the time.

Another important aspect that must be discussed is whether the playwright's authorial oblivion is not compensated for the macro structure of the plays that leave the position of a unifying authorial or narrative consciousness vacant by the use of time and its conception. By using paradoxes and indeterminacies, the narrative structure of Beckett denies closure in the sense that it structurally vacates the center of the text. Now, an important point comes forth which is related to the denial

of the closure. Richard Walsh says that incompleteness is a problem for fictional/imaginary worlds theory because the text of a fiction/drama cannot be expected to fully specify a world, nor even provide a sufficient basis for a comprehensive inferential process. An obvious thing about a dramatic narrative is that it presents us with a kind of model of time while building a relationship between a text and its reading. The experience of reading accords with a tensed conception of time which is subjective. This tensed conception of time only gives the existence to the present, blocking the view of time in which past and present co-exist simultaneously. For this reason, while reading we experience the past as a quasi-present, and not because there is any ontological difference between fiction and life. Every written text has a dormant future which waits to be actualized by the reading. So we can say that the written text works as a block view of time which is not offered to us in lived experience.

In conclusion, it appears that Beckettian narration dwindles between two poles: the void created from evacuation and the complex subjectivity attributed to that vacated center. This narration is further complicated by another factor – the non-stop effort of vacating consciousness to re-establish contact with its void content. Beckettian narration shows us a struggle between the need to evacuate and need to accumulate, the necessity of awareness and the necessity of oblivion. The narrative mind of Beckett reminds us about the two famous lines of T. S. Eliot from “The Hollow Men”:

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion (Eliot 79)

Thus is the time and its narrative which makes us “paralysed” and our “gestures” are nothing but motionless.

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Influences and Varied Perspectives of Colonial Science and Technology in Amitav Ghosh's "The Imam and the Indian" and *The Calcutta Chromosome*

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Abstract

The colonialists' advances in terms of establishing complete political, economic and often cultural hold in the colonies came with their concurrent advances in scientific and technological arenas. The technological advances of the colonizers were also a means of showcasing their superiority over the colonized, and in turn, holding the colonized in awe of the colonizers' scientific inventions. The focus of this paper is on how the technology of the colonizers played a role in the making of the modern world, and the way it has been reflected in literature and science thriller writing. Taking Amitav Ghosh as an example, it will also focus on the varied viewpoints and encounters of the colonized people with the technological advancements of the colonizers.

Keywords: Science, Technology, Colonialism, Forces, Chromosome, Indian

Civilization in the western world is often viewed as an interchangeable term for technology; Lévi-Strauss's idea of the raw and the cooked is a classic case in point. The supremacy of Western technology led them to believe that non-Europeans, or more specifically the non-whites, needed white men's protection. This article highlights how the colonizers showcased their technological superiority over the colonized people and created a hegemonic relationship with them because the idea of development and advancement were often imbued in the technological prowess of the colonizers. Amitav Ghosh, an anthropologist by training, is keenly aware of this Western parading of technology. His science fiction explores this issue in a

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fictive plane and offers a counter punch. In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Ghosh traces the invention of the malaria parasite by Dr. Ross to some primitive local knowledge in India. In doing so, Ghosh adds another layer to postcolonial discourse: technology. Simultaneously, he also demonstrates that the then British government indulged more in governing the colony than in engaging in serious scientific research. They also lacked the proper facilities to carry out cutting edge research, and that Dr. Ross was not cut out to be a scientist.

Before I move on to analyze how Ghosh responded to the western superiority claim in his science thriller, let me conceptualize the issue. Charles Grant who was posted as an administrator in India in 1792 wrote, “Except a few Brahmins, who consider the concealment of the learning as part of their religion, the people are totally misled as to the system and phenomena of Nature...the communication of our light and knowledge and science to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders” (qtd. in Baber 41). For another administrator James Mill, “*The Surya Siddhanta* is the great repository of the astronomical knowledge of the Hindus ... This book itself is the most satisfactory of all proofs of the low state of science among the Hindus, and the rudeness of the people from whom it proceeds” (qtd. in Baber 41). The statements by Charles Grant and James Mill, quoted by Zaheer Baber in an article titled, “Colonizing nature: scientific knowledge, colonial power and the incorporation of India into the Modern world-system,” exemplified how the colonizers viewed themselves as superior. James Mill’s citation of *The Surya Siddhanta* implies that the native relied on a belief-system based on the sun, therefore they are technologically inferior.

The ignorance about local knowledge has been pointed out by Gurminder K. Bhambra who, in an article, “Historical Sociology, Modernity and Postcolonial Critique,” hopes that the meta-narratives of the twenty-first century will “leave behind more than two millennia of historical writing designed to proclaim and validate the superiorities of particular civilizations.” But his hope comes with a note of caution as he thinks that it will take longer to move on from narratives preoccupied with “western achievements in science, technology, economic organization and warfare” (660). As Agustí Nieto-Galan rightly observes:

If we turn to technology and technical education, it is worth mentioning that Gramsci was deeply impressed by the new systems of chain production of cars in the North American factory of Henry Ford (1863-1947) – the founding father of the utilitarian car – and by the great international impact of Fredrick W. Taylor’s *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911). [H]e realized their potential as mechanisms of domination and materialization of the elite hegemony.... (462)

Nieto-Galan based his argument on Gramsci who was commenting on the mass production of cars in the North American factory of Henry Ford, which Fredrick W. Taylor in his *principles of Scientific Management* dubs as “mechanisms for

domination and materialization of the elite hegemony.”Put simply, technology is nothing but a tool of control and subjugation. Even Michael Adas in his book titled, *Machines as the Measure of Man: Science Technology and Ideologies of Western Dominance* agrees when he mentions that technology was indeed a way of measuring superiority and subjugating people.

Even as European global power and arrogance peaked, non racist educational policies continued to be pursued in China and India and the racist, social evolutionist foundations on which British and French policies rested in Africa had begun to be eroded by the doubts and counter evidence of travelers, officials and missionary educators. It was not just that race was a peripheral issue or that racist assumptions were strongly contested. There were other criteria by which Europeans measured the achievements and potential of non-Western people. These involved the treatment of women, legal procedures and marriage customs. But no standards were more frequently invoked in this era (19th century) than attainments in science and technological distinctions. Though the vast majority of Europeans may have considered themselves superior to Africans and Asians, significant numbers did not see or express this superiority in racist terms. For many of these the conviction that they possessed vastly better tools and weapons was sufficient to justify European conquest, commercial expansion and efforts to educate and uplift the ‘benighted’ peoples of the non-Western world. (341-342)

The Western parading of technology is again reinforced by David Arnold who in his book *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India* states that, “The history of Indian science served as a mere prologue to the eventual unfolding of Western Science in South Asia as science was rescued from centuries of decline and obscurity by the British rule and the introduction of more scientific and technological knowledge of the West” (55).

Western parading of technology is again seen clearly when Fernando F. Suarez, in an article titled “Battle for Technological Dominance: An Integrative Framework,” mentions that, “The better a technology performs with respect to competing technologies, the higher the likelihood that it will become dominant. Western obsession with technology gave them tools of domination. Science and technology were sources of domination over African and Asian people” (6). Suarez makes it clear that people in the West viewed themselves to be superior because their technologies such as hypodermic syringes and obstetric forceps superseded native technologies of the colonized. Implements like these replaced the methods or technologies that were employed before them. So the statements that science and technology were sources of domination over African and Asian people, and that Western obsession with technology gave them tools of domination supports the fact that the Western people “technologically subjugated” the non-Western people and portrayed themselves as the master society.

Lévi-Strauss's idea of the raw and cooked is further reinforced by Federico Caprotti in the article titled "Visuality, Hybridity, and Colonialism: Imaging Ethiopia through Colonial Aviation, 1935-1940" where he states:

Technologies and progress were depicted as improving formerly "wild" and inaccessible African landscapes, turning them into a new colony described as "Italy's breadbasket." Aviation played a key role on two levels: materially through the institution of networks of air routes criss-crossing the deserts, mountains and coasts of the horn of Africa, rapidly connecting far-flung colonial outposts with colonial capitals and Rome, the imperial capital; and discursively, through the elaboration of imaginations connected with aviation technology as one of the means through which "natural" African landscapes could be subjugated and controlled by advanced fascist technology. As a result, the natural and the social were separated and produced, through images and text, into discourses that pitted fascist technology and progress against nature and an indigenous colonial "Other." (380)

Even though the Italians did not finally manage to colonize Ethiopia and were ousted in 1941, the wild or natural African landscapes can be thought of as the "raw" and the fascist technology that was wielded for improving the formerly wild landscape can be thought of as the "cooked." According to Albert Doja, in his article, "The Apotheosis of Heroic Anthropology," Lévi-Strauss concerned himself in the ideas of dichotomy especially in the realms of social transformation and cultural ideologies such as ethnocentrism. Fascist Italy's exploits in Africa to expand the frontiers of the West is illuminated by Lévi-Strauss's ideas of the raw and cooked: primitive and non-primitive.

Amitav Ghosh, who spent a considerable time in the West, was no stranger to this (ab)use of technology. In his autobiographical essay, "The Imam and the Indian," he uses the metaphor of a hypodermic syringe for colonizers' technology and assesses its supremacy. The thought of scientific progress and achievements, and the consciousness of it pervade the whole essay as the discourse between the Imam (one of the residents of the village in Egypt where the author was living) and the author, when it comes to the Imam's profession and his views about the Indian doctor (that is the author himself), unfolds. Even though the Imam knew a lot about herbs, poultices, and the old medicine, it brought him little credit in the village. This is evident when the author says, "No one had time for old fashioned Imams who made themselves ridiculous by boiling herbs and cutting hair" (Ghosh 2). But Ghosh hears from Ustad Ahmed, who taught in the village's secondary school, that the old Imam read a lot. This aroused an interest in Ghosh to meet the Imam personally and talk to him about "the methods of his system of medicine" (3).

However, the Imam is not at all interested in talking about his herbs. Instead, he is more enthusiastic to talk about the hypodermic syringe. The Imam informs Ghosh that he was learning the art of mixing and giving medicines, that there was a huge

market for it, and that one could make a good living out of it. The hypodermic syringe is an instrument that represents advancement: a Western medical implement that is all about scientific progress. Even though the terms “Western science” or “Western scientific achievements” are not mentioned by the Imam when he first meets the author, the Imam realizes that the traditional herbal treatments that he uses to cure his rural patients are now painfully out of fashion. The Imam finds himself to be a relic from the past and his learning the art of mixing and giving injections is his desperate attempt to modernize his ways as everyone in the village wanted injections. They wanted it for “coughs, colds, fevers, whatever” (4). The Imam’s admission about the lack of demand for his herbal medicines and his faith in the hypodermic syringe can be seen as his interest in keeping up with the science of the great powers of the world. Thus, it is evident how strong the influence of Western science is on the Imam, as he learns to administer more up to date medical solutions through the hypodermic syringe. The influence is also strong on the villagers who are keen about injections and not herbal medicines.

The author also points out that uneasy realization about one’s own regressive reality gives rise to frantic search for people/culture/traditions that can be deemed inferior to one’s own. A comparison with seemingly more regressive civilizations and traditions provides consolations. And in the author the Imam had seen the rich possibility of that comparison and contrast. If Egypt was not as advanced a civilization in terms of science and technology, then India was still worse. According to the Imam, India had nothing in the way of science and scientific progress since Indians burn their dead and worship a bovine animal like a cow. According to the Imam, how can these people possibly be educated and civilized? But the author defends India and tries to show that it is not as backward a civilization as the Imam was portraying it to be by saying that even in the West people are burnt after their death, that is they are cremated. He says in the West they have special electric furnaces to burn dead people. The Imam does not believe this simply because he thinks Westerners are advanced, educated, and have technology, meaning they have guns, tanks and bombs. The author defends India who also has guns and bombs and tanks, but the Imam thinks he is lying and that the Egyptian guns and bombs were better than the ones in India, and only second to the West. The author continues to defend India. After this heated argument the author realizes that shouting at each other did not change the fact that both the Imam and the author were delegates from two civilizations that were superseded by the West:

So there we were, the Imam and I, delegates from two superseded civilizations. At that moment despite the vast gap that lay between us, we understood each other perfectly. We were both travelling, he and I: we were travelling in the West. The only difference was I had been there in person: I could have told him about the ancient English university I had won a scholarship to, about punk dons with safety pins in their mortarboards, about super highways and sex shops and Picasso. But none of it would have mattered. We would have known,

both of us, that all that was mere fluff: at the bottom, for him as for me and millions and millions of people in the landmasses around us, the West meant only this – science and tanks and guns and bombs.” (11)

The fact that the Indian or the Egyptian civilization did not possess any modern day technological or scientific legacy makes them weak and vulnerable. The sorry state of affairs forces Ghosh to sadly affirm his inability to protect his dignity from the assailing Imam owing to him not being a Westerner. His not having “an aura of inherited expertise in the technology of violence” as the Westerner does “like a bulletproof screen” subjects him to ridicule and questioning as an Indian citizen, a member from a regressive culture in need of justifying its religion, superstitions and awkward ways (11). The despair of the Imam that sets him lounging for the Indian doctor is clearly a result of his frustrations in not being able to identify himself with the advanced science, technology and military exploits of the West. In fact, both the Egyptian Imam and the Indian doctor can be subjected to Western technological subjugation.

The author makes it clear that there is respect and power associated in being a Westerner who belongs to a land of scientific advances: nations that have bombs and tanks. This is evident when he says:

The Imam would not have dared to say any of those things to me had I been a foreigner. He would not have dared. Whether I wanted to or not, I would have had around me the protective aura of an inherited expertise in the technology of violence. The aura would have surrounded me, I thought, with a sheet of clear glass, like a bulletproof screen; or perhaps it would have worked as a talisman, like a press card, armed with which I could have gone off to what were said to be the most terrible places in the world that month, to gaze and wonder. And then perhaps I too would have had enough material for a book which would have for its epigraph the line, The horror! The horror!– for the virtue of a sheet of glass is that it does not require one to look within. (11)

This is indeed very true in case of the Westerners. They are shocked at some of the practices of the people of the Indian-sub continent. An example is keeping housekeepers whereas the white people themselves had slaves that they bought and, more often than not, treated with cruelty. However, because of the aura that protects them “like a sheet of glass,” the colonized people can hardly question and frown upon what they do. Furthermore, the sheet of glass that they have wrapped around themselves gives them the privilege of not looking into themselves and critically examining the kinds of things they do or did in the past.

Moving on, in Ghosh’s science thriller, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, the protagonist L. Murugan does not question the discovery of how malaria is spread, but brings forth from his perspective, a unique alternative explanation as to how Ronald Ross, the British scientist who discovered the malaria parasite, arrived at his conclusions.

According to L. Murugan's perspective, the discovery of the malaria parasite might have been nothing short of a providential accident, an intervention from the unknown that brought in a breakthrough. The news in the *Colonial Services Gazette* confirms to L. Murugan that D. D. Cunningham, the original custodian of the Calcutta laboratory where Ronald Ross made his discovery was removed from Calcutta not of his own accord, but by an obscure fear of forces which could be traced back to the Shrine of Silence in Alexandria, Egypt. The anxiety and terror ridden Cunningham is deduced to have visited a mysterious association in Madras, where a certain Finnish lady named Salminen held court and shed light on the occult, unknown and mythical. This force is also implied to have a hand in the disappearance of the American scientist Elijah Monroe Farley. The only lab in which Ronald Ross had any chance of discovering the malaria parasite was the one under the charge of Cunningham. Lutchman (Ronald Ross's laboratory assistant) and Mangala (the sweeper woman) most probably had connections with the Shrine of Silence in Alexandria. Major Ronald Ross, who was not otherwise a "scientist," succeeds in making a breakthrough as he is helped by Lutchman and Mangala. L. Murugan discovers that there was no question that Mangala and Lutchman knew a lot more about the malaria parasite, the prognosis of the disease, and that it could cure or arrest syphilitic paresis.

Here what Ghosh offers is proof that Mangala (with the help of Lutchman) was essentially performing experiments and proving her knowledge on the nature of malaria parasite. She was the one, in fact, who discovered the cause of the disease, and not Ronald Ross. But Ghosh describes the experimental ways and philosophy of discovery that is very non-western: an attitude and approach towards invention and its applications that the westerner cannot fathom, cannot account for. For example, Mangala did not seek to have credit for her discovery or explain her special knowledge of the disease to others. Mangala severing the heads of pigeons and drawing fresh blood for experimentation, her analogy with human sexual intercourse with the parasite reproducing in blood cells, starkly contrasts Western ways of looking at such a phenomenon. A Westerner would have pored over the microscope and proffered his observation that the parasite was reproducing itself. A Westerner would have thought of the personal fame of making such a discovery and established scientific processes that helped him/her make it. The difference in science of the West and non-West is not in the quality of outcome, but in the approach and attitude towards it. Thus, Ghosh claims in this fictive plane, that Western and non-Western science, are in fact, equal.

Years before the Austrian scientist Julius Wagner-Jauregg found a treatment for syphilitic paresis (making incisions and artificially inducing malarial blood into the patients' bodies) which won him the Nobel Prize in 1927, Mangala was treating the same disease in the 1890s through the avian strain of the malaria parasite. All this was, of course, before the invention of antibiotics. Since Mangala was treating syphilitic paresis in the late nineteenth century before the treatment was officially

discovered in 1927, her patients considered her a goddess. Non-Western primitive forces paralleling colonial science is evident because we see Mangala treating patients with syphilitic paresis long before Julius Wagner-Jauregg found a treatment for it.

Thus we find that pitted against Western science is the unconventional, primitive, local force that underpins the strange vicissitudes of Mangala and Lutchman, the seeming connections to the Alexandrian cult in Egypt and their machinations in making Sir Ronald Ross a success. This esoteric intervention is not an influence by a conventional science that craves for power and political correctness in the annals of colonial hegemony. This is a force unleashed in the hands of waifs like Mangala and Lutchman. We find an oriental force whose aims and ambitions in making discoveries are also not clear; yet it stands in stark parallel to colonial science and its powers and achievements. The oriental force stays in the shadows, keeps going about in its obscure ways and is intolerant of anyone who tries to shed light on the mystery. The myths, events, and actions that are evoked by Ghosh are not necessarily Indian in origin. He refers to the ancient Valentinian cult of Alexandria in Egypt. The people who are pawns to this dark esoteric power encompass a curious mixture of nationalities: not only the colonial dichotomy of Indian and English, but also Americans and Europeans such as Finns and Hungarians.

We also notice that while espousing his alternative theory of the process of discovering the malaria parasite, L. Murugan paints a rather unflattering picture of the colonial establishment and its capacity to carry out cutting edge research. The laboratory where Cunningham was doing his research in Calcutta is described by mentioning that it could not have been more unlike the laboratories of European and American universities, and that it was just an ordinary bungalow, the kind that was common to British military installations everywhere. So, in a way, the much lauded technological prowess of the then British Government in India is deemed substandard for carrying out scientific feats of global impact according to Ghosh in his science thriller.

The manner in which L. Murugan talks about Sir Patrick Manson who proved that the mosquito was the vector for malaria shows that someone from Britain getting the Nobel Prize for discovering the malaria parasite was part of the colonial agenda, regardless of whether that person delved into serious science or not. About Doctor Patrick Manson, L. Murugan mentions, “Now he’s got a hunch that the mosquito has something to do with the malaria bug too. He hasn’t got time to do the work himself so he’s looking for someone to carry the torch for the Queen and Empire. Guess who walks in? Ronnie Ross” (61).

Based on this statement, it would not be wrong to assume that Ghosh in a winding way through his protagonist L. Murugan says that the colonizers were busier governing the colony, establishing their colonial agenda and keeping the Empire going, rather than delving in serious science.

L. Murugan also critiques the lifestyle and pastime of colonial military officers. The kind of inclination, views on life and interests that Major Ronald Ross had could not have been conducive to cutting edge research that was required for the discovery of the malaria parasite. L. Murugan mentions Sir Ronald Ross was in the lab for about only half the time he was in Calcutta. Murugan continues, "The rest went into cleaning up epidemics, playing tennis and polo, going on holidays in the hills, that kind of stuff" (46). The manner in which L. Murugan describes Ronald Ross makes it obvious that he was anything but a scientist. He mentions imagining a man who takes pleasure in hunting, fishing, and shooting, and is like the colonial type in the movies. He plays tennis and polo and goes pig sticking. L. Murugan mentions his other interests like a night out in the town now and again and talks about his strange lifestyle – drinking whiskey for breakfast sometimes. He had no idea what he wanted to do with his life. He tried writing medieval romances and when that did not work out, he tried writing poetry, which did not work either. The description of his lifestyle suggests that Sir Ronald Ross was more of an adventurer who liked to try out different things rather than a scientist who would seriously and consistently concentrate on research.

He joins the Indian Medical Service only because his father, a big general in the British army, asked him what is it that he thought he was doing with his life and succeeds in convincing him to join. L. Murugan mentions, "Medicine is the last thing on his mind, but he gets into the Indian Medical Service anyway and the next thing you know he's back in India toting a stethoscope and carving up vets. So he coasts again, a couple of years, playing tennis, riding, same old same old" (47).

This is the way his life continues. One day after getting married and having children he is suddenly interested in science. He asks himself, "What's hot in medicine right now? ... What's going to bag me the Nobel?" (47-48). The answer that stood before him was malaria, and once he starts the research, he is helped by Lutchman and Mangala.

Sir Ronald Ross's lifestyle, it is quite clear, indicates that he was not the type of person who had the mindset of a scientist. He was a laid back person with no real or serious interest in research. His father literally pushed him into the Indian Medical Service. His interest and his lifestyle suggest that he is more of an outgoing, adventurous person who likes to take life easy. He did not really have the mindset or determination that was needed to discover the malaria parasite. He was more into merry-making and trying out different things, rather than the type of person who would seriously concentrate on something for a long period of time. Thus, the discovery of the Malaria parasite might have been nothing short of a providential accident, an intervention from the unknown that brought in a breakthrough.

It is interesting to note what a conversation is like between two people whose countries have been dominated by the science and technology of the West. Quite interesting to note is how an uneasy realization about one's country can give rise to a desperate search for people who can be deemed inferior to one's own. "The Imam and

the Indian” is the Imam’s loss of ability as well as authority to dominate and civilize the citizens of a country which, to his understanding, is still a backwater of civilization. It is also the author’s realization that there is respect associated with being a member of a country with advanced science and technology. He realizes the fact that both he and the Imam could go on arguing for hours boasting about the science and technology of their countries, but nothing could change the fact that they were dominated by the superior technology of the West.

By the same token, *The Calcutta Chromosome* is unique because even though it is a fictive plane, the colonized (L. Murugan) questioning the authenticity of the scientific acumen and achievement of the colonizers is quite unusual. The other unusual aspect of this science thriller is that here science is not pitted against science: that is the colonized challenging the scientific achievements and methods of the colonizer with a more advanced or alternative homegrown process. Science, or at least an instance of science, is challenged by knowledge gleaned from indigenous esoteric sources, a source that is far removed from logic, science, and rational explanations as Westerners see it.

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Clashing Nationalisms and Corrupting Co-Existence: An Analysis of the Shahbag/Hefajot Frenzy in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The Shahbag Protest and its aftermath, the rise of Hefajote Islam, signify the existence of competing ideological interests in the public sphere in Bangladesh. Rooted in the early 20th century Bengali-Hindu nationalist movement as well as in the identity politics that resulted in the Partition of the Subcontinent in 1947, the political polarization that gripped Bangladesh in 2013 has since divided the society. The Shahbag Protest, largely middle-class and urban in nature, was peaceful though it was demanding capital punishment against the war criminals. The proponents of the Shahbag Protest tried to evoke patriotic sentiment by emphasizing Bengaliness, a trait associated with the Bengali people, an “imagined community” created to legitimize the existence of Bangladesh. The violent Islamist rhetoric of the Hefajote Islam carried the insignia of the “Islamization” project. The discourse of global Islamism targets Muslim-majority countries in South Asia and South-East Asia as “these countries are not Islamic because their legal structures, norms, the predominant educational systems, popular cultures, etc., are manifestly un-Islamic” (Ahmad 3). In short, the cultural battle that emerged out of a legal demand for maximum punishment of the war criminals, who during the Liberation War of 1971, committed atrocities against their own people, is suggestive of the unresolved problem of nationalism in Bangladesh.

The epigraph, taken from Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Address,” is suggestive of a deep division between the North and the South during the American Civil War, a division so intractable that the opposing parties seek

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God's providence to emerge victorious in the war. Lincoln's evocation of the two warring factions seeking God's grace has a tragic undertone, which leads Jonathan Burt in *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism* to argue that "conflicts over moral issues are so entangled with the weaknesses of human nature that all outcomes are tragic and no agents are pure" (649). It can be said that conflicts occur when moral issues are at stake and their outcome is tragic because the agents of a conflict resort to violence which puts into question the very intractability of the moral position.

The event that came to be termed as the '2013 Shahbag Protests,' a rather insignificant political occurrence in comparison to the lives lost in the American Civil War, or in our time the Syrian Civil War, was born when a group of young people protested. They thought the state failed to enact the popular demand of maximum punishment against Kader Molla, one of the war criminals accused of perpetrating genocide in 1971. The month-long sit-in in the Shahbag area of Dhaka city was indeed spontaneous and in many ways represented the anger of a young generation tired of political blame-games and immunities delivered to the rajakars (collaborators). However, implicit in their protest was the unresolved problem of nationalism in Bangladesh. The protesters in Shahbag claimed to represent Bengali nationalism, while their opposition, the Hefajote Islam movement represented Islamist nationalism in Bangladesh. This paper will analyze the ideological battle of nationalisms from the standpoint of Partha Chatterjee's analysis of nationalism in *Nation and its Fragments* (1993) to argue that constructs of nationalism in Bangladesh have continued to occlude the question of peasantry and indigenous people while championing nationalisms that are suggestive of a colonial hangover. I will also argue that the nationalisms have tragedy and moral relevance impinged upon their quest for dominating the discourse of nationalism.

That Shahbag was addressing the problem of nationalism more than it was clamoring for the maximum punishment of those accused of War Crimes in 1971 was not very visible in the early days of the protest. Enthusiasts, in particular the Left, welcomed it as having a revolutionary kernel, which is visible in Bokhtiar Ahmed's article "Shahbag Ki Biplab" ("Is Shahbag a Revolution?"): "Are we experiencing a Revolution? What is happening in Shahbag? Another 1969? 1971? 1990? 1993? Is Shahbag a Revolution? The Spring of Bengal?" (Ahmed). This article is an example of the hope that many pinned on Shahbag. The article celebrates Shahbag as having the potential to become a full-blown revolution by comparing it to the popular uprisings of the past.

It was revolutionary precisely because it rekindled a nationalist fervor similar to that of 1971, but soon it became the government's propaganda mouthpiece to discredit the opposition. Moreover, the internal inconsistency of the movement, somewhat touched upon by Ahmed later in his article, became its own nemesis. Chants such as "Golam Azam Saydee, Banglar Ihudi" or "Fashi fashi fashi chai," which Ahmed views as apparently reactionary yet benign slogans, are not only

signifiers of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and hate-mongering but also suggestive the unchanged nature of Shahbag’s discourse that claims to usher change in a political landscape mired by violence and hate-mongering.

Shahbag also began to show signs of colonial nationalism. The framework for such nationalism is to create an ‘other’ and to annihilate the ‘other’ at all costs so that a particular form of nationalism can establish its hegemony over all other nationalist ideas, a tendency which can be described as the “fixation with producing a pulverized and uniform sense of national identity (usually along majoritarian lines)” (Krishna xvii). Shahbag defended Bengali nationalism (also one of the founding ideological pillars of the Awami League) while simultaneously antagonizing religio-centric nationalism that sees religion as the yardstick for national identity formation. To counteract Shahbag, the Islamist nationalists representing the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP sponsored the pogrom of *Hefajot-e-Islam* that unleashed a reign of terror in Dhaka demanding full implementation of the *Sharia law*.

It should be noted that the Shahbag protest and its counter-movement represent “caught in its *middleness*” crisis which sways public opinion in their favor through the use of mainstream and alternative media (Chatterjee 55). The growing bourgeoisie and their sentiment became the focus of their struggle. This trend of influencing bourgeoisie public opinion occluded the peasantry and the indigenous communities. Both saw the peasants as “simple, ignorant, exploited by landlords, traders, and moneylenders, respectful of authority, ... but also volatile in temperament, superstitious and often fanatical, easily aroused by agitators and troublemakers...who wanted to use them for their narrow political designs” (Chatterjee 158-159). On the other hand, different ethnicities and indigenous communities were simply ignored as they did not fit into the scheme of nationalisms, one championing Bengali identity and the other advocating an Islamic identity.

Interestingly, Shahbag evoked religious sentiment (by endorsing the *namaj-e-janaza*, or funeral prayer, of the murdered blogger Rajib) which is the rallying cry of its opposition. Contrarily, the Islamist nationalists framed the *namaj-e-janaza* of Rajib as a violation of Islam. Bangladesh’s Right-wing media identified Rajib as a *nastik* (atheist) by publishing what they termed as his anti-Islamic blogging. At this point, Islam became the make-or-break political ingredient. Shahbag and its opposition’s attempt to add religious coloring to nationalist ideological clashesis colonialist as it was done “at a time when governments of key capitalist countries, the mass media and much of the academic world ... would have us believe in precisely that Islamic exceptionalism, that hyper-religiosity among the Muslims, that civilizational *difference* of Islam which the Islamic revivalists, fundamentalists and would-be martyrs would have us believe in” (Ahmad 10). Their fight for God also signifies their framing national narratives as invested in the tragic and as having a deep moral significance.

Partha Chatterjee's account of nationalism in colonial Bengal is pertinent to understanding the imbroglio in Bangladesh. It is necessary to note that Bengali nationalism, the bourgeoisie ideology dominant during the formation of Bangladesh and also the grand narrative of the Bangladesh Awami League, has roots in the nineteenth century Hindu nationalist movement. Chatterjee argues that Hindu nationalism was promoted by "the *bhadralok*, 'respectable folk'" of Calcutta Hindu middle-class, which included figures like Ramakrishna, Bankimchandra, Mrityunjay Vidyalkar, and Tarinicharan Chattopadhyay (Chatterjee 35).

Chatterjee provides a detailed analysis of Tarinicharan Chattopadhyay's *Bharatborsher Itihash*. Tarinicharan writes history from a Hindu perspective. Delineating tragedy of Hindu national life, he chalks out moral imperatives, investing much time to depict the glory of ancient India. Tarinicharan Hinduism makes a linear progress from the north to south, a narrative Chatterjee argues would embarrass "the votaries of political Hinduism today" as the idea that "Rama had subdued the inhabitants of southern India and established a colonial rule" is too reactionary even to their fundamentalist mindset (Chatterjee 96). Tarinicharan's emphasis on the ancientness of the Hindu religion is aggressive and supremacist. What is even more problematic, Chatterjee contends, is that Tarinicharan's story exudes morality; a morality that is willed, imposed and imagined but not historically proven: "His story of ancient glory and subsequent decline has a moral at the end: reform society, remove all of these superstitions that are the marks of decadence, and revive the true ideals of the past" (Chatterjee 98).

Chatterjee mentions Sayid Abdul Rahim of Barisal whose counter-narrative of Muslim misfortune also urges moral reformation. Rahim's historical account of Muslim rule in India was "to repudiate the slander that it was a characteristic of Islam as a religion and of Muslim rulers to be violent, intolerant, and oppressive towards others" (109). Rahim's purpose, Chatterjee is convinced, was to encourage Indians "to listen to Muslim historians telling the story of their own past ... and elicit the respect of others towards Islamic civilization and tradition" (Chatterjee 109). Chatterjee finds Rahim's rationale to be "no different from what Bankim has suggested for the nationalist past" (Chatterjee 109).

The cultural materials presented and circulated in the popular media like Facebook and YouTube by the Shahbag protesters and the Islamists echoed a similar sentiment to that of the colonial nationalists. They conjured up the persistence of tragedy in national life and urged that a moral battle be fought to cleanse nationalism. The song "Tui Razakar" by the band Chirkutt, which is representative of Bengali nationalism, foregrounds the deafening chant of "Rajakarer Fashi Chai" to illustrate that capital punishment of the rajakars is a demand of the entire nation. Implicit in the song is the message that anything other than exterminating

the rajakars would incur national tragedy. The song thus seeks to cleanse the past just as Tarinicharan advocated.

The Islamist video circulated on YouTube by an unidentified Islamist group, explicitly supporting the Islamist cause in Bangladesh, evokes the ‘Islam in danger’ rhetoric and attempts to discredit Bengali nationalism as a threat to Islam and the Muslims. The insistence on the tragic and the moral duty overlap in this propaganda video as it equates Bangladesh’s linguistic nationalism to be un-Islamic, a menace to Islam’s history. This very history provides them the impetus to fight this scar. Since Islam is in danger in Bangladesh, it must be rescued by enacting a global Jihad, the video insists.

Mainstream intellectual responses to Shahbag were also condescending to opposing nationalist sentiments. They evoked similar senses of tragedy and perpetuated moral messages as that of the music video and the Islamist clip. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal’s article “Onek Onek Onek Bhalobashi” is representative of Pro-Liberation bourgeoisie sentiment. Iqbal emphasizes the moral necessity to withstand what he considers the tragedy of Bangladesh. He identifies Islamic nationalism as the sole reason for the political crisis in Bangladesh, blaming its upholders as conspiring against religious minorities as well as the nation: “What the Pakistan army did in 1971 is being repeated now. Besides burning Hindu houses, temples and religious institutions, Awami League or the *Muktijuddho* murals have been destroyed ... there are *hartals*, power stations are demolished, offices and courts are burned. The loss of resources due to this violence could have contributed to the construction of the Padmabridge” (Iqbal, n.p., my translation). He reflects on the 1971 Liberation War as a classical past and hails the Shahbag Movement as reliving that past: “They did not see Ekattor; they did not see the valor or sacrifice of the freedom fighters. No proper weapon in hand, neither garment nor food, yet the freedom fighters waiting for Pakistani soldiers with fingers on the trigger and the chin on the rifle is a sight they missed. Also they didn’t see the courageous youth waiting for the military convoy with an unpinned grenade in his hand hiding behind the trees, ...they didn’t see the energetic youth facing certain death because he uttered the words *Joy Bangla*” (Iqbal, n.p., my translation). It is important to note that Iqbal’s “impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical” celebration of the prowess of the freedom fighters is remarkably similar to Tarinicharan’s celebration of Hindu militarism in Ancient India (Bhabha 1). Iqbal does not mention the implicit xenophobia and anti-Semitism of some of the slogans in Shahbag either, nor does he mention the peasants’ struggle or the indigenous people. His mission is to uncritically celebrate Bengali nationalism and discredit Islamic nationalism.

Farhad Mazhar’s “Bangali Jatiyotabadi Rajnitir Porinoti” (“The Consequences of Bengali Nationalist Politics”), similar to the YouTube video, projects the religion-in-danger sentiment. He identifies Bengali nationalist politics as anti-religious: “On one side there are Bengali nationalists and on the other there are the religious

people of Bangladesh. Linguistically and culturally, they are Bengali but religion is also integral to their identity. But when you consistently and continually claim that language and culture are key to your identity but not religion, you create a new conflict” (Mazhar, n.p., my translation). Islam, Mazhar argues, can confront nationalism based on culture and language: “When language and culture become your political weapons, whether you want it or not, Islam, as a religious weapon, stands to confront it” (Mazhar). Islam is presented as a catch-all force as Mazhar’s nationalist vision excommunicates Bangladesh’s different religious communities. It suggests his glorification of the Islamist attempt to shape Islam into “a standardized religion of a standardized majority” (Nandy vii).

Deeply problematic in the article is Mazhar’s accusation of Bengali nationalist politics as the sole reason for unrest in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region: “If you demand that ‘Bengali nationalism’ is your political identity and this notion of identity has to be made an integral part of the constitution, you are throwing a political challenge to the other CHT and plain-land indigenous communities including the Chakmas” (Mazhar). Mazhar deliberately occludes the role played by military dictators of Bangladesh whose nationalist ideology he endorses as a discredit to Bengali nationalism. Indeed, both nationalisms have contributed to colonization and occlusion of the indigenous communities in Bangladesh as is evident in Jenneke Arens’ argument: “Although Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had threatened to flood the area with the Army and Bengali settlers, it was General Ziaur Rahman who fully militarized the Chittagong Hill Tracts after he came to power in 1975 through a military coup” (Arens 120). It can be said Mazhar’s Islamic nationalism, as it is divisive and xenophobic, has no answer, except for blaming the ‘other’ nationalism, for the exclusion of the working class, peasantry and indigenous communities from Bangladesh’s nationalism discourse.

To conclude, nationalisms that confronted each other during the tumultuous days of the Shahbag/Hefajot frenzy and continue to do so in Bangladesh are heavily invested “in the patriotic, atavistic temporality of Traditionalism” because they see political unity to be “a continual displacement of its irredeemably plural modern space” (Bhabha 300). It is Fanon who long ago said, “Colonization or decolonization: it is simply a power struggle” (Fanon 23). In Bangladesh, nationalism has become a power struggle as the peasantry and the indigenous are “systematically left out” from discourses of Bengali nationalism or Islamic nationalism (Fanon 23). Bhabha asks for counter-narratives to “disturb the ideological man oeuvres through which ‘imagined communities’ are given essentialist identities” (300). Persistent questioning of the dominant narratives of nationalism, as this paper does, is a way to look beyond the contesting nationalisms that have rendered impossible co-existence of religions, ethnicities and ideologies.

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Homesickness, Failed Transnationality, the Conservatism of Belonging, and Salman Rushdie

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Abstract

The Satanic Verses as a text that dramatizes the failure of a transnational belongingness and the conservatism of place and belonging; it is a celebration of migrancy and cosmopolitan identity. Focusing on the tensions between the homeland and the migrant self, this paper intends to highlight a depiction of homesickness in the novel's major migrant characters to show how they fail to negotiate an idea of a new cosmopolitan space that not only accommodates the migrant on equal terms with the city host, but also one that insists on the possibility of a community of different peoples living and working together harmoniously. The question of how the novel fares in the context of transnational globalism and the immigrant's claim to citizenship rights and fair treatment is also considered.

Keywords: Homesickness; Transnationality, Conservatism

Although *The Satanic Verses* refuses to be read merely as a text that speaks for any particular tradition or cultural space, its engagement with homesickness – observed in its principal protagonists: Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta – exposes Rushdie's narrative as an adventure towards a search for home or a realization of it in love. The novel's multiple plots derive basically from the consciousness (or unconsciousness in some cases) of the two male protagonists of the text whose journeys to Britain are used to explore the migrant experience as well as the tensions between the migrant self and the *homeland*. Rushdie

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depicts Chamcha and Gibreel as representing two different images of the Indian immigrant in Britain: evil and angelic respectively. Understandably, Gibreel is angelic given in part that he has already attained a level of fame in the homeland and also because he represents a sort of *Oriental* charm. Chamcha, on the other hand, is filled with self-loathing and occupies an obscure space that fixes him in the eyes of the *Empire* as evil. What, however, unites these two characters is their homesickness for India (or their being held by it), depicted in their haunted consciousness. Both men are haunted by their pasts and the desire to return home, even when they keep repressing these desires. The intrigue of their stories is woven around their apparent denial of this desire to return to India, especially as both of them chase after the Englishness that they eventually realize they can never acquire.

Oftentimes, depiction of homesickness in many post-colonial narratives that portray the exilic and migrant experiences of immigrants (from the supposed Orient) in the West have been explained away as nostalgia in many a critical essay, blurring the apparent difference between the two psychological states. While nostalgia exposes a desire for a past and thus fixes that past in a state of unchanging ideal, homesickness is basically preoccupied with a longing for home – a space. In other words, nostalgia deals more with time, especially a past time that is associated with wholeness and ideal, while homesickness deals with space. An instance of this blurring of the two terms as meaning the same thing is clearly expressed in Mridula Chakraborty's essay, "Nostalgic Narratives and the Otherness Industry," wherein the critic makes no clear demarcation between homesickness and nostalgia. The longing for *home* is hailed as nostalgia thus:

These nostalgic narratives, for me, are the diasporic expressions of Third World intellectuals trying to come to terms with life in Anglo-North America, often through retelling of a particularized socio-cultural collectivity, creating thereby not only a memory, but a home in memory. Memory becomes the gunny sack in which the intellectual and emotional baggage of the refugee, the immigrant, and the asylum seeker crosses the waters. (128)

While Chakraborty's view on "nostalgic narratives" helps us to make a link between homesickness and nostalgia in memory, it collapses the two as meaning the same thing, apparently failing to distinguish between a memory of (remembrance of things past) and a desire for place. The concept of nostalgia will not necessarily help us understand Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* since it presupposes a longing for a past time that is idyllic, harmonious and whole. Homesickness, however, captures the hauntedness of space in a dislocated self. In the homesickness syndrome, the memory is not a remembrance of past experiences or of an alluring past, but more of a desire (however repressed) to occupy a present space. The Negritude poems of Leopold Sedar Senghor, for instance, are expressive of the nostalgic feeling, even in their celebration of migrancy. Amazingly, homesickness as a concept has not really

been popular in the exploration of the migrant/exilic hero in the critical engagements with postcolonial narratives. In this paper, homesickness is defined as the conscious or subconscious longing for *the home*, resulting often in “adjustment disorder” (vanTilburg *et al.* 901) due to a dislocation from a social, cultural, or psychological space.

In *The Satanic Verses*, the characterization of Chamcha and Gibreel has largely been seen as Rushdie’s revisionism (with immigrant identity and experience) of the primacy of a Western self and place (Brians). The migrants populate England, *contaminating* it with their exoticness and diversities. London is not the property of the English alone, but also of the immigrants: Asians, Africans, Americans, and the peoples of the Caribbean. This type of reading draws attention to Paul Gilroy’s reminder of the hybrid and transnational character of identities in Europe and America, a concept he explores in his book, *The Black Atlantic*. It is quite clear that Rushdie revises much of the Western myths about the center-periphery construct that is used to “describe” the immigrant from the *periphery* to the *center* as a non-self (a monster) until they begin to see themselves as monsters. Chamcha’s metamorphosis like Franz Kafka’s Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*— into a beast is a clear exemplification of how the *Empire* constructs the image of the immigrant. This linking of Chamcha to a Kafkaesque working class condition is quite clear in the novel, even though neither Chamchan or Gibreel belong to the working class in their homelands—India. Their choice of exile is largely self-induced, as against the notion of a forced exile due to an uncomfortable and unsafe home front. Rushdie’s choice of the petit-bourgeois exposes his elitist focus as many critics have also observed. Nevertheless, the tension between Chamcha and his father, similar to that between Samsa and his father, makes this link quite apparent. In addition, however, Rushdie refuses to permit the *Empire* the sole power of such description.

Chamcha is shown to also have a hand in his metamorphosis. His self-loathing and hatred for his Indianness also contribute to his transmutation. Jumpy Joshi aptly expresses this view when he offers his own ideological understanding of Chamcha’s monstrous state:

What has happened here? A: Wrongful arrest, intimidation, violence. Two: Illegal detention, unknown medical experimentation in hospital... And thirdly,... psychological breakdown, loss of sense of self, inability to cope. We’ve seen it all before... I refuse to accept the position of victim. Certainly, he has been victimized, but we know that all abuse of power is in part the responsibility of the abused; our passiveness colludes with, permits such crimes. (260-61)

Chamcha’s and Gibreel’s homesickness is made more apparent in their desire for home, manifested in their striving to inhabit the same spaces with their partners: Chamcha seeks to reunite with his wife Pamela and Gibreel with Allie. Their

rejection by these women intensifies their traumatic experience in the West, a metaphorical reflection of their inability to feel at home. Chamcha, for one, is first rejected by his wife due to his disfigurement and thrown out of the house. After he is transformed— *humanized*, he faces the awkward situation of living in the same house with his wife and her lover, Jumpy Joshi. He is helplessly homesick, but keeps repressing this feeling because home, in the image of Zeeny and his father Changez, seems to haunt and taunt him. Refusing to accept defeat as if in competition with himself, Chamcha rejects everything Indian, including the Indian community in London which tries to appropriate him as belonging to them. During his disfigurement, Mishal's father, Sufyan, tells him, "Best place for you is here...Where else would you go to heal your disfigurements and recover your normal health? Where else but here, with us, among your own people, your own kind?" (261). But to himself, Chamcha says afterwards, "I'm not your kind ... You're not my people. I've spent half my life trying to get away from you" (262). Although in practice he remains with the diaspora community until his restoration to a *human being*, he never accepts this community or its claim on him.

Even when it is apparent to him that London harbors a tragic conclusion for the immigrant who lives in self-denial, Chamcha refuses to accept defeat: he refuses to concede to the implausibility of forcing his way from the periphery to the center, the impossibility of being *at home* in London. His insistence on the possibility of transplanting himself from India to London is expressed in his musing during a television program, *Gardeners' World*:

There it palpably was, achimera \kai-mere \with roots, firmly planted in and growing vigorously out of a piece of English earth: a tree, he thought, capable of taking the metaphoric place of the one his father had chopped down in a distant garden in another, incompatible world. If such a tree were possible, then so was he; he, too, could cohere, send down roots, survive. Amid all the televisual images of hybrid tragedies – the uselessness of mermen, the failures of plastic surgery, the Esperanto- like vacuity of much modern art, the Coca-Colonization of the planet—he was given this gift. It was enough. He switched off the set. (420)

Like Gibreel, India haunts Chamcha until he receives the telegram informing him of his father's terminal illness. That is when "he discovered to his surprise that after a lifetime of tangled relationships with his father, after long years of crossed wires and 'irrevocable Sunderings', he was once again capable of an uncomplicated reaction" (525). Even when he is unable to remember any happy moment he has had with his father, it is gladdening for him to discover "that even the unforgivable crime of being one's father could be forgiven, after all, in the end" (527). He reverts his Western accented name back to its Indian status quo. He reunites with Zeeny and even joins in the political rally.

This final reunification with *home* and all its foibles and attractions reveals an

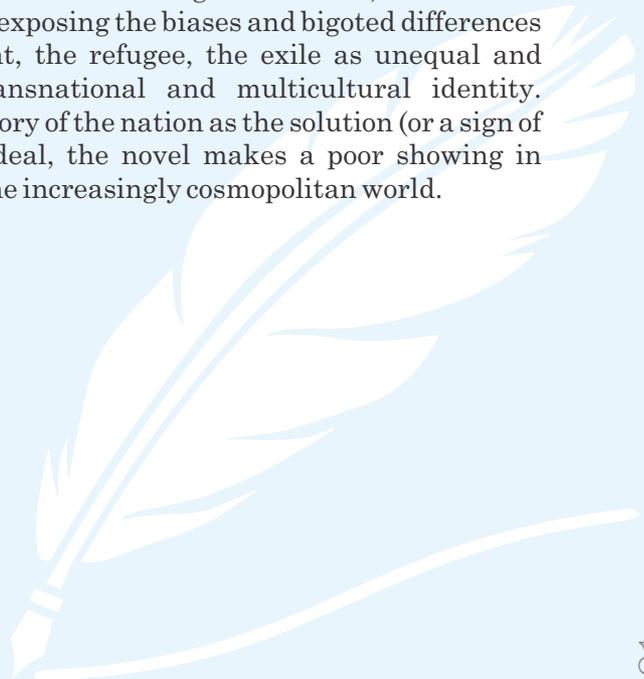
apparent conservatism in the novel. In Rushdie's portrayal, the India to which Chamcha returns is in a sort of historical stasis that he walks back in to as if to pause the past. Nothing has changed *really much*, except that Changez is dying of cancer. It seems that only Chamcha has changed, coming to such epiphanic moments that provides him with fresher understandings of life, particularly while watching Changez die. Even Zeeny and her friends are still doing the same things. Zeeny's re-entry into his life (or his re-entry into her life) is said to complete "the process of renewal, of regeneration, that had been the most surprising and paradoxical product of his father's terminal illness. His old English life, its bizarreries, its evil, now seemed very remote, even irrelevant, like his truncated stage-name" (548-49). It is also apparent by implication that Zeeny has paused her sexual life, perhaps in her wait for his return, given her shyness in inviting him *home* "as if she were removing a veil after long concealment" (549).

Chamcha's resolution to "think of myself, from now on, as living perpetually in the first instant of the future" (549) is in line with Pnina Werbner's statement that the "ultimate message [of *The Satanic Verses*] is one of faith in man as the source of rational creativity" (S57). In other words, the novel should be seen more as a modernist rather than a postmodernist narrative, since postmodernism "is constituted by absolute uncertainty, a loss of the last remaining cornerstone of modernist faith in progress, a realization of the irrational consequences of rationality itself" (Werbner S57). The expression of postmodernist temperament in the novel is Gibreel. But woeful Gibreel's death and the seeming resurgence of energy in Chamcha sends Rushdie's message quite firmly and aptly: hope (or at least a semblance of it) in the rational self. Chamcha's rootedness and place of belonging, metaphorized in the walnut-tree which, even after it is cut from the base, maintains its root in the homestead, exposes further the conservatism that insists that *home* is rooted somewhere in a cultural space that haunts and pulls the prodigal migrant back to itself. The search for happiness is often always traceable to the cultural root and so, the cause of unhappiness is the severance from it.

Unlike Saladin Chamcha, Gibreel Farishta is a privileged migrant. Even after his angelic transfiguration in London, he is considered an outsider. The turn in his life as he escapes to London is quite instructive. In India, he is a demigod, a posturing that incenses Chamcha to heightened hatred of everything Gibreel represents, including a part of Chamcha himself. In London, Gibreel finds himself utterly useless, even reproductively sterile. His inability to reignite his sexual charms and to have women frolicking around him turns him into a passionately dotting partner, ultimately culminating in his suspicion of everything Allie does. Like Chamcha, he is on a self-imposed exile, haunted by both his Indian past and present. While Chamcha perhaps in search of fame and an apparent hatred for India migrates to London, Gibreel flees India to escape fame and find love—Alleluia Cone. It turns out, however, that London does not recognize his angelic form, which is basically construed in the same light as monstrous though with lighter consequences, unlike

Chamcha's monstrosity. Gibreel challenges traditions, dreaming revisionist and blasphemous dreams as he struggles to make sense of his existence. The notion of homesickness is more complicated in his characterization, particularly because he does not really have a *home* in the traditional sense of the word, even in India. Coming from an ethnic minority, having lost his parents at a tender age, and having been raised by a generous foster family, Gibreel seems to be the perfect character to challenge repressive customs and traditions. All his haunted surrealist dreams are a systematic questioning of established religious and cultural codes. His faithlessness—a postmodernist expression of displeasure at best—leads him to near insanity and eventually to murder and suicide. Could Rushdie have used Gibreel's death to signal the hopelessness in postmodernist faithlessness? There is no home for Gibreel, not in India, not in London. In a sense, it is easy to conclude that all the attractions as well as flaws in Gibreel emblemize the flaws of postmodernist thinking.

Gibreel's death in the end and Chamcha's resolution to start anew in India shows the novel as privileging an Indian national allegory, reversing the narrative build-up of what appeared to be a transnational aesthetic attempt to write the marginalized *subaltern* immigrant, the exile, the refugee into the global sphere on equal terms with the West. Gibreel's and Chamcha's epic adventures to the West are depicted as failed escapades into the heart of whiteness (Europe). Perhaps, Rushdie may have used this narrative to express the notion that before any claims of place in the global arena should be made, a claim of place in the local has to be established first. The only problem with this notion, though, is how the global and the local are defined. Ultimately, from the point of view of human rights criticism, *The Satanic Verses* is significant in underscoring and exposing the biases and bigoted differences that insist on describing the immigrant, the refugee, the exile as unequal and *monsters*, even in the face of a transnational and multicultural identity. Nonetheless, for regressing into the allegory of the nation as the solution (or a sign of grander hope) to failed cosmopolitan ideal, the novel makes a poor showing in charting a clear transnational vision of the increasingly cosmopolitan world.



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The Pakistan Movement and the Bangla Poetry of the Islamic Trend: An Evaluation from Postcolonial Perspective

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Abstract

The Pakistan Movement was a political movement that took place during the dying stage of the British colonial rule and demanded for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. Some of the Bengali Muslim poets saw this Movement as a great opportunity to overcome the servitude of colonization. They thought a separate homeland for the Muslims would enable them to establish an ideal state based on Islamic nationalism. Moreover, the prospect of developing a distinct literary tradition for the Muslims also motivated them to support the Movement. This is why they regarded it their holy duty to uphold the ideologies of the Pakistan Movement in their poetry. This effort had become so pervasive that it led to the emergence of a distinct poetic trend in Bangla literature, that is, the Islamic trend. The poets of this trend, in the process of disseminating the ideologies of the Movement, showed strong resistance against the oppressive colonial rule by expressing tremendous concern for freedom in their poetry. But they emphasized Islamic nationalism and culture so much that, sometimes, they could not avoid being communal in their attitude. And all these issues are very significant from a postcolonial perspective. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to examine the poetry of this trend in the historical context of the Pakistan Movement and British colonization to address its postcolonial significance by focusing on its themes of resistance, independence, culture, nationalism, and communalism.

The creation of Pakistan as a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indian

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subcontinent was, on the one hand, a result of the Pakistan Movement and, on the other, the insidious impact of the British colonial policy of “divide and rule” that maneuvered the relationship between Hindus and Muslims of British India into hostility and distrust. The Pakistan Movement was inspired by the controversial “two-nation theory” devised by the Muslim intellectuals and political leaders like Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah that defined the national identity of the people of the Indian subcontinent on the basis of religion disregarding some of the basic components of identity formation like language, culture, and ethnicity. Consequently, the communal basis of this theory, though it had a long historical background, culminated in the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims of India which was formally proposed in a meeting of All India Muslim League in 1940 – known as the Lahore Resolution. So the Pakistan Movement, which sought independence from the British colonial rule to form a new independent nation state for the Muslims of India, gained momentum after the Lahore Resolution. This situation inspired some of the Bengali Muslim poets so strongly that they wholeheartedly dedicated themselves to upholding the ideologies of the Movement by exclusively depending on Islam as the subject matter for their poetry. It resulted in the emergence of a distinct trend in Bangla poetry – the Islamic trend, of which some of the notable poets are Shahadat Hossain (1893-1953), Golam Mostafa (1895-1964), Sufi Zulfiqar Haider (1899-1987), Raushan Yazdani (1917-1967), Farrukh Ahmad (1918-1974), and Talim Husain (1918-1999). In the course of propagating the ideologies of the Movement, the poets of this trend expressed strong resistance against the colonial rule in their poetry. Their resistance was so subversive and critical of the colonial relationship that their poetry can easily be identified with postcolonial literature because, in general definition, postcolonial literature is that “which critically or subversively scrutinizes the colonial relationship” (Boehmer 3). The following quotation from Sufi Zulfiqar Haider’s poem “Koifiot” (“Demanding an Answer”) of *Bhanga Tolwar* [The Broken Sword] (1945) exemplifies the overall attitude of the poets of this trend towards colonization: “I want to know: in this ill-fated land, how long this inhuman oppression / of the native and of the overseas oppressors will continue in the guise of protection?” (1-2). The poet holds the colonizers and their native collaborators responsible for the inhuman condition of the people of his land. He is aware of the oppressive nature of colonial rule which exercises its evil power upon the native people deceptively in the name of doing good for them. Therefore, like Sufi Zulfiqar Haider, the poets of this trend expressed their experience of oppression, exploitation, and subordination in a form of resistance against colonization in their poetry. And thus their poetry becomes fiercely anti-colonial which is an important feature of post colonial literature because

texts which are anti-colonial, which reject the premises of colonialist intervention (the civilizing mission, the rejuvenation of stagnant cultures)

¹ Author’s translation from Bangla. All such references from Bangla texts used in this paper are translated by the author except those which are otherwise specified in the Works Cited page.

might be regarded as post-colonial insofar as they have ‘got beyond’ colonialism and its ideologies, broken free of its lures to a point from which to mount a critique or counter-attack. (Childs, Peter, and Patrick Williams 4).

This is why the poets of the Islamic trend, rejecting the grounds of colonialist intervention and going beyond its ideologies, attempted to rejuvenate Islamic culture in their poetry which became stagnant during the colonial rule.

Though the tradition of writing poetry on Islamic themes has a much older history in Bangla literature than that of the poetry of the Islamic trend fueled by the Pakistan Movement, what made this trend truly distinct is the fact that the poets of this time fused Islamic elements with the political situation of their time in a way that had never been done before. In the following extract from Azharul Islam’s “Hazrat Muhammad” in *Chhayapath [The Galaxy]* (1966), the poet perfectly blends his Islamic consciousness with his awareness of the political situation of his time which has placed him in a wretched condition: “Remembering you, O Prophet, the great and sober / Bring the new tide in the dead bank of life’s river” (1-2). Under the colonial system, the speaker’s life has become as lifeless as a dead river and to revitalize it, he remembers Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, whose ideals can bring flow to it again. The poets of this trend, therefore, opted for Islam as a solution to overcoming their colonial situation. So their choice of Islam is no less a political decision as much as it is religious. Thus the Islamic trend in Bangla poetry, “being nourished by the Pakistan Movement, succeeded in establishing a distinct and narrow space in Bangla literature whose flavor persisted for many days” (Das 19). Therefore, though the poets of this trend are normally slighted and evaluated very negatively in the poetic history of Bangla literature for their somewhat communal position and lack of artistic or literary merit, the themes of resistance and protest against the oppressive colonial rule and of culture, nationalism, and independence movement that they expressed in their poetry are very significant from a postcolonial perspective. But, as the very creation of Pakistan by partitioning India is itself an extremely contentious issue, the Pakistan Movement and its offshoot, the Islamic trend in Bangla poetry, are held responsible for encouraging communalism in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in today’s Bangladesh that gained independence from Pakistan in 1971. However, the emphasis on Islamic nationalism by the poets of the Islamic trend deserves special attention in postcolonial studies because “throughout the imperial world during the decolonizing period, protest, resistance, and independence movements were fuelled by one or another nationalism” (Said 261). So it is not unusual that the Pakistan Movement, which occurred during the decolonizing period of British colonial rule, was fueled by Islamic nationalism which was reflected in the poetry of the Islamic trend.

During the colonial period, majority of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent had this feeling that they were the worst victims of colonization, for before the inception

of the colonial rule in India, Muslims were the rulers of this land, though, ironically, all the Muslim rulers like the Mughals or the Sultans had come to India from Persia, Turkey, and the Afghan region. Therefore, in spite of their rulers' foreign origins, the Muslims used to feel an affinity with them, perhaps believing in the universal brotherhood of Muslims. As a result, an Islamic way of life – observing its traditions, culture, rules, and regulations was very strongly prevalent during the pre-colonial period. At that time, the official language of the Mughals was Persian; and Arabic, being the language of the Qur'an, the holy book of the Muslims, used to enjoy a highly honored status. Education was, for the Muslims, primarily confined to the study of the Arabic-Persian language and the tenets of Islam. This kind of education would enable them to find moderate jobs in different sectors. Besides, “(d)uring that long Muslim rule in India, the migrant Muslims from Arab-Turkey-Persia had the absolute priority in the top positions of army, court and administrative services. They were the centre of the elite class of that period” (Das 25). This situation must have hurt the Hindus and the people of other communities of India, and a sense of discrimination and deprivation definitely worked in their minds for they became marginalized during the Muslim rule. For that reason, when the British came to India, new opportunities opened up for these deprived groups, especially for the Hindus. They warmly accepted English education and collaborated with the British to change their social position. Gradually, due to western education, these marginalized people attained better positions under the British Raj in contrast with their Muslim counterparts who showed a strong reluctance to western education and indulged in romanticizing the pride and glory of the old days when they used to be the rulers of India. This had made the situation very complicated for the Muslims with the passage of time, especially at a stage when they found themselves ineligible for any good job because of not having an English education. Under these circumstances, the Muslims failed to keep pace with the Hindus and lagged behind them in almost every sector. Hence, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, some of the educated Muslim elites like Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Abdul Latif (1828-1893) and Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928) stepped forward with the mission of upgrading the status of the Muslims. The British government, as a part of their own policy, encouraged and patronized this venture. Accordingly, the Muslims started to receive English education and, consequently, a new Muslim middle class emerged who became “involved in competition with the Hindu middle class for their development” (Das 26). This situation widened the gap between these two communities and deepened the sense of insecurity and inferiority among the Muslims for their lower position in the social structure. Later on, Sadruddin, one of the poets of the Islamic trend, emphasized in his poem “14th August” that the distance between these two communities had reached an unbridgeable position:

Hindus and Muslims
Are never the same nations –
They are two – having millions of difference.

Their progress is in separation, ruin is in union.
So
For the Muslims I want
The separate homeland – holy Pakistan. (qtd. in Das 118)

Such an utterance was typical of the adherents of Pakistanism. However, gradually the newly emerged Muslim middle class started to form various political, cultural, and literary organizations to work for the betterment of the Muslims of India, maintaining a strong alliance with the British government. They believed that “the interest of the Muslims will not be preserved by Congress” (qtd. in Das 26). As a consequence, a separate political party for the Muslims, All India Muslim League, was formed in 1906. This was the time when Bengal had already been partitioned (1905) by the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, and the whole Bengal, mainly the West Bengal, was fuming in protest at this decision. But the educated Muslim middle class, particularly of East Bengal, considered the partition highly beneficial to them, and in the founding assembly of the All India Muslim League, they expressed their support for partition: “That this meeting considers that partition is sure to prove beneficial to the community which constitute the majority of the population and that all such methods of agitation boycotting shall be firmly condemned and discouraged” (qtd. in Das 27). So it is evident that the educated or elite Muslims had wanted partition even before the commencement of the Pakistan Movement. The sense of insecurity due to their fallen status in the colonial period, and their feeling of inferiority because of their backwardness in comparison with the Hindus in almost every sector including education, art, literature, and science made them believe a separate homeland would guarantee their security, respect, peace, and prosperity. But there were also certain political reasons which were very subtly manipulated by the politicians of the two communities and also the policy-makers of the British Raj who led to the ultimate partition of India in 1947. However, the Pakistan Movement progressed in parallel with the Indian Independence Movement led by Congress.

In this situation, the Bengali poets of the Islamic trend, who also belonged to that Muslim middle class, considered it their sacred duty to support the Movement. Apart from political reasons, some of them had literary considerations to seek for a separate homeland for the Muslims because that would give them the opportunity to produce a distinct literary tradition which did not develop very notably during the colonial period. They believed that it would give them the opportunity to portray the life of the Muslims in their own literature which remained almost ignored by the Hindu writers. At the prospect of the emergence of Pakistan, the poets of this trend felt that “perhaps such an opportunity is coming for us when we will be able to speak of ourselves, when our poetry will contain our history, when the accounts of our society, our desires, pride and sorrows will be portrayed in our poetry” (Ahsan 52). To promote the ideology of the Movement, “Purbo-Pakistan Renaissance Society (East-Pakistan Renaissance Society) was established in Kolkata in 1942” and to

materialize the vision of the poets and writers “Purbo-Pakistan Shahitto Sangsad (East-Pakistan Literary Society) was founded in Dhaka in 1943” (Azad 12) under the leadership of Syed Sazzad Husain (1920-1995) and Syed Ali Ahsan (1922-2002). The mission of the literary society was to work for the progress of a distinct stream in Bangla literature (Pakistani literature) based on Islamic tradition as Syed Ali Ahsan declared:

In the present circumstances, we cannot afford to ignore our political feelings. Great literature does not exhaust itself in aesthetic creation alone. In the field of literature our heritage lies in the current traditions of Islam, in the innumerable unpolished *punthis*, folk-ballads and songs. Some narrative poems based on them have already been written. We expect many more in the future. Even if they come through conscious efforts, they are welcome, because genuine literature will emerge out of them. (qtd. in Al-Azad)

Therefore, to produce a literature of their own, the poets of this trend culled the materials for their poetry from Islamic tradition, myths, history, legends, and the *punthi* literature of the mediaeval age. To create a new type of language for the emerging Pakistani literature, they made very careful choice of their diction by using Arabic and Persian words in their work by consciously avoiding Sanskrit-based words in Bangla language which was deemed to be the language of the Hindus by these poets. In this context, it is imperative to note their choice of language because language is not only “a means of communication” but also “a carrier of culture” (Thiong’o 13). So it can be assumed that by making conscious use of Arabic and Persian words in their language, the poets of this trend wanted to uplift the Islamic culture that remained occluded during the colonial period. Moreover, “(l)anguage as culture is the collective memory bank of a people’s experience in history” (Thiong’o 15). In that sense, the Islamic poets wanted to bring forth the experience of their own history through the collective memory of the people of their community by their special choice of language. They were driven by a spontaneous and sincere enthusiasm to create something new. And, most importantly, they hoped that “Pakistan will be formed as an ideal religious state (*dharmarajya*) where the Islamic egalitarianism will be established, and there will be no place for the oppressors” (Das 68). This is imperative to note that almost all the poets of this trend identified the British rulers as oppressors, and the sense of being oppressed in their own homeland by the foreign rulers made them extremely charged to show resistance.

So the Islamic trend in Bangla poetry foregrounded itself with the themes that are common in resistance literature under any colonial rule. Generally, the writers of resistance literature express their yearning for freedom, as Edward W. Said asserts, “being conscious of themselves as prisoners in their own land” (258). Similarly, the poets of the Islamic trend in Bangla literature, having the same consciousness of being prisoners, resorted to Islam as the basis for their identity

envisaging the revival of the golden days of Islam of Prophet Muhammad's era that would ensure a society absolutely human in nature and free from all sorts of tyranny and oppression in contrast to their prevailing situation under the colonial regime. Farrukh Ahmad is the most prominent poet of this trend who is famously known as the poet of Islamic Renaissance. "Pakistaner Kobi Allama Iqbal" ("The Poet of Pakistan Allama Iqbal") of his second volume of poems *Azad Koro Pakistan [Let's Free Pakistan]* (1945) is a remarkable example of such poetry where the poet takes refuge in Islam expressing his longing for freedom: "In all the imprisoned minds there is now only one yearning – Let's free Pakistan / ... All the hearts of the devotees are Mustafa's unyielding edifice" (qtd. in Rahman 165). The poet puts his experience of colonization vis-à-vis his faith in Islam. As Ngūgī wa Thiong'o opines, "To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others" (16), so it can be said that the poet is trying to recover the most important tool of his self-definition, that is, Islam which used to be controlled by the colonial power as a process of the control of his whole culture during the colonial period, for he affirms that he can define himself better in the light of Islam. This attempt by the poet can be regarded as "a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath" (Gandhi 4) which gives more meaning to the very title of this volume *Let's Free Pakistan*. It has double signification. On the one hand, it refers to the poet's desire for freedom, and on the other, his demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims – Pakistan. The poet believes that freedom would remain incomplete or impossible without the creation of Pakistan where he would establish an ideal state on the basis of Islamic egalitarianism. In the introduction to this volume, Farrukh Ahmad explained his view of freedom by declaring that freedom is the birth right of mankind which had been snatched away from them by the colonial rulers. Therefore, in "Punjeri" ("The Navigator"), a famous poem of his first poetry collection, *Shat Shagorer Majhi [The Sailor of the Seven Seas]* (1944), the poet is seen to wait passionately for the break of a new dawn that will put an end to this dark period of imprisonment:

When will the night end, punjeri?

After this long night's weary voyage
 What sea's dark horizon beckons us?
 Is it the dim life's gate wailing
 On the strife-torn dream of the painful heart?
 Life's triumphant sound recedes and dies slowly.
 You on mast and I row blindfold;
 Endless mist exists before me.

When will the night end, punjeri? (6-14)

Farrukh Ahmad showed tremendous enthusiasm in the poems of this collection expressing his earnest desire for freedom. The sailor of the title poem "The Sailor of

the Seven Seas” symbolizes a revolutionary leader, who alludes to the leader of the Pakistan Movement, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, to whom the poet appeals to start his revolutionary journey to reinstate the golden days of Islam (though it is not necessarily the pre-colonial Islam) by defeating the evil power of colonization:

I don't know how many black curtains had to be raised to bring this morning.

The green leaves shiver in the orange grove.
The seven seas' tide has brought foam on your door-steps.
O Sailor of the seven seas, see, your ship calls at your door,
A still-life, like a picture it stands there.
No water reaches the helm, its sails do not flutter,
O Sailor, I entreat you, rise up,
Rise up and join the seamen,
You will find your ship sailing again in the seas,
Like a full-moon in the blue seas
Braving cloudy waves and crossing all obstacles. (1-11)

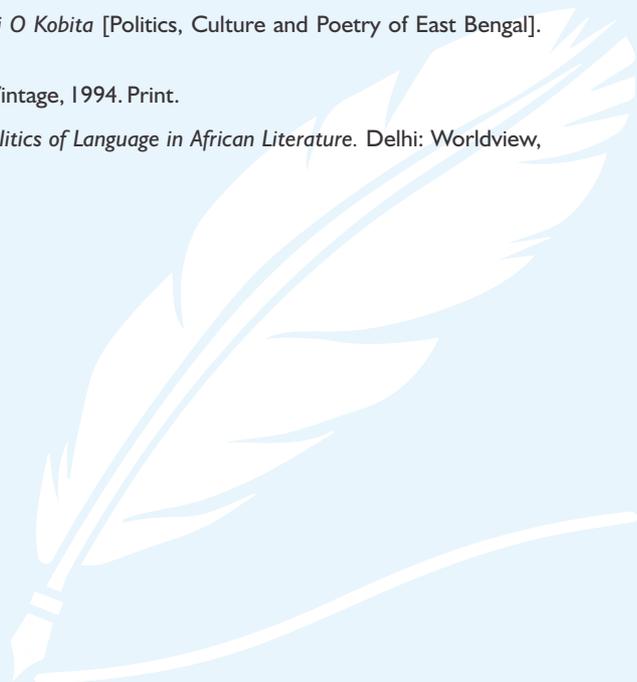
Farrukh Ahmad used to play with words by using different symbols and metaphors in his poetry. The above excerpt is no exception to this. Though the English translation cannot fully contain his artistic talent in using Arabic and Persian words, it is not difficult to understand the overall atmosphere of the poem where the speaker is alluding to his existence of colonization as covered by black curtains which the morning sun cannot penetrate. But the speaker has the feeling that day is not very far when the evil period will come to an end. The time has become ripe to start the revolution for which the sailor, the leader, should take immediate action because the speaker, along with his fellow people, is completely prepared and only waiting for his command. Here the speaker refers to the time of the Pakistan Movement when the Muslims were eagerly waiting to welcome Pakistan and bid farewell to the British colonial system. But he is also aware of the fact that it will not be an easy job, because for an eternally long period of time they have not experienced freedom. Therefore, to achieve freedom, they have to overcome all the obstacles. Like Farrukh Ahmad, all the poets of the Islamic trend expressed their concern for freedom along with their protest against the colonial oppression. In their poetry, therefore, their consciousness of being prisoners repeatedly appears. This type of consciousness is a common feature of the “literature of the imperialized world” (Said 258). Besides, as post colonialism “foregrounds a politics of opposition and struggle, and problematizes the key relationship between centre and periphery” (Mishra and Hodge 276), their poetry, in that sense, belongs to post colonial literature because they also put themselves in a conflicting relationship with the colonizers through their extreme concern for freedom.

The poets of the Islamic trend initiated ideological and cultural resistance against the colonial power to reform their community. According to Said, resistance in the imperial world “in turn makes possible the establishment of new and independent

states” (253). So it is not surprising that a new and independent state Pakistan was established in 1947 as a result of the resistance in which the poets of the Islamic trend participated though many of them gradually fell into disillusionment by finding their dream country a far cry from their expectation because of the oppressive and discriminatory rule of the West Pakistani rulers. And, after the Language Movement of 1952 that sprouted the seed of Bengali nationalism among the people of East Pakistan rejecting the communal ideology of Pakistanism, the trend started to dissipate because of the gaining prominence of the overpowering secular and liberal-humanistic trends in Bangla poetry. Since then, the poets of the Islamic trend are normally treated as anti-progressive and communal. Many of them are not even recognized as poets. And it cannot be denied that some of them had become so obsessed with the ideology of the Pakistan Movement that “(t)hey often resorted to blind communal feelings instead of appealing to the humanistic and peace-loving aspects of Islam” (Hossain 90). At this juncture, it is of high importance to consider the fact that the type of nationalism they supported or the communal attitude they expressed was the result of their tension loaded relationship with the empire. This sort of radical nationalism is, as Said explains in a different context, like the choice of “a Caliban who sheds his current servitude and physical disfigurements in the process of discovering his essential, pre-colonial self” (258). And Said states further that “this Caliban is behind the nativist and radical nationalisms that produced concepts of Négritude, Islamic fundamentalism, Arabianism, and the like” (258). So it is not unusual to see the Bengali poets of the Islamic trend to take refuge in their essential, pre-colonial self of Islam by which they attempted to consolidate their identity to continue their resistance against the colonial forces. But, in some cases, they failed to make a balance between their ideology and the traditional Bengali culture of secularism that normally does not appreciate communal attitude. Moreover, they were somewhat deceived by the beneficiaries of the Pakistan Movement whose political propaganda blurred their vision from reality, for the later events in the history of Pakistan bear testimony to the shortcomings of the Movement. This is why the Islamic trend in Bangla poetry, so far, failed to contribute any strong legacy in Bangla literature, but its study from a post colonial point of view is immensely important in the present context of the world which is always haunted by the ghosts of colonialism and the demons of neocolonialism.

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The Curious Case of Kafka's "Odradek": A Trickster in the Old World

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Abstract

Franz Kafka's "The Cares of a Family Man" is a narrative riddle that has created an interpretive frenzy. Central to the discussion of the short story is Odradek, a wooden bobbin, which veers between being human and non-human. The transgression of identity is informed by an assemblage that makes Odradek a character that is both social and anti-social. Kafka presents this character as a bricolage between the sacred and the profane. More importantly, it is connected to some threads which can be identified as a metaphor for narrative. This paper considers various interpretations of Odradek and compares it with the culture hero, the trickster. Although Odradek is a modernist figure that responds to the angst of the Europe after the Great War, I shall argue that it can be considered as a marginal figure trickster that continuously asserts the need for continuance and survival.

Keywords: Kafka, animal, sacred, profane, trickster, assemblage, thing-power, Marxism, psychoanalysis

The enigmatic figure Odradek, featured in Franz Kafka's "The Cares of a Family Man," by design, both invites and defies interpretations. Put simply, Odradek is a personified spool of thread that has been used up by a family man; it is discarded but not fully thrown away. Kafka locates this everyday object in a space that is both real and figurative. He presents its story in such a way that the inanimate object assumes both the body and soul of a human. What Odradek lacks in becoming fully human is something that Aristotle would have argued

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as an essential characteristic of an animal, “a sensitive soul”—a combination of “sensation, appetite and local motion” (Great Books 1.18). Yet it moves: it moves out of the house to visit the neighbors and returns almost like a pet cat and poses in different corners of the house. Its constant appearance and disappearance makes the family man “re-member” and include it as a subject of his care, if not a member of his family. But while it stays within the reach of the family man, it remains out of his care. The ambivalence of Odradek’s existence exudes allegorical possibilities, but it nevertheless maintains its material entity as a wooden object.

Kafka attains this material indeterminacy through his diction. It will not be an overstatement to say that it is language that gives life to Odradek. For example, Kafka describes this wooden object as something that has “lungs” or “legs.” The anthropomorphication helps Odradek transcend its objectified state and embrace a corporeal identity of an animal or a human. Then again, at the end of the short story, the family man ponders: “Can he possibly die? Anything that dies has had some kind of aim in life, some kind of activity, which has worn out, but that does not apply to Odradek” (CFM 429). The family man, because of his familial bond, has certain responsibilities, which can be labeled as his “aim in life.” In contrast, Odradek lacks any such aim or conscious activity. In other words, Odradek lacks human desire, which, according to Aristotle again, would connect it to the Great Chain of Being. Odradek’s vegetable existence corresponds with its material component—wood. But it keeps on transgressing boundaries. Earlier, its laughter has been compared to the rustle of “fallen leaves” (CFM 428). The fall image evokes death only to be transcended in the final lines of the story. Its defiance against death brings it to a trans-corporeal reality – to the realm of the immortal, i.e., the divine. There can also be a rather matter-of-fact explanation for such a supposed immortality. Maybe Odradek is nothing more than a machine. The physical description excites one such possibility:

At first glance it looks like a flat star-shaped spool for thread, and indeed it does seem to have thread wound upon it; to be sure, they are only old, broken-off bits of thread, knotted and tangled together, of the most varied sorts and colors. But it is not only a spool, for a small wooden crossbar sticks out of the middle of the star, and another small rod is joined to that at a right angle. By means of this latter rod on one side and one of the points of the star on the other, the whole thing can stand upright as if on two legs.” [emphasis added] (CFM 428)

The allusions to Jewish and Christian traditions in this description are obvious: what seemed like an alienated object in a machine age, suddenly posed as a sacrificial crucified figure; the reference to the star is a reminder of the Star of David. Odradek exists in a liminal space between the two Testaments: Old and New, and assumes a spiritual existence. The residue of colorful narrative threads gives this wooden object a spiritual aura as it both links and delinks the Old Testament

and the New Testament. It is suddenly possible to interpret “cross bar,” and “right angle” as nuanced religiosity. However, Odradek is not a mythical figure that has ceased to exist, or that exists only in memory. For Kafka, “No one, of course, would occupy himself with such studies if there were not a creature called Odradek” (CFM 428).

Odradek then is real. At least we are told to believe so. The description of Odradek in the course of the narrative constantly changes shape, reminding one of Proteus in Greek mythology; and it is indeed a Herculean task to grasp its full meaning. One way to approach Odradek then is to compare it with the figure of the trickster, the eternal shape-shifters, found in oral traditions in various cultures. Tricksters too border the realms of both man and animal, and trade with the sacred and the profane as they are often involved in the cosmology and cosmogony of a given culture; Coyote in the American Southwest, Loki in Norse mythology, Reynard the Fox in France, or Brer Rabbit in Africa are cases in point (Erdoes xiii). Similarly, Odradek is niched between man and animal boundaries; as a “star shaped spool for thread,” The anthropomorphization of the household object allows us to think of Odradek as a member of the family, similar to the way a tribal trickster is considered as an uncle or an elder brother in a community. The trickster’s ability to sustain against all odds and to return from an uncanny realm of consciousness is another area that makes the trickster analogy even more pertinent. In what follows I shall argue that much like Kafka’s celebrated piece *The Metamorphosis*, “The Cares of a Family Man” relies on indeterminacy, which can be used to locate Odradek in a narrative tradition where the object can be deemed a trickster. As Barbara Babcock aptly puts it:

No character in literature, oral or written, baffles us quite as much as trickster. He is positively identified with creative powers, often bringing such defining features of culture as fire or basic food, and yet he constantly behaves in the most anti-social manner we can imagine. Although we laugh at him for his troubles and promiscuity, his creative cleverness amazes us and keeps alive the possibility of transcending the social restrictions we regularly encounter” (147).

Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz in their introduction argue that the pithy presence of animals in the trickster stories proves the tribe’s proximity to nature. They quote Howard Norman to claim that trickster stories “enlighten an audience about the sacredness of life. In the naturalness of form, they turn away from forced conclusions, they animate and enact, they shape and reshape the world” (xix). Odradek too, as I shall argue, shapes and reshapes its surroundings. It is a transcendental agency that stands in opposition to the social category of the family man. Its vitality to outlast its other makes it a close cousin of the trickster.

One of the salient features of the trickster is buffoonery. A trickster is known for its great skills of outsmarting its audience, even at the expense of his self-deprecation.

While Kafka animates an inanimate object, giving them some semblance of reality, he begins “The Cares of a Family Man” with an etymological survey of the nomenclature:

Some say the word Odradek is of Slavonic origin, and try to account for it on that basis. Others again, believe it to be of German origin, only influenced by Slavonic. The uncertainty of both interpretations allows one to assume with justice that neither is accurate, especially as neither of them provides an intelligent meaning of the world.(CFM 427-8)

The criticism of the academia is obvious in the line where scholars are divided in their opinions as they fail to discern the true meaning of the name. Is it a parody of the renewed interest in the primitive that was in vogue within a modernist frame? It is hard to tell. It reminds one of the efforts of the salvage ethnologists in the 19th century who tried to rescue the folklore of the primitive past as a vanishing art; Franz Boas is a case in point. The tribal trickster became a member of the public because of such ethnographic surveys.

The Slavonic root word of Odradek, as Anya Meksin has pointed out, is an “antiquated verb, ‘odradeti,’ which means ‘to counsel against’. ...seems to advise against interpretation itself, against attempts at meaning making” (“Kafka Project” n.p.). The indeterminacy of such a claim is contradicted by Jean-Claude Milner who traces the origin of the word back to Greece where *Dodekaedron* means “part of something,” (Wikipedia) an idea that is in sync with the physical reality of Odradek. Kafka writes:

One is tempted to believe that the creature once had some sort of intelligible shape and is now only a broken-down remnant. Yet this does not seem to be the case; at least there is no sign of it; nowhere is there an unfinished or unbroken surface to suggest anything of the kind; the whole thing looks senseless enough, but in its own way perfectly finished. In any case, closer scrutiny is impossible, since Odradek is extraordinarily nimble and can never be laid hold of. (CFM 428)

It appears that Kafka never wanted the name to be decoded, just like he never wanted the bug that Gregor Samsa turned into in “The Metamorphosis” to be identified or named. Judith Ryan who, while reviewing a book by Margret Walter Schneider, is right as she argues, “since it [Odradek] is chosen for the very purpose of naming what cannot be comprehended. In its confusing conglomeration of oddly assorted details, Odradek represents the object as such, which must necessarily remain inaccessible to subjectivity” (264).

Seen thus, Odradek is a product of the unconscious –a creature of the “id,” while the family man becomes the “ego.” In other words, it is “the Other” of the family man’s “Self.” Its repeated and intermittent return is analogous to Freud’s Sandman story

as expounded in his seminal essay "The Uncanny." Just like the spyglass in Hoffman's story that Freud analyzed to forward his ideas on Uncanny, Odradek is the object that makes the "unfamiliar familiar," the "secret non-secret." It belongs to "the class of frightening thing (s) that leads us back to what is known and familiar" (930). But what is there for the family man to be frightened, rather feel guilty about? The family man has a house, but Odradek, as it confesses, has "no fixed abode" (CFM 428). The house can be a metaphor for shelter, protection in the way conscience, religion, morality, superego, or any other institutions protect a man. It can be a belief system. By the same token, Odradek does not have any fixed faith base. The greatest anxiety of the family man involves the fear that the object will outlast the subject, the Other will keep on haunting even after the Self has ceased to be. The same idea recurs in trickster narratives: the trickster never dies; even if it does, it keeps coming back like in the animation film "The Coyote and the Roadrunner." In the final few lines, the family man ponders: "Am I to suppose, then, that he will always be rolling down the stairs, with ends of thread trailing after him, right before the feet of my children, and my children's children? He does no harm to anyone that one can see; but the idea that he is likely to survive me I find almost painful" (CFM 429).

Is death a sign of loneliness that the family man is worried about? Odradek in contrast will keep on forming bonds with his children and children's children. Odradek's survival means that it will be social, albeit tribal, like that of a trickster.

Odradek's existence in the after-life has left critics divided; there seems to be little agreement whether this creature belongs to heaven or hell. Like Paul Klee's Angels, Odradek remains suspended between heaven and hell. Adorno for one, believes that Odradek's "life-world symbolizes the utter profanity, the 'hell' in which things exist under capitalism: used-up, forgotten, left for lost or without employment, they call in vain for our care" (Vatter 47). Adorno, in his "Notes on Kafka," identifies the latter's textual world as "hell seen from the perspective of salvation" (qtd. in Corngold 35). Conversely, for Agamben, Odradek represents "heaven." After all, Odradek's world is "a place where nothing has its proper place and every object has lost all relation to functionality or instrumentality, a type of ambivalence that can only be found in "heaven." For utopia is found wherever things can be enjoyed (or used) without being used up (or consumed); wherever our dealing with things escapes the confines of a rationalized and professionalized activity" (Vatter 47).

It suddenly seems that Odradek is simply a relic of some lost theology. After all, the diabolical nature of its "abode" located it in what Adorno calls a "negative theology." Stanley Corngold, summarizing Adorno's position, posits that "Kafka's theology – if one can speak of such at all – is antinomian with respect to the God of the Enlightenment, the Deistic *deus otiosus*... Both are instances of a God total, abstract, and indeterminate, whom Kafka finds finally 'mythic'; the 'absolute difference' of the hidden God 'converges with the mythic powers' (34). We have seen Ted Hughes' trickster crow engaging in such negative theology. In "Theology," Ted

Hughes writes “No, the serpent did not/ Seduce Eve to the apple/ All that’s simply/ Corruption of the facts” (ll.1-4, 92). Hughes is credited for his creation of the literary trickster, Crow. His Crow offers a counter canonical narrative in which crow exists at the womb door to detect death in birth (“Examination at the Womb Door”). The trickster Crow is responsible for the creation of genitals in humans while God was sleeping (“A Childish Prank”). Figures of the tricksters thus render a negative theology with which Odradek too can be affiliated.

So far, we have seen how Odradek keeps on switching between Marxian and Freudian paradigms. The family man’s encounter with Odradek is a great meeting point of these two ideologies. Once the family man sees Odradek leaning against his bannister, he is compelled to engage in a conversation. The family man assumes that his Other lacks his sophisticated vocabulary; much like Viktor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley’s novel:

Of course, you put no difficult questions to him, you treat him--he is so diminutive that you cannot help it – rather like a child. "Well, what's your name?" you ask him. "Odradek," he says. "And where do you live?" "No fixed abode," he says and laughs; but it is only the kind of laughter that has no lungs behind it. It sounds rather like the rustling of fallen leaves. And that is usually the end of the conversation. Even these answers are not always forthcoming; often he stays mute for a long time, as wooden as his appearance. (CFM 428)

Curiously enough, the lack of communication shows how distant the two have become. Prehistoric man was close to nature including animals. With the advent of technology, man has learned to master nature, but it has detached itself from what was once natural. Even the communication with animals has changed. One can now mimic an animal to have a semblance of communication. Odradek’s silence shows how distant it has become from the family man. Peter Stine, in an interesting article “Franz Kafka and Animals” posits that Kafka’s animals are his way out of “spiritual anxieties,” and “His animals emerge as indicators of the far pole of dispossession from ourselves and each other, and we stand in the same relation to them as God does to us” (61). Stine’s analysis adds another dimension to the interpretative frenzy. We have already argued that Odradek is more than a household object of a family man and its neglected plight is a reminder of how modern man under

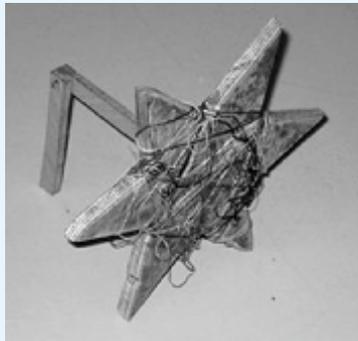
¹Let us remind ourselves, however, of several elements of the animalistic stories: (1) there is no possibility of distinguishing those cases where the animal is treated as an animal and those where it is part of a metamorphosis; everything in the animal is a metamorphosis, and the metamorphosis is part of a single circuit of the becoming- human of the animal and the becoming-animal of the human; (2) the metamorphosis is a sort of conjunction of two deterritorializations, that which the animal proposes to the human by indicating ways-out or means of escape that the human would never have thought of by himself (schizo-scape); each of these two deterritorializations is immanent to the other and makes it cross a threshold; (3) thus, what matters is not at all the relative slowness of the becoming-animal; because no matter how slow it is, and even the more slow it is, it constitutes no less an absolute deterritorialization of the man in opposition to the merely relative deterritorialization that the man causes to himself by shifting, by traveling; the becoming-animal is an immobile voyage that stays in one place; it only lives and is comprehensible as an intensity (to transgress the thresholds of intensity).” (Deleuze and Guattari, 35)

capitalism has alienated himself from the mode of production. But Stine now tells us that the body that exists without a soul can only be that of an animal.

Tricksters too exist without any conscience. In one Hopi story, Coyote tricks the badger to make love to his wife. Trickster stories are all about continuance and survival. Kafka's return to the animal, Stine maintains in line with Walter Benjamin, is "an act of recovery, a reversal of time into the past" (58). Deleuze and Guattari in their *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* make a survey of the "animalistic stories" and points out three elements. For them, the becoming-animal process in Kafka's stories has two poles: "a properly animal pole and a properly familial one" (36). Odradek too oscillates between these two poles. No wonder, Kafka includes "family man" in the title of his story.

For the object to be animated enough to become either an animal or a familial subject (human), Odradek needs certain agency. Jane Bennet terms this power as "thing power": "A thing has power by virtue of its operating in conjunction with other things" (354). Loosely drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's idea of "assemblage," Bennet expounds her ecological materialism by maintaining that "matter has an inclination to make connections and form networks of relations with varying degrees of stability" (354).

Odradek's return to the family man can be construed as its inclination to form a network. Then again, its constant departure from the household and existence on the margin make him a contender for the trickster category. Finally, we can add that Odradek is a conundrum. But the mystery of Odradek centers on its shape-shifting ability: it is an object that keeps switching places between human and non-human. It is also the cause of anxiety for the family man. An anti-social object, with machine-like assemblage, will outlive the tradition that the family man upholds. Odradek will keep on living with severed threads wrapped around it. Such a tale of man-animal can only find its parallel in trickster narratives. Odradek is indeed a trickster of the Old World.



"Odradek"

Source: <http://escritsdetercer.blogspot.com/2011/01/el-odradek.html>



Paul Klee, "Angelus Novus."
Source: <http://1.bp.blogspot.com/>

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Politics of Gender and Power: Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth in Polanski's Film Adaptation

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Abstract

Lady Macbeth is one of the most memorable of all Shakespearean characters. She stands out because of her disregard for social rules and extremely strong personality. In a male dominated society she dares to trade into the masculine world of power and authority. Such a dynamic woman is also interpreted as a psychologically weak character because of her mental ailment at the end of the play. The paper gives an analysis of Lady Macbeth's quest for power. It also tries to locate the reason of her neurotic behavior in the politics of patriarchal society that tries to subdue her. A parallel analysis of Lady Macbeth is also made with her character as presented in Roman Polanski's 1971 cinematic adaptation of *Macbeth*. At the same time it shows how Polanski creates a much more feminine and vulnerable character out of Shakespeare's heroine.

Keywords: politics, power, adaptation, film, feminine, courage, infanticide

Lady Macbeth, one of the most famous of all Shakespearean characters, is frequently interpreted as a woman challenging gender identity. In most social systems the existence of fixed roles for both men and women can be found. Literary texts as early as Aristotle's *Poetics* bear the example of the allotment of gender attributes: "a character may possess manly qualities, but it is not appropriate that a female character should be given manliness or cleverness" (51). This distribution of specific characteristics to both genders, if stated in a simple way, is due to man and woman's separate social obligations. Traditionally, in most societies men play the role of legislators,

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administrators, and preservers of the state while women get to play roles which are more oriented towards the domestic circle. Naturally, the social system wants both of them to be endowed with the qualities which compliment their allocated responsibilities. That is why traits like courage, authority, and aggression are often seen as being masculine and qualities like vulnerability, submission, and delicacy are considered to be *feminine*. Lady Macbeth is an example of a woman who desires to embody the qualities reserved only for men, and thus enter into the male world of freedom and power. While she works towards her aspiration, she automatically disrupts some established social rules. Shakespeare's depiction of Lady Macbeth's engagement in politics of power with society was translated on screen by Polish film maker Roman Polanski. Polanski's *Macbeth*, released in 1971, presents a Lady Macbeth who obviously goes through the same struggles as Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, but the heroine in the film is less intense and more *feminine* in the traditional sense of the word. In the following paper I aim to offer a parallel reading of Lady Macbeth's quest for power and control as shown in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* and Polanski's film adaptation of the same work. I also intend to highlight the points where Polanski has significantly differed from Shakespeare in order to imbue his Lady Macbeth with a different flavor.

Polanski's *Macbeth* has an intriguing background. Before making *Macbeth*, he directed some critically acclaimed films like *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby*. In 1969, while Polanski was in Europe, his wife Sharon Tate was murdered in their Beverly Hills home, along with four of her friends, by Charles Manson and other members of the so-called Manson family. The murder became one of the most talked about cases of that time in the United States. Sharon Tate's murder had a profound effect on her husband and, in the following months, every subject he was thinking about for a film "seemed futile." Nothing was "worthwhile or dignified enough to spend a year or more on it" and at this critical moment what seemed to be the "most acceptable" choice for Polanski was to adapt Shakespeare on screen because that was "worth the effort" (Dubois 96). After the release of *Macbeth* in 1971, many critics attributed the explicit violence in the film to the murder of Sharon Tate and the child she was carrying at the time, and to other Manson murders, though Polanski himself never accepted the claim. In his autobiography *Roman*, he says in his defense,

Most American critics assumed that I'd used the film for some cathartic purpose. In fact, I'd chosen to make *Macbeth* because I thought that Shakespeare, at least, would preserve my motives from suspicion. After the Manson murders, it was clear that whatever kind of film I'd come out with next would have been treated in the same way. (297)

Being an adaptation, Polanski's film naturally differs from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Adaptation, which is a form of inter-semiotic translation, "does not happen in a vacuum" (Bassnett and Trivedi1). The translator's sensibilities and ideologies get

mixed with them to produce a unique work of art. William Shakespeare's works, canonical as they are, offer a greater opportunity for the translators to bring out multiple meanings or interpretations from it. "Translation is not an innocent, transparent activity but is highly charged with significance at every step" (2) and whether or not the murder of Sharon Tate or other violent events of Polanski's life have influenced his adaptation, there is undoubtedly something unique about it other than being completely Shakespearean. According to the ideas of post colonial translation, an adapted work simultaneously moves away from and comes closer to the original work because it helps us to see the original in a new light. About the cinematic interpretations of Shakespeare's plays, Anthony Davis says,

Charles Marowitz, whose productions of *Hamlet* and *The Taming of the Shrew* aroused such immense controversy, has maintained that the life force of a Shakespearean play is not embedded in the text, but results from an interaction between the imaginative mind and the text. (4)

Similarly, Polanski's *Macbeth* gets its meaning from the "interaction" between his ideas and the Shakespearean text. He casts Francesca Annis, just 26 years old at that time, to play Lady Macbeth who is commonly seen as a middle aged woman. Polanski adds and omits some scenes, changes dialogues, and introduces more violence in the film to give it a distinct flavor. Julie Sanders, in her book *Adaptation and Appropriation*, theorizes on the relationship between the original work and its adapted version which becomes helpful in explaining the difference between the power struggles of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth and that of Polanski's Lady Macbeth,

Adaptation and appropriation are dependent on the literary canon for the provision of a shared body of storylines, themes, characters, and ideas upon which their creative variations are made. (45)

In William Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*, the struggle for power and control occurs in the Macbeth couple. Lady Macbeth, unlike Lady Macduff, is not the kind of woman who finds refuge in the domestic world and becomes satisfied with her life. Rather, she feels a natural affinity towards implementing control and authority. The first half of the play is concerned with Lady Macbeth pursuing her husband to kill Duncan and thus attaining the desired end. While she provokes her husband we see a woman who can go to any length to materialize her desires. When Polanski adapts the play into his film, he creates a Lady Macbeth of much lesser intensity. In the film, Polanski highlights the guilt and remorse which the Macbeth couple goes through rather than emphasize the power struggle.

Much has been said and written about possible connections between the three witches and Lady Macbeth as both play pivotal roles in Macbeth's attainment of power. In the film, Polanski takes it a step further and tries to show physical

similarities between them. Both have long blond hair and pale skin; and towards the end of the film, Lady Macbeth's unclothed appearance echoes the witches' appearance in their den where Macbeth had gone to hear their prophecy. Polanski also shows other possible connections between the witches and Lady Macbeth. At the very beginning of the film the witches are seen burying a noose and an amputated hand which is holding a dagger. After that they smear blood on a little grave. This action is an addition to the film because in Shakespeare's play nothing of that description can be seen. In the film the image of a hand holding a dagger is later repeated when Lady Macbeth places a dagger in her husband's hand and the camera focuses on the weapon. The witches' burial ritual also expresses Lady Macbeth's connection with blood throughout the film.

In the play, when Lady Macbeth receives a letter from her husband (Act 1 Scene 5) and learns about the witches' prophecies, she understands two things very clearly. First, though the promise of kingship will spark ambition inside her husband, he ultimately will not be able to carry out any bloody deed by himself as Macbeth has a weaker side to his nature. And second, she cannot miss this opportunity to avail and exercise control beyond the domestic setting by instigating her husband to kill Duncan, thus enjoying real power and authority. Moreover, Lady Macbeth knows that she has what it takes to embark on such a dangerous as well as enthralling journey.

This excitement of knowledge and opportunity is supported by her rapidity of actions. In the play, she receives Macbeth's letter, reads about the witches' prophecies and her husband's blazing desires, then she becomes determined that he must attain the promised position but expresses doubts about his strength of purpose. A messenger enters to tell her about Duncan's visit, and after that she plans the murder, fully equipping herself with the power and strength necessary to pursue Macbeth as she pronounces "unsex me here" (1.5.40). Thus Lady Macbeth becomes completely charged with the strength and energy which is socially ascribed on males and which give her dominance over her husband in the following scenes. In the play, these happen in a single scene without any gap, so we get to see the rapidity of her actions. Polanski, in order to lessen the overwhelming impact Lady Macbeth often has when she is presented on stage, interrupts her actions by introducing other scenes in it. In the cinematic adaptation, there is a substantial time gap between her reading of Macbeth's letter and starting to pursue her husband. Here we see her receive the letter, read about the witches' soothsaying, and after that she says,

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promis'd (1.5.14-15)

Afterwards when Lady Macbeth utters her famous words, "That I may pour my spirits in thine ear," Polanski does not show Lady Macbeth's face holding a

determined expression. Instead, the camera focuses on the letter which she folds and puts in a box. At this moment, Polanski ceases to show her further actions as he takes us to Duncan's court where he is nominating his elder son Malcolm as the heir to his throne. Polanski then takes us back to Macbeth's castle where he has just returned from war. The famous words "unsex me here" (1.5.40) appear much later in the film and not in its original sequence. In the film, the director adds a scene where Lady Macbeth utters these words in her mind while she watches Duncan's arrival from her rooftop. However, the intensity is lost because the delayed delivery of the words makes her vocation of attaining power through unsexing herself less intense. Moreover, her voice-over does not raise the same excitement and awe in the audience as does her violent utterance of the words on the stage. Thus, Polanski makes Lady Macbeth less powerful than her theatrical counterpart. This also implies that her desire to counteract the *feminine* characteristics in order to attain power over her oscillating husband is less virulent in the film than it is in the play.

The scene of Macbeth's entry into his house becomes crucial for the interpretation of how power changes its source from a man to a woman. In the play, when Macbeth enters his bed chamber, his wife has just uttered words like,

... Come, thick night,
 And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
 That my keen knife see not the wounds it makes,
 Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
 To cry, "Hold! Hold" (1.5.49-53)

She feels invigorated with the energy achieved by unsexing herself which helps to suppress everything feminine within her. The cinematic adaptation, on the other hand, accentuates her *feminine* aspects. We see her getting ready for her husband; her anticipation and her love for Macbeth become very evident as she jumps into his arms as soon as he enters. In the dialogues that follow, Lady Macbeth continues to pursue her husband with her feminine charm.

Another instance where the cinematic production loses some of the original flavor is Polanski's omission of two significant monologues by Lady Macbeth which contribute to Shakespeare's character's courage and power. The first monologue which Polanski leaves out is where she trades her milk for gall (Act 1 Scene 5 in the play). Though he retrieves the portion in which she asks the spirits to unsex her, he omits the latter part of the long monologue. What makes Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth distinct from her cinematic counterpart is her courage to differ from society's definition of the ideal woman by disregarding the long standing rules and boundaries made for them. To be a woman, as society clearly articulates, she has to be subservient to her male guardian, in Lady Macbeth's case she needs to be submissive to her husband Macbeth. Again, an ideal woman is expected to embrace maternity with all her heart and cherish it as the biggest blessing of her life. Whether Lady Macbeth ever mothered a child or not is a matter of scholarly debate,

but the play seems to be preoccupied with images concerning maternity. Shakespeare offers us recurring images of mother and child which work to give an insight into Lady Macbeth's opinion about motherhood and power. The two notions are juxtaposed in order to show her preference of one over the other. In the famous soliloquy "unsex me here" (1.5.40), Lady Macbeth urges the spirits to

Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers, (1.5.46-47)

For a woman who would normally uphold the gift of motherhood higher than anything else, to trade her breast milk for poison which in turn will make her ruthless enough to attain a bloody deed for power is a major violation of social norms. A mother's milk is the first and purest source of nourishment for a child. Lady Macbeth's desire to obtain political power for her husband is so strong that she is ready to trade something that is unimaginable and odious for the society. The hypothetical trading of breast milk is imperative because by filling her with poison instead of nourishment she defies a major social rule. Motherhood or womanhood, for that matter, means the embodiment of everything nurturing and vulnerable. When she rejects milk and thinks of filling herself with poison, she achieves the power that only comes from the exorcism of everything sensitive within her. By doing so, she secures the power needed to pursue Macbeth to kill Duncan.

The second monologue that Polanski omits to downplay the issue of power is Lady Macbeth's imagination of infanticide. In the play, the imaginary killing allows Lady Macbeth to gain tremendous power which she uses to provoke and deride her husband. The relationship between a mother and a new born child is one of love and dependence. An infant has an intense somatic relation with its mother as it is completely dependent on its mother for care. Nursing a baby is perhaps the most intimate moment between a child and its mother which Lady Macbeth fills with images of horror,

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
I would while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipples from its boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this. (1.5.54-59)

Here Lady Macbeth juxtaposes two contradictory images: the first one is her tenderness for the infant and the second one is the infanticide. Lady Macbeth accepts the love a child can raise in her, at the same time she makes it clear that the purpose she has been working for is of a greater importance than her love for a child – a thought blasphemous for any woman who wants to be a part of society. Here Lady Macbeth implies, "how absolutely empowering such a fantasized moment proves to one struggling to break free from the gendered constraints that bind her"

(Chamberlain 82). Lady Macbeth's contravention of maternal images is less about the horror of infanticide or poisoning breast milk. In fact, they are more about a typical choices a woman dares to make outside the fixed laws of society.

Polanski further reduces Lady Macbeth's influence on her husband in the scene where a dinner is being held in the honor of the king's arrival at their house (Act 3 Scene 4, popularly known as 'The Banquet Scene'). In this scene, Macbeth's dilemma and anxiety is quite evident through his soliloquies. In the play, the scene projects Macbeth's transition from an oscillating man to a determined one. He switches from one state of being to another after Lady Macbeth chastises him for being a coward, tells him what manhood is, and offers the image of infanticide. The result of this "incredible mixture of insinuation and bullying is that Macbeth is forced to accept a concept of manliness that consists wholly in rampant self-seeking aggression" and only then is he propelled into action ((Ramsey 289). In the film, it is not Lady Macbeth's words that propel him; rather it is his jealousy of Duncan's elder son Malcolm which provokes him. From the beginning of the scene Lady Macbeth pleads with her husband to murder Duncan, not with untamed censure but with tears in her eyes which highlight her feminine charms and love. As soon as she utters the following lines,

When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. (1.7.49-51)

Macbeth becomes so agitated by her that he physically moves away so that he does not have to listen to the plea again. What makes him determined about the murder is a brief encounter with the King's eldest son who is the newly entitled prince of Cumberland. As Macbeth pours himself a drink after moving away from his wife, Malcolm interrupts him with his empty glass. As Malcolm is now an heir to his father's throne, Macbeth has to serve him first. After that Malcolm sarcastically utters a hail to the Thane of Cawdor and moves away. At this moment, the camera focuses on Macbeth's face which holds a changed expression of resolution as opposed to his previously confused demeanor. This short encounter enkindles in him political jealousy and lust for power. The addition of this brief scene in Polanski's film gives a new dimension to the original meaning. Macbeth understands that Duncan's murder will bring his son under suspicion as he is supposed to inherit the throne from his father. This suspicion can drive Malcolm away from home to avoid any harsh outcome and then Macbeth will automatically be named king. By introducing this small encounter, Polanski makes Lady Macbeth less influential. Of course her enthusiasm and planning concerning the murder have significance, but her logic about manhood and bravery is not strong enough to set her husband into action.

Polanski omits some other significant lines that were important in showing Lady Macbeth's strength of character. In the cinematic adaptation, she does not utter the

words “That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold” (2.2.1) after she has drugged the Chamberlain’s wines. Rather, she directly voices her doubts about Macbeth committing the murder. Again, in the film she does not try to make the whole business of murder trivial by calling the bloody spectacle “brain sickly of things” (2.2.45) and “the dead/ Are but as pictures” (2.2.52-53) as she does in the play which makes her more controlled when juxtaposed with Macbeth’s apprehension. Here Lady Macbeth is more vulnerable than she is in the play. Her fear is most noticeable when she sees the two blood-stained daggers in Macbeth’s hand. Polanski captures Lady Macbeth’s fear-stricken face between two daggers held by Macbeth which the director highlights with a terrifying background score.

After Macbeth becomes the king, he pushes his wife to the background, eliminating her from his political decisions. In the play he openly gives clues to his wife about her socially ascribed duties once he has used her as an agent of encouraging and persuading him. Just after determining that he will commit the murder, he starts to corner his wife. Though he accepts his wife’s courage and energy, his double standards are prominently palpable in his deep-seated patriarchal vocabulary as he says,

Bring forth men- children only:
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. (1.7.74-76)

With this comment Macbeth achieves two things. First, he articulates his wife’s function within the limits of maternity. He alludes to the “service” of giving birth and child rearing which John Stuart Mill talks about in his work *The Subjection of Women* (1015). Lady Macbeth, who has been imagining infanticide to become powerful and bold, becomes confined to the role which she has been consciously rejecting. Second, he asks Lady Macbeth to pass on her talents to the next generation of boy child, not girl child. As her courage, determination, strength of nerves are male qualities, so they should be passed on to a boy child, not a girl child. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their *The Madwoman in the Attic* articulate that women are supposed to possess the exact opposite characteristics of men. Gubar and Gilbert quotes Ruskin in the chapter “The Queen’s Looking Glass: Feminine Creativity, Male Images of Women and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity” where he says that a woman’s power is “not for rule, not for battle, and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet orderings” (24). It implies that a woman should be passive, meek and submissive-everything Lady Macbeth is not. So her characteristics must be passed on to a male child. Unlike Macbeth’s blunt remarks in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, in the cinematic adaptation Lady Macbeth’s withdrawal into the domestic setting is less about her husband’s chauvinism and more about her anxiety of murder. Here Macbeth does not utter the above quoted words directly to his wife; rather it comes as a voice- over which the audience can hear but Lady Macbeth certainly cannot. These words in the film

adaptation become Macbeth's appreciation for his wife's mental strength rather than a direct reminder of her socially ascribed role.

After Duncan's murder, Malcolm and Donalbain escape to England and Ireland respectively and Macbeth is crowned as king. Then Macbeth starts plotting against those who pose a threat to him- Banquo, Macduff and even his wife Lady Macbeth. The activities involved in rising to the Scottish throne were something Macbeth was not capable of undertaking alone. But once he is the king all he cares about is securing his power as he was clearly told by the witches that his legacy will not continue. His lust for absolute power becomes so intense that he completely excludes his wife from political decisions as he has complete knowledge about her persuasive power. The instance (Act 3 scene 2) where Macbeth tells his wife about the threat Banquo poses to his rule, presents a striking contrast with the previous scenes in which Lady Macbeth pursues him to kill Duncan. Here, Lady Macbeth is not his confederate any more, rather he consciously keeps her outside his decision making process. When she asks her husband what he is planning to do with Banquo and gets the following answer,

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed- . . . (3.2.48-49)

Polanski's adaptation of this scene resembles Shakespeare's play very closely except the director's omission of Macbeth's following instruction to his wife,

Let your remembrance apply to Banquo,
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue- (3.2.33-34)

In the play, where Macbeth is hiding his plans from Lady Macbeth, seems to mock her by saying this as he already has ordered his murder. In the film too, Macbeth keeps his wife out of his plans post King Duncan's murder, but he does not show a total disregard for his wife by mocking her. In both the play and its cinematic adaptation, we see Lady Macbeth's mental prowess for the last time in the banquet scene. In Shakespeare's play she appears next (and for the last time) in the sleepwalking scene where she has completely given in to mental ailment. The claustrophobic state in which Macbeth pushes her becomes the chief reason for her illness. Her existence is defined by her wit, strength of nerves, persuasive power and amazing intellectuality which has no use in the domestic life where she is forced to live devoid of any control and authority. Here she does not find any vent through which she can channel her energies. Polanski, on the other hand, allows Lady Macbeth more screen space by including some additional scenes and gives us a more detailed view of her neurotic behavior. In the film, we see a somber Lady Macbeth when her husband goes to seek the witches' prophecy, but here she has not started showing any sign of neurosis. Then we see her before Macbeth returns to his castle, and this time she has already started hallucinating blood on her hands. She is

withdrawn, semi-conscious, and is unaware of what is going on around her. She even murmurs, “Gracious Duncan’s dead” after she imagines blood on her hands. Thus Polanski emphasizes Lady Macbeth’s anxiety about the guilt as well as the uncertainty about the witches’ next prophecy which can decide their future. Next time she hallucinates blood in the sleepwalking scene. In Polanski’s film Lady Macbeth’s undressed appearance in the sleepwalking scene further projects her vulnerable condition. On the screen Lady Macbeth is continuously shivering and more than once the camera focuses on her fear-stricken face. She is now a lonely figure who is haunted by her own decisions; David Thomson explains Polanski’s treatment of his characters towards the end of the film *Macbeth*,

Much more characteristic is the underlying alienation and hostility: the feeling that people are cut off, unsupported by any shared view of life and society. From this solitariness, the move towards acts of violence is stealthy, remorseless, and even comic. (689)

Polanski makes it clear that the chief reason behind Lady Macbeth’s death was the guilt she incurred. He does that by giving one more scene to Lady Macbeth after we see her suffering from somnambulism. In the added scene, we see Lady Macbeth, this time fully clothed, but the signs of restlessness still visible in her appearance, reading the letter Macbeth sends her at the beginning of the play. She sobs while reading the letter and puts extra emphasis when she utters the words “Thane of Cawdor” and “King”. By the time she finishes reading it is clearly visible that psychologically she is shattered. This additional scene also contributes to the interpretation of her death. In the play it is not made clear whether Lady Macbeth dies a natural death or she commits suicide. In the film it is made quite clear that she commits suicide because the guilt has become too heavy for her. After Polanski presents the scene where she is re-reading the letter, he takes us to Macbeth and Seyton’s conversation about the warfare. Next, we hear the woman’s cry and then we are presented with the spectacle of Lady Macbeth’s mangled corpse in the courtyard and Polanski makes it clear that Lady Macbeth has jumped down to take her life. The multiple cases of hallucinations, the additional scene about re-reading the letter leading to her suicide, indicate that Lady Macbeth kills herself because she could no longer bear the sin. On the other hand, Shakespeare’s exclusion of Lady Macbeth in the latter part of the play except the sleepwalking scene indicates that the story is now about Macbeth where his wife does not have any place. In the play, Lady Macbeth dies because she cannot stand the state of her being totally powerless. The moment she loses power to express herself through her craft, her remorse returns and tears her from within- a state unimaginable for the woman we see at the beginning of the play. She dies because she has lost the game of power and control and cannot bear the miserable state.

The vocation of transforming a play into a cinematic art form, if termed technically, is called inter-semiotic translation. According to the rules of translation when a

work gets translated from one genre to another the translator's sensibilities become evident in the translated work along with some of its original flavor. I said earlier that Lady Macbeth is often read as a woman who bravely challenges established social norms. Her remorse and inner vulnerability have also been matters of literary discussion. Polanski's own interpretation of this character stands somewhere between these two facets of her character. What Polanski does in film is that he illuminates certain ambiguities like Lady Macbeth's mode of death or the reasons behind her hallucinations in order to create his own version of Lady Macbeth who surely has a very prominent Shakespearean root but her core belongs to Polanski.

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The Woman/Poet Wife: Emily Dickinson and the Influence of Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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Abstract

The influence of Elizabeth Barrett Browning on Emily Dickinson's poetry has been the subject of much speculation. The thematic similarities between the poetry of these two women and, sometimes, the use of similar or exact words have led some critics to accuse Dickinson of plagiarism. This paper considers this accusation in terms of Harold Bloom's idea of the "anxiety of influence" to show how Barrett Browning inspired Dickinson to become at once a part of a strong female tradition as well as a deviant. The image of the wife as presented by Dickinson in her "bridal" poems has been compared with that presented in Barrett Browning's famous "Sonnets from the Portuguese." Barrett Browning's sonnet sequence, written for her husband, has been valued more for the romance behind the poems than for their literary value. These poems have ultimately placed Barrett Browning securely in the place of woman/wife rather than poet. But where Barrett Browning never questioned the overlapping of these roles, Dickinson, in her poetry, is often troubled by the implications. This paper examines Dickinson's poems as an assertion of the conflicts between the woman/poet/wife compared to Barrett Browning's poetry which shows her complacency with her position as woman/wife as she had already established herself as a poet in the man's world before she ever met Robert Browning.

Emily Dickinson first refers to Barrett Browning in a letter possibly written in 1861 to the Norcross sisters (L234), in which she equates the poet with George Sand and calls them both "queens." She also lists Barrett Browning as one of her frequently read poets in her answer to T.W. Higginson's inquiry about

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her reading habits (L261). In 1862, Dickinson writes thus to Samuel Bowles who was in England at the time: “Should anybody where you go, talk of Mrs. Browning, you must hear for us — and if you touch her Grave, put one hand on the Head, for me — her unmentioned mourner —” (L266). For Dickinson, Barrett Browning provided a viable role model as a woman who had apparently been able to reconcile the multiple roles of woman, wife, and poet. (In fact, she was a better known poet at the time than her husband, Robert Browning.) Although she never married, Dickinson was deeply concerned with the effects of marriage and the often circumscribing role of a wife. Barrett Browning, thus, represented something of an ideal, and it is to her that Dickinson refers most often in her letters. A significant portion of Dickinson’s enormous output of poems focuses on marriage or uses the image of a bride or wife that portrays her concerns regarding the relations of the sexes.

In an attempt to understand how Barrett Browning as woman/poet/wife inspired Dickinson to become part of a strong female tradition, this paper closely examines the overall influences of the former on the latter’s poetry. The image of the wife as presented by Dickinson in her “bridal” poems has been compared with that presented in Barrett Browning’s famous “Sonnets from the Portuguese.” Interestingly, Barrett Browning’s sonnet sequence, written for her husband, has been valued more for the romance behind the poems than for their literary value. These poems have ultimately placed Barrett Browning securely in the place of woman/wife rather than poet. But where Barrett Browning never questioned the overlapping of these roles, Dickinson, in her poetry, is often troubled by the implications.

The Influence of Barrett Browning on the Poetry of Dickinson

It would appear that only after her death did Barrett Browning actually begin to influence Dickinson as there is no mention of the poet in Dickinson’s letters before that time. As Gary Lee Stonum observes, “It seems likely, in other words, that Browning’s death precipitated a change, or at least a marked increase, in the appeal she held for Dickinson. The American poet had no doubt been reading Browning’s poetry over a period of years, but only in death did the English poet assume a central place in her imagination” (40). This would seem to be true as the two years following Barrett Browning’s death were the most productive period of Dickinson’s literary career. Stonum, however, thinks that though Dickinson was familiar with the works of Barrett Browning, the latter actually had very little influence on Dickinson’s writings in general. He opines that the attempt by many critics to find marks of similarities between the writings of the two poets is ridiculous and that any similarity that may be found is either slight or may be attributed to “poetic commonplaces” (Stonum 45). In other words, it is typical to find certain ideas recurring in the works of different writers over the generations simply because of their profundity.

One of these critics that Stonum may have been referring to, but does not list in his bibliography, is John E. Walsh. Walsh, in an obsessive manner, in his book *The Hidden Life of Emily Dickinson*, proceeds to identify passages in Dickinson, which, according to him, were direct plagiarisms of Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. In the appendix, he includes a complete list of Dickinson's references ("borrowings," as he calls them) to *Aurora Leigh*. Interestingly, a comparison of the passages he identifies in Dickinson as having been "borrowed" from Barrett Browning shows that there is not enough similarity between them to warrant the libel of plagiarism. For instance:

I, writing thus, am still what men call young;
 I have not so far left the coasts of life
 To travel inland, that I cannot hear
 That murmur of the outer Infinite... (Aurora Leigh 1.9-12)

Exultation is the going
 Of an inland soul to sea,
 Past the houses – past the headlands –
 Into deep Eternity – (Dickinson P76)

Parts of Dickinson's poems may perhaps, on occasion, have some of the exact words or similar ideas used by Barrett Browning in a certain passage in her book, but this can hardly be deemed plagiarism since ideas have always been borrowed by writers from their predecessors. As T. S. Eliot would have it, an individual writer must acquire a "historical sense" and an awareness of "not only the pastness of the past, but also of its presence" before becoming an "individual talent" (37). It is what Harold Bloom later identifies as the "anxiety of influence."

Dickinson's admiration for Barrett Browning is evident from the fact that she actually had a picture of the poet hanging on her bedroom wall alongside George Eliot's and Thomas Carlyle's (Eberwein 36). She was also extremely grief-stricken at Barrett Browning's death and wrote at least three poems in her memory. When Robert Browning's *Dramatis Personae* appeared in 1864, she was incredulous at his being able to write after suffering such a great loss: "I noticed Robert Browning had made another poem, and was astonished – till I remembered that I, myself, in my smaller way, sang off charnel steps" (L298). She had, indeed, sung "off charnel steps" in Poem 312 ("Her-last Poems—"). Mourning the loss of Barrett Browning, Dickinson says it is meaningless to praise her since the poet's head is "too High to Crown –." She wonders, at the end of the poem, about how great the poet's husband's grief must be, seeing that she and others, who are "No Poet's Kinsman –," feel so sad.

Poem 593 ("I think I was enchanted") is another of Dickinson's tributes to Barrett Browning. Here she refers to a "Conversion of the Mind" which she could not define, but which felt "Like Sanctifying in the Soul—." Walsh attributes this to her reading of *Aurora Leigh* (92). Apparently, *Aurora Leigh* had had a profound effect on her, so

much so, that she could not decide “whether it was noon at night—/Or only Heaven—at Noon—/For very Lunacy of Light/I had not power to tell—” (P593). Walsh also says that it was about this time that Dickinson not only hung a picture of Barrett Browning on her bedroom wall but also began to imitate her hairstyle. He attempts to prove, too, that Dickinson’s handwriting also changed in this period as Romney’s handwriting did in *Aurora Leigh* as described by Barrett Browning.

The third poem in which Dickinson pays homage to Barrett Browning is Poem 363 (“I went to thank Her—”). It is well known that Dickinson uses uppercase letters in odd places, but the use of an uppercase letter for the word ‘her’ in the first line of this poem, and for others within it, indicates the pedestal on which Dickinson had evidently placed Barrett Browning. The poem sounds like a regret for her inability to meet her idealized poet. It is possibly true, as Walsh believes, that this poem was written when Dickinson heard of the death of her favorite poet and so could not send her a letter of gratitude that she had probably written after the first publication of one of her poems in 1860.

Apart from the three poems of tribute, Dickinson also wrote other poems which reveal the influence of Barrett Browning. Eberwein thinks that Poem 199 was influenced by Sonnets 13 and 27 from “Sonnets from the Portuguese” (Eberwein 35), while Walsh finds several poems (sixty-two, to be exact), some of whose lines contain not only similar ideas, but are, in fact, “plagiarisms” of *Aurora Leigh*. As discussed above, this is going a bit too far as ideas among writers have always been transmitted over generations. Walsh seems to be okay with Shakespeare and Coleridge borrowing ideas from their predecessors, while he renders his reservation against Dickinson doing the same. “Strong” poets, according to Bloom’s second ratio, *tessera*, must create a link between a precursor’s and his or her own poetry, the purpose of which is to “complete the otherwise ‘truncated’ precursor poem and poet” (66). Shakespeare and Coleridge forge this connection and are unanimously considered “strong” poets. But Dickinson is also well-established as a “strong poet,” leaving no doubt that her poetry is the link between her literary past and present, and therefore, there was no reason for her to plagiarize from Barrett Browning. Walsh, however, thinks her case is different, though it is not clear why he thinks this except perhaps that the sheer number of her poems exceeded both Shakespeare’s and Coleridge’s:

But what if Emily’s case turns out to be not so ordinary? What if she frequently did not just *pilfer* lines and images for inclusion in some original setting of her own, but regularly squeezed and stretched her borrowings as she molded dough for bread? And what if the number of poems so derived should begin — as it has begun — to mount into the hundreds? What then? (Walsh, 121 [My emphasis])

Walsh is perhaps overreacting, and Dickinson deserves more credit than being labeled a common thief. It should be noted that, in this passage, he derogates not only her poetic ability but her status as a woman as well when he makes fun of her

baking bread. It becomes imperative then to discuss the overlapping roles of the woman and the poet.

The Woman/Poet/Wife

Even though she remained unmarried, Dickinson certainly belonged to a literary tradition where the figure of the woman-poet is seen in conflict with her domestic role as wife. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar as well as Cheryl Walker have examined this issue at great length. As Gilbert and Gubar put it,

Like Barrett Browning, whose poetry she [Dickinson] much admired, she seems at first to have assuaged the guilt verse-writing aroused by transforming Romantic poetic self-assertion into an aesthetic of female service modeled on Victorian marriage. Certainly something like the relationship between a masterful husband and a self-abnegating wife appears to be at the heart of much of her poetry, where it is also pictured, variously, as the encounter of lover and mistress, king and queen. (586)

Dickinson's poetry certainly offers pictures of the "female double life" (Gilbert and Gubar 590), although she herself never fulfilled the role of a wife, and therefore, did not have to practically juggle the roles of wife and poet.

Among the "bridal" poems, tensions can be detected, sometimes directly, sometimes not, between the wife and the woman/poet. This, according to Paul Crumbley, was not because Dickinson was averse to men, but was, rather, interested in "analyzing, interrogating, and exposing assumptions she believed contrary to her own best interests as a woman" (124). The issue of marriage and its circumscribing effect thus crops up frequently in Dickinson's poetry.

In a letter to Susan Gilbert, her sister-in-law, Dickinson voices her concern about the fate of a "wife" as opposed to the "bride":

How dull our lives must seem to the bride, and the plighted maiden, whose days are fed with gold, and who gathers pearls every evening; but to the wife, Susie, sometimes the wife forgotten, our lives perhaps seem dearer than all others in the world; you have seen flowers at morning, satisfied with the dew, and those same sweet flowers at noon with their heads bowed in anguish before the mighty sun; think you these thirsty blossoms will now need naught but – dew? No, they will cry for sunlight, and pine for the burning noon, tho' it scorches them, scathes them; they have got through with peace – they know that the man of noon, is mightier than the morning, and their life is henceforth to him. (Johnson L93)

It is evident from the above extract that Dickinson was concerned about how women were dependent on men for their happiness even though they were, more often than not, cowed down by the physical and mental strengths of the men.

Dickinson came from a home where education and enrichment of the mind were encouraged. Her father, Edward Dickinson, “continually stimulated his children’s interest in contemporary as well as classical reading by his admonitions regarding their choice of authors” (Capps 13). It is remarkable to note, though, that Edward Dickinson bought them books but would tell the children not to read them as they may “joggle the Mind” (L261). Critics are not quite sure why he would do something like this but, though he forbade them to read certain books, he did not remove them from the children’s vicinity, and Dickinson read whatever she could lay her hands on. The poet had also studied at the co-educational Amherst Academy and later went on to Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. This is evidence enough to show that Dickinson hardly led the life of a Victorian woman commonly thought to have been denied the opportunities of improving her mind. And yet, as Helen McNeil puts it, “The social definition of gender role reaches inside the poem. As a woman writer, Dickinson partakes of this larger difference as much as any of her sisters. This is the case despite her considerable cultural advantages” (38).

Certain of Dickinson’s poems undoubtedly question the conventional role of the woman. Dickinson was most concerned with the role of a wife, it seems, as this recurs frequently in her poems. She herself had, around the mid-1860s, started wearing white dresses and remaining within the confines of her home by choice. She never married, but the white dresses she wore have signified to critics an assumption of the bride role on her part, although no one is quite sure why she chose to assume such a figure. To Dickinson, it was “Mine – by the Right of the White Election!” (P528). The word “Election” here seems to signify that Dickinson was asserting her right to choose.

Dickinson’s first wife/bride poem, Poem 199, was possibly written in 1860. Here, she looks back at her existence as a girl and appears to feel that her existence as a “wife” is “comfort,” and therefore the past state must have been “pain.” The poem begins with denial – she is no longer “wife,” but has been transformed into a “Czar,” has become a “Woman.” Such a beginning would seem to anticipate a rebellious tone for the rest of the poem, or an elaboration on how her status as a “woman” has uplifted her. Instead, we see a comparison with her girlhood, with a gradual shift towards a complacency or satisfaction with the “wife” role. This would fit into the description Gilbert and Gubar give of her poetry – that they feature unequal relationships between the male and the female. The final line, however, denies this complacency with “I’m ‘Wife’! Stop there!” as if the poet no longer wants to think of her actual state, that she had been temporarily lulled into a false sense of security. Indeed, the transition from “wife” to “Wife” signals the poet’s coming into her own, against all odds. As Lucia Aiello says in her essay, “Mimesis and Poiesis,” in response to Gilbert and Gubar, the words “Woman,” “Czar,” and “Girl” show

an internal movement that discloses the multiple potential of these words. In this perspective, the simple binary that Gilbert and Gubar construct around

the two concepts of renunciation and self-assertion is complicated by the possibility of inversion of traditional hierarchies and established power relationships. (246)

In other words, the use of the uppercase W in “Wife” turns the “established power relationships” on its head and reasserts the strength of the woman-poet.

Barrett Browning, in speaking of a similar situation, in “Sonnets from the Portuguese,” adopts a completely opposite tone. In describing her acceptance of her lover’s love, she says “... In lifting upward, as in crushing low!/And as a vanquished soldier yields his sword/To one who lifts him from the bloody earth,--/Even so, Beloved, I at last record,/Here ends my strife” (Sonnet XVI). Curiously though, Barrett Browning uses martial imagery to describe her surrender. In a clever manner, therefore, she manages to fuse the role of the conquered maiden with the more masculine image of a soldier. In doing so, she not only allows her beloved to retain his sense of superiority as male, but puts herself into a more assertive position. She, therefore, is able to reach a compromise between the two partners in the story: between herself as female beloved and her male lover. Dickinson’s Poem 199 shows no sign of such an understanding – in fact, the male lover/husband is absent from the poem and only the female ‘wife’ struggles for some sort of meaning to her status.

Before going further, I would like to look at Barrett Browning’s use of the sonnet form. Written in the conventional Renaissance mode, Barrett Browning’s Sonnets I through XVI express the poet’s doubts as she longs to accept the love offered, but is too aware of her own shortcomings to do so. And though she uses the sonnet form, a popular Renaissance convention, Barrett Browning’s poems are different because they are addressed to an achievable lover of whom she feels unworthy. Usually, in the Renaissance sonnets, the beloved is unreachable but the poet, even knowing this, continues to exert his poetic faculties in her praise. For Barrett Browning, the “Sonnets” represented something more real. They articulated her uncertainties and reservations because she felt unworthy, but, simultaneously, they expressed her gratitude for being loved.

Barrett Browning’s sonnets also differ from her literary predecessors as she forays into a realm traditionally regarded as men’s. She places herself in the position of the male lover, the conventional speaker in such poems. However, the speaker in the “Sonnets” seems too conscious of her gender and sounds subservient at all times. In spite of this, she must be acknowledged for reversing the roles and actually addressing her beloved. According to Dorothy Mermin though, this is the speaker’s adoption of a double role – of the lover and the beloved: “This is not a reversal of roles, but a doubling of them. There are two poets in the poem, [the writer herself, and Robert Browning to whom she is addressing the poems] and two poets’ beloveds, and its project is the utopian one of replacing hierarchy by equality” (130). Angela Leigh ton is on the same page as Mermin and says that it is a strategy used by Barrett Browning to give herself a voice, while simultaneously retaining her

beloved's masculinity by always referring to herself as the inferior: "Unwilling to portray Robert as a desirable object, Elizabeth Barrett Browning plays at being both subject and object herself, and thus in a cunning way protects him by exclusion. She is herself the subject who loves and who says so, and she is herself the object who is 'transfigured' by her own desire" (Leighton 102). By adopting this attitude of compromise, Barrett Browning reconciles the roles of woman/poet/wife.

Coming back to Dickinson, Poems 246 and 249 reveal a feeling of security and safety because the woman is with her man, or would like to be, and Eberwein's interpretation, in *Dickinson: Strategies of Limitations*, reflects this. A close reading of Poem 246, however, shows that the woman is definitely taking on a lesser position, although it seems as if she does not realize it. She is "The smaller of the two!/Brain of His Brain—/Blood of His Blood—" Poem 631, however, sounds a definitely bitter note. When her friend is married, the speaker also decides to do the same. The difference between them, though, was that the speaker is "overtaken in the Dark." This expression suggests the speaker was caught unawares, and possibly against her will, and the experience is not a pleasant one as is evident from her descriptions of her surroundings as cold and bleak.

Poem 732 is perhaps one of the most poignant expressions of the conflicts between the existence of a woman, a wife, and a poet. The woman is described as having to submit to the man's "Requirement," and abandon her own existence to serve his. She must drop "The Playthings of Her Life" to undertake "the honorable Work/Of Woman, and of Wife —." The plaything may be interpreted as the "pen" with which the girl had been exercising her literary talents. With marriage, she must surrender her art, in order to fit into her role as "woman" and "wife." Barrett Browning faced no such dilemma in her "Sonnets." For her, it was more a conflict of her various ailments – her age, her illness – which made her hesitate to accept Browning's hand.

Dickinson's poetry expresses more an assertion of the conflicts between the woman/poet/wife unlike Barrett Browning, and for independence. Her poems adopt more of a feminist voice than Barrett Browning ever does in her "Sonnets." According to Betsy Erkkila, "Dickinson's life and work represented a swerve away from rather than a continuation of the female literary life represented by Barrett Browning. ... If Dickinson was 'enchanted' by Barrett Browning's 'Tomes of solid Witchcraft,' her life and writing suggest that once the initial enchantment wore off, she moved against and away from her literary precursor" (77). Although there is a regret in Dickinson's poetry sometimes of how the woman's role as wife confines her within a boundary, marked by the man's desires and "Requirement," her poetry asserts an authority that Barrett Browning's "Sonnets" did not, primarily, perhaps because Barrett Browning had been able to come to terms with her position as woman/wife as she had already made a place for herself in the man's world as a poet before she ever met Robert Browning. The question of asserting her position, therefore, never arose.

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The Eschatologicality in Emily Dickinson's Poetry

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Abstract

Emily Dickinson's artistic self was an outcome of the Calvinist branch of mainstream Christianity and her intellectual descent from eschatological people, the seventeenth century, New England Puritans. This spiritual backdrop along with some elementary ecclesiastical propensity of her New England pedigree contributed to her work. One of those pre dispositions was to scrutinize everything underneath the shadow of the end of life. The sense of end characterizes Dickinson's eschatological sensibility. Dickinson's poems loom large with images like death, darkness, destruction, dissolution, doomsday, Day of Judgment, and the like. Since the study of eschatologicality is crucial in understanding Dickenson's poems, the aim of this paper is to analyze different aspects of eschatologicality in Dickinson's poems

Keywords: Eschatologicality, Terminality, Calvinism, Puritanism, Apocalypse, Day of Judgment.

Under the rough and hard shell of Dickinson's poetic approach, puzzling dash mark, diffusive personifications, compactness of expression, unconventionality of grammar, strangeness of diction, strained figures of speech, often generalized symbolism, condensed style, monotonous rhythms, varied allegory, bafflingly recurring themes, distracting tones, moods and attitudes to life, death, immortality, doomsday, afterlife, God, nature, people, society, or art, critics have discovered her poems an unfathomably valuable treasure of world literature. Sustained readings by critics,

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in-depth study of her difficult works, and biographical information have contributed to the emergence of Emily Dickinson as one of the most illuminating and sanguine nineteenth century American poets. In fact, biographical and eschatological study is crucial in deciphering meaning and understanding Dickinson's poems (Tate 16-27).

The word "Eschatology" is derived from the Greek word "eskhatos" which means last, furthest, uttermost, extreme, most remote, or the discussion on last things. It refers to a branch of methodical religious studies dealing with death, demise, life after death, revivification, the second coming of Christ, the ending of the age, heavenly judgment, the future state, immortality, and eternity. Eschatology refers to the Judeo-Christian dogma of the commencement of the kingdom of God and the alteration of history. Metaphorically, it may be cited as the discussion of issues associated with terminality (J.D.M.). It also refers to the branch of theology or biblical exegesis concerned with the end of the world or that branch of systematic theology which deals with the doctrines of the last things. Originally, in theology, eschatology means the study of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Generally, eschatology denotes any system concerning the last or final matters such as death, the judgment, the future state, etc. (Toner). According to R.H. Charles, eschatology refers to a term of Greek derivation, meaning "discourse about last things." It is a branch of theology dealing with death, resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the end of the age, divine judgment, the future state, immortality, and eternity. It also refers to the Judeo-Christian doctrine of the coming of the kingdom of God and the transformation or the end of history. Figuratively, it may be viewed as the study of any idea or subject related to terminality.

Calvinism in Shaping Dickinson's Eschatological Self

The study of Dickinson's New England decadent eschatological culture and the Calvinistic background of her sense of the end and endings are crucial in understanding her personality and her poems as well. In discussing eschatologicality in Emily Dickinson's life, mind, and art, it is not only important to understand its theological meaning, it is also necessary to recognize its potential for imaginative extensions and intense personal expressions. Her creative self was an outgrowth of the Calvinistic branch of orthodox Christianity and her cultural descent from an eschatological people, the seventeenth century New England Puritans (Mahmood 110). This religious background contributed some fundamental spiritual tendencies of her New England in her works. One of those tendencies was to view everything under the shadow of the End. Dickinson's recurrent musing on death and afterlife might easily be termed as "morbid" but it would not seem that eccentric to her readers if they understand her descension from the New England Puritans who were extremely obsessed with the last things, ends, and endings. Dickinson's besotted curiosity with death is reflected in over one-third of her poems, with numerous others suggesting or referring to it. Seldom is there a letter that does not call attention to time and transience (Mahmood 38). Her recognition on any

subject is inevitably streaked with her speculations about death and life in the hereafter which ultimately constitute the typical texture of all her thoughts. Calvin's religious dogma, which actually contains stimulants for apocalyptic thinking, embodies the essence of Puritan eschatology in general. However, though this background instilled sentimentalist tendencies in Dickinson, she consciously rejected certain illogicality of her religion, Calvinistic ideas, and eschatological thoughts and developed her own private eschatology (Mahmood 210).

Puritan Background in Shaping Dickinson's Eschatological Self

Emily Dickinson's birth, growing up as a child, education, religion, private life, and overall socio-cultural milieu of the then New England deserve a sound analysis in excavating the eschatological aspects in her poems. Emily Dickinson was born in 1830 into an orthodox Calvinistic family that attended the Congregationalist church in Amherst, Massachusetts. Amherst was a sparsely populated 19th century farming settlement of the Connecticut River Valley with a cultural line going back to the Puritan beginnings of seventeenth century America. Eleanor Wilner contends: "For Dickinson the theology of her evangelical forebears and the disintegrating concepts and constraints of her society are imaginatively realized and heavy with emotions" (130). The sixth generation of Dickinson from Nathaniel to Samuel Fowler, Emily's grandfather, had sustained or did not make much departure from Puritan pieties. Samuel Fowler Dickinson says that "he remained one of the early Puritans" (Sewall 35). The Puritan character was also evident in Dickinson's father, Edward Dickinson's personality with his commitment to public service and strict moral conduct in private life.

The early New England Puritan brought into the new world the vision of a holy commonwealth and thought of themselves as "an eschatological people in quest of Jerusalem" (Gilmore 1-4). They were quite convinced that they were God's New Israel under the second disposition of grace and that it was in New England that the Kingdom of God would soon be established. They looked upon themselves as covenanted people. In their unspeakable misery, they sustained themselves by the strong faith that God had removed them from England to this wilderness (New England) and they were singled out above all other people to fulfill a mission- that is to build His Kingdom by setting up a new heaven and a new earth in new churches and a new commonwealth through the agency of His covenanted people. This sentiment resounds throughout the literature of both Protestant and Roman Catholic settlers of the New World. Such sentiments of New Englanders was further intensified by the preaching of Jonathan Edwards, one of the Congregationalist and America's first prominent theologians, who preached that the millennium is at hand and America was destined to be the center of the Kingdom of God and, therefore, the Christians should be prepared for it (Wilmore 67-71). In Dickinson's time, the fervor of Puritanism, though, dwindled everywhere to a great extent but in the

Connecticut River Valley its values wielded a decisive and far-reaching impact on the rural New England mind with its rigor of morality, its stern commandments, and its commitment not only to fulfilling the divine purpose but also to playing a social role. By 1820, despite the decline of Puritan orthodoxy due to the growth of mercantile centers in New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield, and the subsequent rise of secularism, the church still occupied center stage in the lives of the majority of the Amherst populace who were constantly reminded of their enduring concern by the regular preaching of sermons – the salvation of the soul (Ludwig 38).

Some deaths of Dickinson's close relatives, neighbors, and friends also contributed to the development of her eschatological personality. The diseases that ravaged New England during Dickinson's time left an appalling impact on developing an acute consciousness of death's triumphant presence in her life. Small pox, cholera, and many such epidemic diseases were on the rampage. Youth death rates were astronomical in Amherst (Bingham 178). Under these circumstances, it is quite usual for one to think of death and death alone. And in Dickinson's case, the thought of death found much natural and fertile soil owing to the eschatological background of her religious culture. Her imagination processed it into an indispensable psychic material for her poetry and thinking. Dickinson was always worried about the death of her friends and relatives. In her mature age she wrote to her friend Abiah Root of her concern with death:

I have seen pass from my sight in the prime of their days like dew before the sun will not again walk the streets and act their parts in the great drama of life, nor can I realize that when I again meet them it will be another & and far different world from this ... I wonder if we shall know each other in heaven, and whether we shall be a chosen band as we are here.(Dickinson L10)

After two years, following the actual incident, she wrote to Abiah about the death of her bosom friend Sophia Holland: "My friend was Sophia Holland ... I visited her often in sickness ... but after she was laid in her coffin ... I gave way to a fixed melancholy" (L11).

There is another biological reason for Dickinson's preoccupation with death and the grave. Dickinson's home at Pleasant Street (1840-1855) was closer to the village cemetery. The fact that nearly all the funeral processions passed her house must have aroused in her a frequent consciousness of mortality and afterlife. This cemetery view would also provide her with ample opportunity of studying at first hand the ceremonies and trappings connected with funerals. As the early New Englander confronted the presence of death which bore down heavily on their daily lives and all too often took a toll on them, it is recognized as a typically New England subject (Flinn 63). Death was all too familiar a thing in the trying frontier conditions of the early New England settlements. The high mortality rate due to unhygienic conditions and frequent epidemics during the early years of New England settlements made the inhabitants particularly sensitive to the physical presence of

death. Dickinson was often horrified to visualize her own death. In another letter she portrays her sentimental self-image in death but her horror at the thought of death persists as usual: “The other day I tried to think how I should look with my eyes shut, and a little white gown on, and a snowdrop on my breast; and I fancied I heard the neighbors stealing in softly to look down in my face – so fast asleep—so still—Oh Jennie, will you and I really become like this?” (L86). In visualizing her own death-scene, Dickinson articulates some certain usual things that take place in the house of the dead: friends, relatives and neighbors visiting the house, weeping over the coffin, and wondering about the destination of the departed. It is as if Dickinson is trying to establish that it is necessary to imagine and visualize one’s own death in order to visualize the end of things (Winters 31-52).

Dickinson’s eschatological inclinations further intensified because of her mother. Her mother Emily Norcross is said to have developed hypochondria and fear of death following some early deaths in her immediate family. Hence she may be singled out as a probable source for Dickinson’s death obsession and so-called neuroses. Millicent Todd Bingham says that Mrs. Dickinson had a tremulous fear of death (4). Because of her mother’s carelessness and her failure to satisfy Emily’s love hunger, the sensitive daughter felt rejected and grew up as an embittered person which resulted in the persistent recurring of the themes of death, anxiety, suffering in her poems and letters.

Dickinson’s traumatic personal life, especially her failure in love, has a share in formulating her eschatological self. Bingham’s analysis reveals that a mood of dejection developed in the voracious love-hungry, sensitive young woman who felt rejected by many of her wooers and grew up an embittered person, reading voraciously and submitting her love-needs in her writings (10). Like her mother, she too was severely affected with a lifelong hypochondriac fear of death. The eschatological implications of death in her writings no doubt have their roots in her religion, New England Puritan culture, and particularly in her failure in love.

Emily Dickinson’s nineteenth century Calvinistic, evangelical, and Puritan education profoundly colored her eschatological imagination from which actually sprung her sentimental attitude towards a traditional idea of “dreadful” death (St. Armand 26-77). Her religious education instilled the idea in her that this earthly life is a present to us – a period of probation revealed in the writings of Reverend Charles Wadsworth, the eminent Philadelphia divine whom Emily Dickinson called the dearest earthly friend and who influenced her most (Eddins 1989). In consonance with Calvin’s attitude to life and death, the New England Puritans were trained to the facts of the transitory nature of life, the inevitability of death, and the terrifying vision of the last Judgment from their early childhood. Naturally, the children were the primary target of the severest clerical admonition. Their primers at school, too, were filled with the chilling lessons based on eschatological ideas such as the brevity of life, the futility of earthly glory and achievement, and the

imminence of death. In order to make their sermons and writings more effective to their audience, the New England Puritan divines would compound the imminence of death with the vision of the terror of hell fire, venomous infernal creatures, the image of loneliness, and the burning on the Day of the Last Judgment which instilled a deep-seated fear of death that the Puritan child would carry over into adult life. Every Puritan in the congregation would be severely exhorted to keep the thought of death uppermost in the mind. Therefore, death and damnation as eschatological subjects would receive special attention and their explication would rise to the concert pitch in evangelical sermons. Emily Dickinson, too, had the experience of intensive and relentless evangelical exhortations during her one year studentship at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. Besides, her religious education was rigidly Calvinistic and highly evangelical. In her early letters she talked a great deal about attending the religious meetings aimed at converting the impenitent (L10, 35). Therefore, the eschatological implications of death in Dickinson's writing have no doubt their roots in her religious education and in New England Puritan culture.

The Shadow End

That Emily Dickinson is a poet of endings rather than beginnings has been documented by many of whom Weisbuch, Sewall, and Rashid are prominent. The manifestation of endgames in various facets of human life and nature such as burial, death, departure, funeral, passage of time, seasonal transition, sunsets, and diurnal endings constitute the staples of her writings, whether prose or poetry. She is perpetually absorbed in things and occurrences, ephemeral and terminal in human life and nature as she looks down the road to the journey's end. The daisy's humble reply, in Poem 106, to the sun's angry fulmination – "Wherefore – Marauder – art thou here?" – can be treated as the poet's apology for her inclination for terminal themes (Thomas):

We are the Flowers – Thou the sun!
Forgive us, if as days decline-
We nearer steal to Thee!
Enamored of the parting West –
The peace – the flight – the Amethyst –
Night's possibility!

In a sense both the daisy and the poet have a common fate. They are automatically and even fatalistically drawn to their end and the end of things without a choice under the given circumstances – the daisy as a flower and the poet with her acute perception of mortality. Metaphorically, night denotes death whereas sunset refers to terminality which is followed by the end of the day. Such a view of the end is apocalyptically significant and optimistic in religious terms as it understands the mortal end not as a conclusion but as a state of transition. Burials, funerals, graves,

graveyards, sepulchers, and tombs constitute so significant a portion of Dickinson's graveyard themes and imagery that one may feel tempted to call her an American graveyard poet (Ford 21). She demonstrates an extraordinary capacity for feeling funerals in her brain as well as experiencing in life. She used to practice dying in her imagination which has been deciphered from many of her poems. In Poem 51, the speaker is a dead person who died "Earlier by the dial/ Than the rest have gone." Poem 51 is a graveyard poem. When Dickinson was alive, the graveyard, she passed by on her way to and from school looked like a strange village. Sometimes she would see people come there and leave the place after doing some curious business. She could not guess what they did. To her, it was a distant place and she was ignorant about it. She became knowledgeable about it after her own (imaginary) death. The fear of the place disappears when she herself becomes an inhabitant. As a dead person now, she finds it quiet and peaceful, posing no threat to the delicate and vulnerable.

The Terminality

Dickinson's extraordinary preoccupation with the terminal theme, death, calls for close attention and an eschatological survey of her writings. Suffering from acute sense of loss, sorrows, anguish, despair, and often futile grudge and feelings of jealousy resulted in her extraordinary preoccupation with this terminal fact. Funerals, burials, graves, tombs, graveyards, and sepulchers constitute a significant portion of Dickinson's terminal themes and imagery. Images of midnight, cold, frost, and winter are usually associated with death and the graveyard has been portrayed as a chamber of horrors or prison or the last home of the dead where the deceased souls stop for a moment to make their onward journey to the future state of being in the next world.

To Dickinson, death does not have any fixed meaning. She experiences a wide variety of sensations and meanings out of death. But two distinctly opposite ideas of death are discernible from her poems. One originates from the traditional idea of death and the other springs from contemporary religious culture. The traditional idea defines death as an intractable, abstract, stranger which remains quite distant from us. Its mysterious, non-descriptive, and unforeseeable nature has made it dreadful and unnerving (P90). The age-old image and traditional idea that death is an eternal sleep, absolute, changeless, rigid, and unadjustable to human circumstances; the wages of sin, and so on pervades her poems (P654, 749). Death is a persecutor, an elusive runaway worm, an insect in the human tree (P1716), "the deep stranger" (P1247), a metallic drill machine boring holes in the human soul (P286), the numbing cold that a freezing person recollects, the trackless waste (P341), a silent soft-footed ghost (P274), Old Emperor (P455), a long sleep (P654), a ghastly goblin cat-and-mouse game player (P762), and so on. In the "The Cat receives the Mouse" (P726), death's torturous nature is revealed through the cat and mouse game:

The Cat reprieves the Mouse
She eases from her teeth
Just long enough for Hope to tease –
Then mashes it to death – (P762)

Of course, Dickinson's attitude towards death is not altogether pessimistic and negative as is viewed from the surface. A happy-go-lucky and gay attitude is also traceable from many of her poems and letters. Under the influence of the idyllic landscape of nineteenth century rural New England cemeteries, death became the most desirable resort for the fulfillment of sentimental cravings for unfulfilled friendly or conjugal love. In this mood, death was romanticized and was made an object of great attraction and honorable attainment. Death was viewed as "a peaceful and beautiful deliverance – the releasing of a butterfly from its cocoon" whereas afterlife was dreamt of as an abode of eternal spring, full of happiness and tranquility (Stannard 174). This optimistic attitude to death is reflected in the following poem:

Let down the bars, Oh Death-
The tired Flocks come in
Whose bleating ceases to repeat
Whose wandering is done.

Thine is the stillest night
Thine the securest Fold
Too near Thou art seeking Thee
Too tender to be told (P1065)

She even goes to the extent of mocking at death in the poem "I could not stop for death." Death in Dickinson, too, stands in a dramatic gesture as a pointer to a world of eternal light – a "Beckoning – Eutrascan invitation – / Toward Light" (P295). Her "Alabaster Chamber" is the soul's safest, clean well-lighted residence, an abode of peace and tranquility providing ample space for its occupants. Death underwent a process of romanticization and sentimentalization with Dickinson with its "altered image of soft and affectionate embrace of feminization" (Douglas 132). Sometimes death is personified as a romantic lover by using the idiom of love poetry in portraying it as a stealthy wooer – "Death is the supple suitor" (P1445). Therefore, death no longer was represented as dreadful, something strange staring out of the scooped-out dark eye pits of death's head. It became, instead, a promise of transforming this perishable life into something enduring and permanent, which is far better than that of the early Puritan attitude.

Biblical Interpretation of Death

The two Testaments of the Bible also hold diametrically opposite views of death: the one is persecution, terror, and damnation; the other of forgiveness and love

(Stannard 75-77). The second one puts more emphasis on the non-biological, figurative, and spiritual meaning of death: it is all sweetness, glory, and light. It does not focus on the body in the grave – putrefaction and disintegration. But the other one stresses on the physical miseries of the sinner in the grave. The difference in attitude to death between the early New England Puritans and those in Dickinson's time is comparable with the two different attitudes of the two Testaments. In the Old Testament, death figures as the wages of sin: "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all men sinned" (qtd. in Bandon 167). The physical proximity of death was too real in the early days of the New England settlements owing to the adverse frontier conditions. Death was a terror to them. The stark "death's head," the most common image to appear on the early New England gravestones, embodied the early Puritan idea of death: the dreadful skull reminded the heedless sinner of the grim consequences of an unholy life, of worldly satiety.

By contrast, the New Testament views death as the soul's longing to leave the sinful body and reunite with its long absent Lord. This outlook holds death as a "blessing as if it were a little window or door whereby we pass out of this world and enter into heaven" (Perkins 5-43). All this is evidence that a dual concept of death as both punishment and reward did exist at once in early Puritan discourse. Dickinson's attitude to death is also characterized by a similar ambivalence. Therefore a change from the hard face of death and repulsion that characterized the Early New England image of death mellowed into attraction and a soft, sentimental one in the nineteenth century. It was not much recorded in the prose or poetry of the period as on the gravestone but, to be sure, it marked a progressive decline of the gloomy and heavy going Puritan culture in New England and the dawning of a new cheerful mood. Stannard says, "In death, as in life, Puritan culture had lost its grip. The elegies and sermons, the journals and wills, the poetry and prose on death all suggest the dramatic changes that overtook the world of the Holy Remnant during the middle of the eighteenth century" (161).

Consequently, an extraordinary fondness for romancing with death developed into a fad in the nineteenth century. The difference of attitude towards death from the early period was ascribed to the difference in the moral and spiritual upbringing of the Puritan children in the 19th century. Now death was made into an object of romantic desire and glorious achievement. The icons of death on the gravestones, too, changed from frightful skulls, scythes, and hourglasses to imageries of transcendence into a world of empyrean light and rarefied spirit. This new map was so pervasive that it even led to the addressing of the old burial grounds as God's acres and consecrated places (Mahmood 17). Thus the face of death softened and afterlife grew more attractive and desirable. Corpses increasingly received veneration and cosmetic treatments: dead bodies were embalmed as precious objects and coffins were shaped with the suggestion that the mortal remains were jewelry. Though deathbed or the dying moment was deemed to be a time of great uncertainty,

fear, and psychological turmoil on account of one's spiritual achievements on earth, the Puritans started to exhibit humanity in their rhetoric eulogizing death as a means of liberation and a respite for the earth-bound soul. They would deem the dying moment most crucial and the climax of one's spiritual career on earth. It was a moment of possible revelation for the living; and for the dying, it was passing into the next world to which one had looked forward all one's life.

The paradigm shifts from a scared and skeptic attitude to faith and trust. Therefore, Dickinson can be celebrated as a poet of life, faith, hope, trust, light; a poet building confidence in her readers rather than "a graveyard poet" or a poet of mere terminal things. She has dispersed the doubt and fear of death and afterlife with a greater skill than a priest in a Church or the Pope on his throne in the Vatican City. This nineteenth century sentimental attitude towards death and the hereafter which deeply colored Dickinson's eschatological imagination is a remarkable deviation from her early stand about death and after life (St. Armand 59-77).

Ambivalent attitudes are perceptible in the treatment of Dickinson's terminal themes as well. Death, graveyard, the Day of Judgment, and the second coming of Jesus Christ have been termed as "terminus" in Christian theology. To Dickinson human life symbolizes a long journey which is to taste all these stages in a cyclical order. However, all these terminal stages have often been viewed with doubt and fear by the poet though they not only represent the end but also indicate the beginning of another life or age.

Afterlife

Without a follow-up study (after the discussion of death) of the three other last things, namely Judgment, Heaven, and Hell of Christian the ology, it would by no means complete the eschatological study on Dickinson. The poet's opinion about the existence of afterlife, of course, constantly oscillates between doubt and faith. Some of her letters show extreme reservation that death leads to an afterlife whereas several others reveal hardly any ambiguity. According to Dickinson, death is the end of profane times for the individual dead and also constitutes the apocalyptic moment for them. Death is also viewed as a release from the corporeal form. Dickinson is profoundly concerned with afterlife, time, and transience. Her belief in resurrection and eternal life appears to be particularly strong in the letter to Mrs. William Sterns (L434) where she expresses her strong faith that she would meet her dearest ones in the afterlife. Her images of the afterlife are often cast in the images of the world. The natural cycle of vegetation and seasons tempt her to draw an analogy between the human and the natural world. She believes that death in nature is temporary and in resurrection lies the renewal of natural life just as it happens in the natural cycle of the seasons. The recurrence of life in spring or summer follows the death in winter. This process is so spontaneous and regular that resurrection in nature seems hardly any miracle (P74). She distinguishes between death and resurrection by defining the former as scary, bitter, and temporary

whereas the latter is sweeter, longer, and lasting. Yet, often, her skeptical mind is afflicted with great insecurity and anxiety about the afterlife. And this happens because after all she is a human being. Her human nature is infested with anxiety and doubt.

The Christian Apocalypse and the Day of Judgment

The Christian idea of the Apocalypse constitutes a major part of Dickinson's eschatology. She frequently uses the imagery of resurrection, judgment, Heaven, Hell and, quite often, immortality. The Day of Judgment has vividly been portrayed in the Bible as the day of reckoning for all and sundry. The Day of Judgment would be preceded by supernatural visions coupled with grueling cries and woes of human beings and the natural world. It is a day of the Jewish vindication against a sinful nation. On this day God would award punishment to the wicked. Dickinson visualizes the mammoth gathering of the resurrected dead at the Last Judgment. She can see the "The Dust—connect—and live / On Atoms—features place—" (P515). She envisions a terrific and capricious nature of the Judgment Day when every earthly action is weighed. God sitting on the Seat of Judgment would dispense rewards and punishments. An earlier letter of Dickinson's contains the typical Puritan anxieties, fears, and ecstasies of the Judgment Day. It describes the majestic spectacle of the judgment of the dead at the Celestial Court with a visual effect of summoning the souls, standing before the trial of God, and sentencing the souls either to deliverance or damnation. No earthly conduct is taken into account here as an evidential reference in the trial and the judgment is apparently arbitrary. The souls will be either sentenced to the endless term of permanent separation from its loved ones or awarded the bliss of reunion and eternal coexistence in the hereafter. In another early letter (L10), Dickinson expressed her typical view about the double predestination which states that just as God's elect would have eternal life in Heaven, the unelected or rejected would go to perdition. At other times she recognizes the value of effort and discipline to be gone through compulsorily before attaining Heaven. Man's actions and intentions both will be taken into consideration by God (P823). Spontaneous response of the heart to the divine call which is the sign of God's grace would be a serious concern for the soul's salvation in the afterworld (L47).

Dickinson conveys genuine anxiety of her personal salvation on the Day of Judgment. In the poem "Why –do they shut Me out of heaven?" Dickinson is apprehensive of her falling a victim to God's arbitrary judgment and being excluded from the company of the elect (Ford 102). Her fear that she might be separated from her beloved ones in the afterlife and the guilty feeling at foolishly throwing away the best chance of redemption initially shapes her eschatological frame of mind. Nevertheless, she desires to appear before God on the Judgment Day with her own earthly image: in the shape of a human being.

Heaven and Hell

In Christian theology, Heaven has been depicted as a place of eternal life with eternal happiness; a place of honey and milk and God's grace where only pure souls or the elected or the predestined ones have access and hell is a place of purgatory for impure souls and sinners. It is a place of eternal darkness, fire, and smoke; full of stones, thorns, venomous, and infernal creatures, and other instruments of torture. Dickinson's eschatological thoughts of Heaven and hell are in conformity with the Calvinist's plain faith:

And after that – there's Heaven—
The Good man's – "Dividend"—
And bad Men – "go to Jail"—
I guess—(P234).

Heaven is God's house where the angels dwell (L187). It is described as a romantic place, a place for reuniting with lost family and friends. Heaven is a construct of the imagination and has no specific physical location. Heaven, to Dickinson, is the house of God, a jolly place which is romantically remote and free from the shadows of terror (P239). Love is another sign of Heaven: "To be loved is Heaven" (L361).

Dickinson also develops her own private concept of heaven. To her, heaven remains a hypothesis, some sort of mirage. Her skeptical attitude has been reflected in many a poem of which Poem 338 and 346 may be cited as examples. She considers the temptation of Heaven as bait to delude, befuddle, and trap the dupes. She even fears heaven to be illusory and delusive. Heaven and immortality might be an insidious lure:

And far from Heaven as the Rest—
The soul so close on Paradise—

What if the Bird from journey—
Confused by Sweets—as Mortals –are—
Forget the Secret of His wing—(P346).

Despite Dickinson's preoccupation with the invincible process of physical dissolution, she is not a poet of earthly endings; rather it would be more appropriate to call her a poet of the End, where lies hope and the assurance of immortality and endless happiness against annihilation. Her optimistic attitude about death and the afterlife, her sense of immediacy about the presence of the life after death, her instinctive imagination, and desire for a transposition of heaven and earth: "Heaven on earth" and "earth in Heaven" (L827), distinguish her as a great poet.

Dickinson's eschatological sensibility which consists of the general perspective of the New England eschatological culture in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the Calvinistic background of her sense of the end and endings, deserve a thorough,

detailed, and microscopic scrutiny to explore their implications and to trace the impact of her emotional extremes in shaping her idiom of agony and ecstasy on the four last things – Death, Judgment Day, Heaven and Hell – of Christian theology in her writings. Though Dickinson eschews certain ideas, cults, and rituals of her religion, especially of the Calvinistic branch, which appear incongruous to her, eschatological thoughts and feelings always remain at the core of her writing. They are always oozing out of her soul in critical circumstances in her life and spirit. Her attempt at the appropriation of a great deal of eschatological language transformed into imaginative constructs, individualized and internalized, finally resulting in the making of her private eschatology. Nevertheless, her private eschatology is fully in conformity with the Christian eschatology.

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The Question of “Female Gaze”: Will it Ever Be Possible to Have One?

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Abstract

This paper problematizes the issue of an “active female gaze” as opposed to the passive one determined by the dominant ideological system that produces an “active male gaze” in narratives of cinema and advertisements. In mainstream cinema as well as the advertisement industry, usually the story is rendered from an essentially male perspective, regardless of the narrator’s being male or female. It is so even when the subject matter is related to issues that directly concern women like the repression of their desires or Lesbianism, for instance. Using some of the key ideas propounded by British film critic Laura Mulvey, the paper examines some of the texts from both cinema and the advertisement industry to find out the complex mechanism of the “male gaze.” It also attempts to explore the possibility of a “female gaze” that might, if achieved, give new dimensions to both forms of entertainment.

Images in multifaceted forms are presently dominating the world of culture, politics, and economy. The advertising industry is at its best now, and cinema has become the most powerful and influential form of entertainment. In the current world, products like cinema and advertisements are considered texts, and it is possible to deal with them in the same way as a literary or theoretical work. Therefore, point of view and perspective have become some of the preoccupations that are frequently addressed in any critical discussion of cinema or advertisement. In these two mediums of entertainment, different techniques are applied for rendering particular perspectives, among which one of the most important is the angle of the camera. It is the narrator’s vehicle to say and show what s/he wants. Here the

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question of gaze, more specifically the difference between the male and female gaze, comes in. It has been observed that most of the time in both forms of entertainment, the gaze through which the narrative is presented, is basically male. Even in cases where the story is sympathetic towards a woman or simply has a direct feminist angle, the gaze cannot be proclaimed as “female” since it resorts to the conventions and techniques used by the male gaze. However, the very idea of gaze is directly connected to the concept of representation itself, something which is dependent on the norms and conventions of the culture of a particular society. Therefore, the question of the possibility of a “female gaze” becomes a complicated one.

The seminal essay of the British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” will clarify some of the concepts related to the paper. According to Mulvey, cinema, through its powerful manipulation of images, creates several scopes for pleasure. Referring to Freud’s *Three Essays on Sexuality*, she mentions two important concepts: scopophilia and voyeurism. Scopophilia, for Freud, is a drive that exists outside the erotogenic zone; it is the pleasure of looking at things secretly. In its extreme form, scopophilia can turn into voyeurism which is strongly connected to the erotic impulses. It becomes a perversion that makes the viewer an “obsessive voyeur,” whose sexual gratification comes from secretly watching the activities of others. The viewer is the subject who objectifies the person s/he is watching and derives pleasure from it. Mulvey relates these ideas to cinema, pointing out an interesting fact about its mechanism. For her, cinema creates an atmosphere that reinforces the voyeuristic fantasies of its viewers. She quite cuttingly comments that the mainstream cinema presents a “hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically, indifferent to the presence of the audience, producing for them a sense of separation and plays on their voyeuristic fantasy” (Mulvey 835-836).

The physical setting of a movie theatre clarifies the point. The dark room of the theater where the viewer sits facing the bright screen makes him/her feel as if s/he is the only person watching the cinema. Besides, the theater gives the impression that the world it presents to us is completely separate from the one in which the viewer belongs. What we see on the screen has an air of total alienation about it where the characters seem to be the people who are utterly unaware of the world outside the movie theater, which is ironic since the medium of cinema is very conscious of its audience. Therefore, the viewer gets a feeling that s/he is secretly watching the private activities of the characters shown in the film. The viewer becomes the voyeur, an act which is facilitated by the environment of the movie theater as well as by the controlling “male gaze” of the narrative.

Now, the question of the “male gaze” and its mechanisms should be brought to focus. Mulvey points out that in the patriarchal society the forms of entertainments, like everything else, are determined by the male. Therefore, the pleasure of looking has been split between “active/ male and passive/female” (Mulvey 837). What the viewer

sees is rendered through the eyes of the male: he controls the gaze, and by becoming the subject, objectifies the female in turn. Therefore, the female is shown the way the male gaze wants her to be shown; her body becomes the ground where the fantasies of the male are projected. As Mulvey comments, "In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously to be looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*" (837).

In mainstream cinema, for example, popular Hollywood or Bollywood movies, the female characters, especially the female protagonist, often enter the screen in a visually striking way with the camera focusing on some particular parts of her body. We can begin with a classic movie, *Raging Bull* (Scorsese, 1980), where the first appearance of the female protagonist Vickie (played by Cathy Moriarty), in many ways, makes us understand the issue of male gaze. She is seen sitting beside a pool wearing a white swimming costume while the protagonist Jake Lamotta (played by Robert De Niro) notices her and keeps looking at her. We can realize soon enough that using close shots, Moriarty's body is being glamorized through the gaze of the film's protagonist, a gaze that is immediately shared by the male viewers, even though the movie is done in black and white. Color would have added another dimension to the whole process, but even without it, the point becomes clear. However, the best example would be the "Bond Girls" in the popular James Bond franchise where the female protagonist always, as a part of the tradition of the films, makes her entry wearing bikinis. *Die Another Day* (Tamahori, 2002) is another case in point where the entry of its female protagonist Giacinta 'Jinx' Johnson (played by Halle Berry) is to be noted. When she makes her appearance, her body is foregrounded by the camera for the male gaze, and the male viewer who quickly identifies himself with the hero, objectifies her body. It is noteworthy that in movies like these, the role of the female characters are extremely limited as far as the storyline is concerned, but when it comes to the exhibitionist aspect of the film, she becomes the prime focus. There are numerous other examples to support this particular point of the overwhelming male gaze in popular cinema. Hollywood blockbusters like *True Lies* (Cameron, 1994), *The Fast and the Furious* (Cohen, 2001) or *The Transformers* (Bay, 2007) can delineate this point further. In these movies:

such scenes are marked by a pointed focus on sexually attractive female body parts, to say the least; and the focus demands that the camera repeatedly capture and display those scenes. It turns out that the pointed focus of the camera is targeted specifically at the male gaze. In other words, erotic scenes in Hollywood film can be said to have been designed in such a way that would gratify only the male gaze." (Munim, 2012)

The case has been quite the same in mainstream Indian movies as well. When Bollywood, the second largest film industry of the world, applies strategies that are

culture specific, the strong presence of a male gaze is felt too. One should refer to the massive sweep of the so-called “item songs” that are recently being seen in these films. These songs are visually extravagant, where both the lyrics and choreography are strongly sensuous. The main female performer is scantily dressed, and the camera becomes an instrument in subjecting her body evidently to the male gaze. We can refer to movies like *Dabaang* (Kashyap, 2010), *Tees Mar Khan* (Khan, 2010), *Dum* (Nivas, 2003) which are probably famous more for their item songs than for the content or characterization. These songs do not have much connection to the main plot, but are made to look essential by providing glamour and glitz at the cost of objectifying the female body.

In the advertisement industry as well, the same male gaze is evident. Advertisements that we see on billboards or on the screen extensively use images of the human body, and, in most cases, the female body. Ads of beauty soaps, body lotions, fairness creams, and so on could be some of the best instances. For example, if we notice the very familiar and widely known narrative of beauty soaps like Lux, we can see the voyeuristic elements at work. Lux is an international brand and celebrities from Sophia Loren and Brigitte Bardot to Bollywood actresses like Madhuri Dixit and Katrina Kaif made their appearances to promote the brand. In one of the ads, we see Katrina Kaif in the bathtub, soaping herself. Her appearance is, to use Mulvey’s term, highly “coded,” and she attracts the attention of the viewer with a kind of sensuality that is attached to the actresses of mainstream cinema. Here, too, the viewer becomes the voyeur who secretly watches the actress engaged in a private activity like bathing. This same narrative is also present in the advertisements of other brands; for example, Indian actress Kareena Kapoor’s appearance in the Indian brand Vivel, or our very own Joya Ahsan’s role in an advertisement of the Bangladeshi brand Sandalina. In both cases we see what we have seen in the advertisements of Lux, but in two different ways. Interestingly, in the case of the Vivel ad (Sarker, 2011), Kareena Kapoor’s character shows an awareness of the viewer since she returns a seductive smile at the camera. Here, the desire to look and to be looked at are mingled, and a kind of justification is created for voyeurism on the part of the male gaze which is even more dangerous and further complicates the issue.

At this point of the debate, we can bring the issue of the possibility of a female gaze. Mulvey’s essay shows how the conventional cinema narrative always prioritizes the “active” male gaze where the “passive” female is subjected to that gaze. Her examples are taken basically from mainstream cinema and she asserts that, in avant-garde cinema, it would be possible to create an opposing approach. Therefore, we might assume that avant-garde cinema, or the new forms of advertisements, might offer a potential scope for an “active” female gaze. However, this is not as simple as it appears at first sight. Here, a particular aspect of the idea of representation would shed some light. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues that representation can never be described as objective or as something that presents a

universal reality, rather every work of representation has to do with its particular context, that is, the society, politics, economy, and culture as a whole in which that particular text is produced (cited in Hawthorn, 2000). Therefore, what is presented and how it is presented are determined by the "unspoken" rules of representation in that particular society. For example, a scene of sexual violence or any other form of violence will be presented in different ways by directors of different countries or continents. The conventions of representation in cinema or advertisement vary from country to country and the degree of body exposure, therefore, also varies according to those conventions. When a film from Iran portrays a private scene, it becomes completely different from the one we see in a film from France or Italy. In Iran, a woman is always seen wearing a scarf even when she is in her bedroom with her husband, which is a result of certain restrictions on representing particular scenes in the country. This is not the case with cinema from Europe, for example. The viewers of these countries might feel uncomfortable seeing a woman wearing a scarf in front of her husband, but calmly accept a private scene portrayed in a more raw or graphic way. Having said this, however, it should also be mentioned that the exposure of the body, which in many ways depends on the traditions of representation, does not fully justify the explicit eroticization of the female body. Besides, many films or advertisements that are apparently conscious of the sexual imbalance in representation and seek to offer a different approach both in style and content, often suffer from the problem of a confused gaze. Therefore, these films, while dealing with a subject matter that has obvious feminist overtones, or shows a more liberal outlook, are often seen to be presented from a conventional "male gaze." This is a complicated statement and some examples would clarify the point.

I would begin with the critically acclaimed Italian cinema *Malena* (Tornatore, 2000). The movie is set in Italy during the 2nd World War and tells the story of a woman, Malena, who is left alone in a society of men who make her the object of their desire and do not hesitate to inflict extreme violence on her when she is completely vulnerable. She is only desired, not loved. The only person that loves her is the 12-year-old protagonist and the narrator of the movie, Renato, who at the end becomes the only person to help her to find her husband. The movie clearly criticizes the hypocrisy of the patriarchal society, where even the women function as accomplices of the male power. The climactic scene of the movie delineates this particular point when the women of the town, who blame Malena for their husbands' unfaithfulness, beat her violently and the men observe the victimization from a distance, attempting no intervention to save her. However, while the film should be highly commended for its powerful subject matter, some aspects of its representation must be questioned. The character of Malena, played by Monica Bellucci, is shown as a victim of her society. But parallel to this runs the story of Renato who becomes completely obsessed with her and constantly fantasizes about her. Consequently, the boy becomes "a man." Here, the character of Renato, even though the only sympathetic person to Malena, represents the "male gaze" by projecting his sexual

fantasies on Malena's body. He literally turns into a voyeur when he finds a hole in her house where she lives alone, and peeps into the hole to secretly watch her private activities including bathing and lovemaking with a man who brings her food in return. The movie uses close up shots and focuses every now and then on several parts of Bellucci's body, especially the genitalia. Here the foregrounding of the female body is done in two ways. On one hand, the background score, a particular use of color on screen, and lights accompanied by a stylized representation of Bellucci's body attempt to romanticize the character of Malena. On the other hand, there are more raw presentations as well, especially in Renato's extreme fantasizing of Malena that are often extended to his long erotic dreams. In both cases, the objectification of the body and the presence of a controlling male gaze are evident, whereas Malena is shown as a passive female, a victim who barely talks. Even though she is the central character, she cannot control the way she is seen. It cannot be said that here a "female gaze" is irrelevant or unnecessary since the subject matter it deals with could effortlessly create space for that particular gaze in which case the movie would have had a broader dimension.

Here we could also add the Bengali film *Chokher Bali* (Ghosh, 2003), adapted from a novel of the same name by Rabindranath Tagore. The film portrays the intense sexual desire that a female, more specifically a widow, is forced to suppress in a patriarchal social structure. The movie, however, digresses in many ways from the novel, both in terms of story line as well as representation. One could argue that the difference of medium and the context of the two cultural texts required that the representation be different. However, while Tagore's novel brings out the repressed energy from within with the masterful use of language, Ghosh resorts mainly to the camera and this is where it becomes problematic. Here too, like *Malena*, the focus of the camera is on the body of the female, or rather on the females. Both close and long shots are used to foreground parts of the body of the female characters, though Binodini, the young widow and protagonist, played by Aishwarya Rai, is given more space as far as exposure is concerned. As mentioned earlier, Tagore's text dwells on the psychological aspect of the repressed desire, which Ghosh brings in as well. But the constant focus of the camera on the female body shifts the attention more to the physical and, in the process, the strong presence of the "male gaze" is again felt. Binodini, the woman who desires, soon becomes another object of desire when her body is made the constant focus through the use of the camera.

Interestingly, the presence of a similar kind of "male gaze" can be traced in movies that deal with the issue of lesbianism. Movies such as *Fire* (Mehta, 1996) or *Blue is the Warmest Color* (Kechiche, 2013) deal with powerful issues of sexual deprivation, identity, and the force of liberated desire. However, while presenting subject matters like these, these films cannot go beyond the representations we usually encounter. *Fire*, directed by Deepa Mehta, portrays the lives of two women, Radha (played by Shabana Azmi) and Sita (played by Nandita Das), and how they suffer sexually in a society where the act of lovemaking is determined by its men, in the

case of the two women, by their husbands. Radha's husband, Ashok, due to his subservience to a certain Swamiji, has taken a vow of celibacy, and since Radha cannot bear children, sees it only fit to stay away from her. On the other hand, Sita's husband Jatin completely ignores her because he has a girlfriend from Hong Kong whom his family could not accept. Both women, eager for love and affection, slowly realize the futility of the conventions society has imposed on them, rules that decide the "duties" of the wives and the necessity of performing them rigorously, but never question whether the husbands are performing theirs as well. Therefore, when these two women engage in a homosexual relationship and finally decide to live a life together on their own, the director actually shows a powerful protest against those discriminating conventions. However, in spite of dealing with a subject matter that goes against the enduring traditions of the sub-continent, the representation of body seems problematic here. The lovemaking scene which is followed by Ashok's horrified discovery of the affair could be an appropriate example. The scene is dealt with in a detailed way where Sita's body is exposed considerably. It might be argued that since the movie itself is about breaking traditions, one should be liberal enough to accept this exposure as well. But this might not be so simple. The focus on Sita's body makes her an object to be looked at, a problem which is further complicated when Ashok later re-imagines the whole scene by way of a flashback. Therefore, one does not have to go further to realize that the male gaze is at work here, recreating the incident in his mind.

On the other hand, *Blue is the Warmest Color* (Kechiche, 2013) is more about an individual than his/her society. The protagonist Adele (played by Adele Exarchopoulos) finds out what she truly desires as far her sexuality is concerned. Although the society and its conventions are always present (in the forms of her nagging friends who find out about her visit to a gay bar or her parents who have certain fixed ideas about living), they remain in the background. The issue of lesbianism is given a philosophic dimension when Emma, Adele's partner, quotes Sartre's famous lines from *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, where he asserts that "existence precedes essence" and we are born to exist and define ourselves by our actions. For Emma (played by Lea Seydoux), Sartre's idea made her free and she could afford to be what she is right now, a woman who chose her own sexual identity, not accepting what was imposed on her by a society that is run by a heterosexual discourse. In Emma, Adele finds what she wants or where her desires truly lie. Therefore, the particular intimate scenes between Emma and Adele could be regarded as the physical manifestation of intense mechanisms of desire. As a result, it might seem that the film has achieved something in the form of an "active female gaze." But it is not as simple as it might appear at first. While the intimate scenes might have the possibility of being rendered through a female gaze, it also has a danger of another kind. When these scenes become too explicit, there arises the question of sexual gratification. The film, quite unintentionally, can become a medium for satisfying the desires of a male viewer and, in turn, can create the "male

gaze” as well. Here, the difference between the two gazes might become confused, and what apparently seems like an active “female gaze” can, in reality, be quite the opposite.

We have been talking about the focus of the camera on the female body throughout the whole paper but the question of male body exposure may also arise. This deserves serious critical consideration, not only to be inclusive in approach, but to demonstrate the complications related to the very idea of gaze. In mainstream cinema or advertisement, focus on foregrounding the male body in a sensuous way is also prevalent. The popular Hollywood action movies like *Conan the Destroyer* (Fleischer, 1984), *Conan the Barbarian* (Nispel, 2011), or Bollywood actor Salman Khan’s recent blockbusters like *Wanted* (Deba, 2009), *Dabaang* (Kashyap, 2010) can be suitable instances where the camera focuses specifically on the muscles and other body parts of the protagonist. So, what is the determining gaze here? Male or female? At first it might seem that a kind of female gaze is present here, but we do not have to think hard to realize that this foregrounding only reinforces a male chauvinistic attitude where the male body is used to represent the power that is attached to it. Therefore, here the gaze cannot be “active female” since what is shown and the way it is shown are manifestations of the conventional dominant force which offers no new perspective.

What about the possibility of an “active female gaze” then? Is it only an idea or can it really be achieved? We know that the conventions of representations influence the way the body is seen, and the gaze is largely dependent on them as well. However, this must not mean that cinema is constrained within the limited boundary of those conventions and resultant perspectives. We have seen that in most of the mainstream and many art house cinemas the “female gaze” is absent. But we cannot say that it can never be possible to have one. The movies that discriminate while presenting the body, and thus end up exposing only the “female body,” are more conservative, a problem that is shared by the mainstream cinema in most countries. But in this respect, Bollywood and Hollywood seem to be even bigger conformists than others. For example, countries like South Korea, France, Sweden, Denmark, or even the United Kingdom have shown considerable liberality in terms of the equality in exposing the body. We can refer to movies like *Fur* (Shainberg, 2006), *Shame* (McQueen, 2011), or *Nymphomaniac* (Trier, 2013), where the male body is fully exposed along with the female. This might make one suppose that the exposure of a male body is the only way to provide some kind of a solution to the “female gaze.” This is an over-simplified statement for a rather complicated issue. What is more important here is the equality in the representation of the sexes. If a society suffers from serious gender imbalance of power, something which has to do with a particular kind of discourse, it is quite natural that the imbalance will also be accentuated in its different forms of representations. Therefore, in order to create the space for the “active female gaze,” directors and writers of movies or advertisements need to question the prevalent representational forms and the

controlling “male gaze” that works according to those forms and subvert them to create a new kind of cinema or advertisement. Movies like *Fire*, *Malena*, or *Blue is the Warmest Color* had all the resources to do that, but they failed to use them and fell victim, quite unintentionally though, to the conventions that required serious observation as well as subversion.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the problem of gaze is not exclusive to the medium of cinema or advertisement; it is equally relevant to literature, music, and other forms of representations as well. However, in recent times, the reason this concept is frequently referred to in the discussion of those two particular forms is the very idea of “the image.” Literature creates images with the use of words, but cinema does so with the camera and this image has motion and a kind of immediacy that words do not have. The concept of gaze becomes problematic in cinema since it often claims what it shows and how it shows to be real which, in most of the cases, prove to be otherwise. A sensitive as well as conscious viewer of cinema and advertisement must understand the politics of gaze and react to it accordingly. Cinema is now one of the most powerful forms of entertainment and also one of the most influential. As a result, what we see on screen matters on levels the directors and writers are not always aware of. Therefore, there should be space for an active “female gaze” which would broaden the vista and create new possibilities for cinema by including subject matters that need to be addressed and that have long been ignored by mainstream media.

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The Unheard Stories of Sophocles's Jocasta and Manto's Women: Addressing Social Taboos through Experimental Adaptations in Bangladeshi Theater

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Abstract

In the post-liberation period of Bangladesh, women-centered plays in theater were few. The silence of women's voices led major theater groups to create, translate, or adapt women-centered plays in the post-liberation era, especially in the '80s. The adaptations of the '90s became more vocal as they aimed to reach out and bring more opulent foreign texts to the local audience, not blindly following them but serving to increase the self-confidence of the theater in representing women. One of the major theater groups of Bangladesh, Nagorik Nattya Sampraday, began dedicating their productions to the cause by putting women at the center. In the two recent productions of this theater group, *Andhakare Methane* and *Naamgottroheen – Manto'r Meyera*, inspired by *Oedipus Rex* and three short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, taboo topics like incest and prostitution are addressed. This paper will focus on how these taboos are handled in the two adapted plays. It will also examine how, during the crises, the female characters respond and emerge as strong individuals actively resisting the patriarchal ideologies. To understand the taboo relations in terms of feminism and its relevance in our society, we have taken into consideration Friedman's ideas on locational feminism, Edward Said's Travel Theory, and Alcoff's criticism of feminist theory.

Theater is a strong means for migrating ideas across borders. During migration, ideas in the form of adaptations reach a particular society and culture. Writers of adaptations migrate these ideas in a relative storyline relevant to the culture in their own individual ways.

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During the process of adaptation, a text may or may not be directly conceptualized. According to Gerard Genette, it is a text in the “second degree, created and received in relation to a prior text” (qtd. in Hutcheon 6). An adaptation may be experimental to the extent of creating/re-creating characters that may not be perceived in the same way as in the original text. But the connection remains as movement of ideas from one place to another is a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity (Said 159-160). Ideas are adapted to the new condition according to relevance, preference, and need. As theater is a medium for popularizing ideas in society, it can bring social issues across the border. Writers of adaptations in Bangladesh are also bringing texts across the border to popularize foreign texts and issues relevant to the society. There are several plays which are using the stage to dramatize the female experience. Women are the central characters and seek to represent women’s conditions with a more authentic expression of the female psyche. As Jane Moss says, the women-centered plays are important “in that they replace traditional female dramatic types (femmes fortes, tragic heroines, ingénues, adulterous wives, maids) with truer models and communicate women’s fears and desires in women’s own vocabulary” (Moss 548-549). She further says that most of the activity in women-based theater is the reflection of a developing consciousness about women by theater professionals. The initial observation of theater history shows the absence of women-centered plays. The silence of women’s voices in Bangladesh led major theater groups to create, translate, or adapt women-centered plays in the post-liberation time, especially in the ’80s. The adaptations of the ’90s became more vocal as they aimed to reach out and bring more opulent foreign texts to the local audience, not blindly following them but serving to increase the self-confidence of the theater in representing women. In today’s society, religion and gender have created a conflict, and theater can play a role in making people aware of this crisis as well as mitigate it (Ahmed 68-85).

Among the well-received women-centered plays, the work done by Nagorik Nattya Sampraday is worth mentioning. The recent two productions of this group, *Andhakare Methane* (presented by Agontuk Repertory consisting of Aranyak Nattiyadall, Prachyanat, Theater, Center for Asian Theater, and Nagorik Nattya Sampraday) and *Naamgottroheen – Manto’r Meyera*, especially, have created quite a stir among the theater-loving audience. If we look at the history of this theater group’s work, the majority of the adapted works have been focused on male characters. New productions of Nagorik at the turn of the twenty-first century seem to be more female oriented. When female-centered plays are few, taboo issues like incest and prostitution are rarely discussed. Generally, prostitution and incest are topics that are only whispered about in our society and the people involved are also considered as outcasts. As a result, they become voiceless in societal issues. In *Andhakare Methane* and *Naamgottroheen – Manto’r Meyera*, we find these voiceless people being heard as they brave ostracism and taboo. For this paper, we will focus on how these taboos are handled in the two adapted plays mentioned above. While

analyzing them, we will also see how, in the process of handling their crisis, the female characters become vocal, demand their place, and emerge as strong individuals actively resisting the patriarchal ideologies. The obvious exploration of locational effect on the rights of women, the social acceptance of the problem, the transcultural interaction of the adapted text with the audience also becomes a prime factor of the study.

According to Susan Stanford Friedman, feminism is not something to be homogenized, controlled by certain ideas and theories. She strongly believes in development of a multicultural, international, and transnational feminism. As Friedman further notes, “The borders between sites of feminism surely exist, but just as surely they are and must be transgressed” (244-245). They change with cultural formations, conditions, and alliances. Neither of the plays in discussion here are adapted from feminist plays. Rather the adaptation writers have selected characters like Vivien, Sultana, or Neeti who are commonly found in Western and Eastern societies to focus on conditions associated with feminist ideas. We find names or locations changing, but the crisis or condition remains very similar. Hence the texts travel, as a result of which feminism gains fluidity, spreads, and ultimately sustains. Singular feminism assumes locational epistemology, based on the changing historical and geographical specifications that produce different theories, agendas, and political practices. Locational feminism also requires a kind of geopolitical literacy based on understanding of gender systems in different times and places; that means interlocking dimensions of global cultures in which locals know about the global and the global are informed about the local. The adaptation writers select characters from foreign dramas/plays/short stories and adapt them to create an understanding of the desired area or issue in the local context. The adapted texts reflect the locational study as well as social literacy, and in this case, the understanding of the gender system of Bangladesh. The fluidity of feminism makes us identify with foreign characters like *Jocasta* as *Vivien* in Bangladesh, and *Manto*’s female characters reflect the female experiences of our country.

Locational feminism also encourages travel of feminism across borders, adapting itself to new positions, rising not as an indigenous form but rather developing itself out of “transcultural interaction” with others (Friedman 245). Feminism migrancy, as Said says, “necessarily involves processes of representation and institutionalization different from those at the point of origin. This complicates any account of transplantation, transference, circulation, and commerce of theories and ideas” (qtd. in Friedman 226). Friedman further emphasizes that feminism needs to be understood in a global context. It means internationalizing feminism that affiliates women with victimization which Friedman says mutes women’s agency, ignores cultural conceptualization, and suppresses understanding of gender’s interaction with other constituents of identity. Commitment to rights of women should not be founded on uniform gender oppression that decontextualizes the condition of women in various locations (245-46). The global contextualization of

feminism is favored by Spivak in her criticism of the First World and Third World binaries on internationalization of feminism. She suggested that we should “anthropologize the West, and study the various cultural systems of Africa, Asia, Asia-Pacific, and the Americas as if peopled by historical agents” (qtd. by Friedman 247). So, geopolitical locational feminism travels and, in thinking, avoids impositions of its set of cultural implications on others, and produces a somewhat localized concept of feminism. It is to be noted that, while traveling, the differences are modified through its interaction with multidirectional exchanges just like in *Andhakare Methane* where the Greek patriarchal ideas are not imposed on the local theater and modern European concepts are exercised instead. In the case of *Naamgottroheen – Manto'r Meyera*, however, the social customs and religious practices are from the unpartitioned India. The localized Urdu and Greek customs travel to Bangladesh but the interaction between audience and performers is not affected.

Now the vital question that arises is what is a woman? According to Alcoff, if we are undecided about the category, we cannot say that feminism is immune to deconstruction. If that happens, women are vulnerable to invisibility which, in turn would jeopardize gender politics (352-354). Unlike Jocasta, Vivien is more completely portrayed in the adapted play, her crisis more focused, and the play more centered on what takes place in her life. The other characters like Lawrence (the lover), Edward (the son turned husband) are developed as characters to complement her. So the woman Vivien is more focused on here, and more strongly felt in contrast to Jocasta. Though Vivien is still vulnerable to male forces, she is not invisible. Similarly, in *Naamgottroheen*, the female characters Sultana, Neeti, and Sugandhi are visible, strongly battling for their rights, and are not susceptible to the patriarchal society. Rather, the characters lash out at the male characters like Khuda Bakhsh, Shankar, and Madho.

Some texts are undecided about their approach to feminism. If the text is undecided about its approach, then it cannot be useful to feminists who look for their accusations of misogyny to be validated in the texts. This thesis of “undecidability” (Alcoff 353) is another version of the antifeminist argument that believes that this perception of feminism is limited and what “we take to be misogyny is in reality helpful rather than hurtful to the cause of the women” (Alcoff 354). Pantho Shahriar, the adaptation writer and director of *Andhakare Methane*, has consciously focused on the taboo of incest to make the audience think about it. For him, gender is not the prime focus. Rather ethical issues are raised to challenge the audience’s traditional perception of women. Being a male writer, he gives a neutral perspective of Jocasta’s psychological turmoil that began at a very tender age and made her strong. Creating a woman character and showing her struggle by addressing incest, the director has thrown a challenge at the audience, thus opening up the text for debate. According to the director, Vivien’s character is portrayed to give a voice to the silent Jocasta who suffers alone off-stage only to end her suffering

by committing suicide. He further added that the issue of contextualization was not considered important for the universality of the perception of every society about the incest taboo.

The two selected plays for discussion are experimental adaptations. The inner aspects of the lives of women, which are hidden from the public eye most of the time, are explored more vividly by the playwrights Pantho Shahriar and Usha Ganguly. In the adaptations, these playwrights have selected women characters from the writings of Sophocles and Manto respectively to focus on the relevance of the social taboos faced by Bangladeshi women to explore the position of the marginalized women.

The first play of focus here is an adaptation of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*. Sophocles created a larger-than-life character in Oedipus to show how strong the human spirit can be in the face of all odds and challenges given by fate or the gods. *Oedipus Rex* was first performed in 429 BC and concentrates on the male characters like Oedipus, Creon, and Tiresias only. In contrast to this, the female character, Jocasta, seems to be left with her sufferings and devastated life, never really being developed into a full character. The adaptation writer of *Andhokare Methane*, Pantha Shahriar, has taken this opportunity to build fully developed characters out of the neglected female characters to tell a new story and to address a contemporary taboo of his own society which may not have been feasible by simply conceptualizing the situation. Thus the character Vivien rises as a new well-developed character who resembles Jocasta only slightly.

From the very beginning, Vivien, the central female character in *Andhokare Methane*, has been shown as a woman searching for her identity in society. As the adaptation writer does not clearly proclaim the text to be feminist in outlook, it leaves the option for the deconstruction of the woman character. Vivien is exhausted by the way the male characters in the form of her father, lover, and son-husband, impose decisions on her life. She declares that she has been mesmerized by the way life has treated her, thus leaving her confused as to whether fate is chasing her or it is she who is chasing her fate like Oedipus. Although *Andhokare Methane* has been inspired by Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, the adapted play is more focused on the struggle of a human being with an over-arching fate from the perspective of a woman character. The adapted play is set in an imaginary place which resembles a European country in an early industrialized period. The place itself is a symbol of imprisonment as it puts the life of the characters always in danger of dying inside the coal mines.



Photo 1: Vivien in *Andhakare Methane* (Photo credit: Agontuk Repertory)

Vivien is seen here to be in a contradictory position facing odds and challenges put forth by her father who represents patriarchal society. He does not believe in the freedom of choice of a woman and thinks that she should abandon her illicit child. In spite of Vivien's repeated implorations, her father forces her to give up the child fearing that this illicit child will not be accepted by society. Later on, by a twist of fate, the same child becomes her husband and demands something which Vivien has been trying to avoid. Edward, the son-husband, wants a child from her to make their relationship fruitful. For Vivien, any discussion about a "child" reminds her of the "real child" she had to sacrifice because of the taboo surrounding illegitimacy. Interestingly, it is seen from her life that she has been dominated by the male characters around her. In her life, "methane" is not the deadly gas and the mine is not a prison for her; rather, the mine-restaurant she works at is the prison wherein lies the tools for her impending destruction.

According to Rosalind Coward, the relationship to patriarchal authority, for women especially, is bound to be hazardous (174). Men can exercise power and authority only if women's equality is denied. This is the case with Vivien as her search for "autonomy" ends in realizing that she has been betrayed and subjugated by all the males, especially Lawrence. She demands to be recognized as a human being. In Vivien's case, we notice that though she does not raise her voice verbally against society, she shows her disdain and decides to emancipate her troubled mind in one sense by setting fire to the interior of the mine after entering it.

The forces of patriarchal society make Vivien silently endure her trauma. At the beginning of *Andhakare Methane*, Vivien is seen serving all the customers, running

here and there in the process. The voices of the customers become so clamorous that at one point we see Vivien stop running as if a sudden darkness engulfed her. She feels as though she has lost her identity; then she enters into her private silent world. As Olsen says, only a few are born “into the privileged class” whereas others are born with “bound feet ... powerlessness ... fear of aging” (78). Vivien is such a female, born with these limitations. Here the voices are mostly male and it is clear that her life is dominated by these voices. This abstract “male voice” assumes a shape once she meets Lawrence and Vivien is tempted to respond to his request to drink a glass of beer together. Before Lawrence’s appearance, Vivien was not even conscious of being a woman. Ultimately Vivien succumbs to the charm of Lawrence and eventually, a child is born who becomes Vivien’s responsibility only as Lawrence disappears after that evening. It is the female who carries the burden of an illegitimate child and it is again her powerless in front of the society as she battles for the legitimacy of her child. The “bound feet” or the fear of the taboo makes Vivien give up her child to avoid the social stigma of an unmarried mother. Fear of society, which may accuse her of loneliness, forces her to marry the son-husband Edward whose identity she is totally oblivious of. In search of fulfillment, Vivien finds herself trapped by the memory of that one afternoon she spent with Lawrence. For her, fulfillment as a woman means getting a male life partner and becoming a mother. In a conversation with an imaginary character who is possibly her own self, she admits that it was her only wish to become a mother. Though the choice was hers, she never imagined that the stranger was taking advantage of her situation, thus putting her in a crisis where she had no choice but to estrange herself from the child. The silence of Vivien is noticeable here. She bears the burden of the decisions imposed on her by the male characters which ultimately makes her impassive.



Photo 2: From extreme left Edward, Vivien, and Lawrence (Photo credit: Agontuk Repertory)

Apart from all the ordeals she faces, Vivien stands as a strong character in different terms. First, her resilient nature is quite visible from the beginning as we see her running the restaurant all by herself and dealing with all the customers very efficiently. Second, her resistance to temptation by Lawrence is also very clear when she refuses to sit and drink with a stranger. Though she is lonely, she stays true to her strong personality for some moments. Third, she consciously decides to marry another stranger though later the husband is revealed to be her lost son. Fourth, her decision to take revenge on Lawrence is a daring act for a woman. Eventually, she makes her son-husband Edward kill Lawrence who is actually Edward's biological father, thus rebelling against the tyranny of the lover. All these actions of Vivien's show how free she is within her inner self. She also shows courage and honesty by admitting to Edward that she once loved Lawrence. When Lawrence tells Edward out of anger that Vivien gave birth to his child, Edward does not believe it; but Vivien firmly announces that she did indeed do so. Lastly, when she finds out that Edward is her lost child, she remains silent. This silence is perhaps her last attempt to come to terms with her fate. Her other self tries to interpret the consequences by identifying the situation as "fate" or "her sin" but this only prompts Vivien to do what she has done before. Unlike Oedipus, in this play, it is Vivien, a woman, who meets her downfall because of her search for the truth. However, she, unlike Oedipus, cannot torment herself by piercing her eyes. Instead, she decides to end her life by setting fire to the inside of the mine and thus committing suicide. The theme of incest is thus very aptly used in the play to shed light on the condition of women in society and to show how, in spite of the odds, a woman can still find her own individuality as Vivien does.

The second play for discussion comprises three short stories by Saadat Hasan Manto—"Kaali Shalvar," "The License," and "Hatak"—adapted into a single play by Usha Ganguly. Manto, a short story writer in Urdu, rips away the mask of society's goodness and brings forth the animalism that exists there. He shows in the stories how society makes women choose taboo professions and sell their bodies to earn a living. Manto calls these women living corpses and suggests that society should bear their burden instead of the women themselves. His commitment to truth and his passion for challenging all in the face to establish the truth makes him impartial and unselfconscious. As Daruwalla says, "Manto reveled in whatever shocked him, be it obscenity or sudden violence, or the dramatic and brutal manner with which he unmasked hypocrisy" (117-118). Manto believed that literature can provide solutions to social ills while describing the problem realistically. This is evident in the way he speaks of women and prostitutes with insight into their psychology, thus creating real people and not giving sermons (Bredi 120).

Usha Ganguly, the scriptwriter of the play *Naamgottroheen – Manto'r Meyera*, is an Indian theater writer and activist who focused on the condition of women in Southeast Asia. She brought this play to Bangladesh and successfully staged it with Nagorik Nattya Sampraday as their 45th production. All three characters that are

focused on in the adaptation are out of the ordinary: all three are prostitutes of different ages – Sultana in her early thirties, Neeti not even eighteen, and Sugandhi, a woman in her forties. What they have in common is a taboo profession which was not a choice for them but imposed on them for their survival.

The three short stories are represented in three parts within the play. The chorus (or, as Usha Ganguly calls them in Bangla, “Shutradhar”) connects each part by giving necessary introductory comments. It also goes on stage during the play to interpret the relevant protagonists. The play begins with “Kaali Shalvar,” where the protagonist Sultana is made a prostitute by Khuda Bakhsh, a man who continues to live on her earnings and squanders her money on fraud Pirs and Fakirs. Sultana is forced to sell everything that she has to feed herself and Khuda Bakhsh, and the only thing that she wanted in return from him was a black shalvar¹ to wear during the Muharram which he refuses to give. Throughout the whole play, we see Sultana accepting her situation quite blatantly and happily, even going to the extent of mentioning it to Khuda Bakhsh that her “dhandha” (business) was going quite well in Ambala. Sultana’s recollection of her golden days of prostitution in Ambala is quite dramatic and brutal, making the audience feel the haughtiness with which Sultana embraces her fate.



Photo 3: Khuda Bakhsh and Sultana in *Namgottroheen–Manto'r Meyera* (Photo credit: Nagorik)

¹A loose fitting pair of pants commonly worn with a long tunic by women in Southeast Asia.

It is quite obvious from the play that the playwright wished to focus on the taboo profession as an everyday affair rather than a stigmatized one. Sultana takes pride in her success and is quite eloquent around her customers. She is repeatedly exploited by the males around her, be it her customers, or Khuda Bakhsh, or Shankar who pretends to be her friend. She knows their worth, and their capability, but still believes in the dream that Shankar will give her what she longs for. She is astounded when Shankar cheats her to fulfill her dream of wearing a pair of black shalvar. Shankar, like Khuda Bakhsh, takes Sultana's last possession, the earrings given to her by her mother, with the promise of bringing her the coveted shalvar.

The second part of the play focuses on Neeti, an adolescent girl who falls in love with Abdul, a tangawala (carriage driver) and is whisked away into a dream world of love and affection. The dream does not last long and Neeti is jarred back to reality by the sudden tragic death of Abdul in police custody after he is arrested for marrying the juvenile Neeti.



Photo 4: Neeti and Abdul in Namgottroheen – Manto'r Meyera (Photo credit: Nagorik)

After Abdul's death, Neeti starts driving his carriage and people fall over themselves to ride her tanga as they make indecent proposals to her. Then one day, the City Committee tells her that she cannot drive the carriage without a new license. When asked the reason for such an absurd order, the committee does not give a suitable reply. Rather, the members pass the verdict that no woman would be given a license to drive a carriage. They even go far enough to suggest that she is a prostitute. After much crying and seeing no alternative, Neeti sells off the carriage

and applies for a license for prostitution which she gets very quickly. Neeti lives in a slimy shanty and longs to change her fate. But again, she is bound by the decision taken by the society that a woman cannot be a carriage driver and would be better off being a prostitute. Here we see that women are viewed “as a specifically female, rather than a human power” (Beer 79). Patriarchal society is informed by this view of women and, as Mary Hays points out, “men have valued women’s virtues, such as prudence, patience, wisdom, where they prove convenient” (qtd. by Beer 79). Neeti accepts her fate but when the very same society alienates her for being a prostitute, she lashes back and says that the society can have her whole flesh and body but can never take away what is hers – the soul.

The last part of the play is about Sugandhi who, like Sultana, enters into prostitution to survive in the world. The story begins by showing her as a seasoned prostitute. She knows how to bring in customers and look after them properly. Madho is one of her longstanding customers who does not pay her but rather lives on her money. The play starts with the calculation of Sugandhi’s money by Madho and her monthly expenditure. Madho emotionally exploits her and promises to give her happiness which she longs for. Sugandhi has been silent during all these exploitations, until she is humiliatingly rejected by a customer. She reacts violently and her strength allows her to throw out Madho, her worthless lover, preferring to have her dog as a companion instead. Madho is like the other aforementioned male characters, Khuda Bakhsh or Shankar, living off the women characters. The verbal insults are a reflection of the pain and emptiness that she feels inside which makes her embrace the dog and retire into her own private world. The play ends with a question to the audience: whether Manto was more focused on the vulgarism of prostitution or dedicated to presenting women in that profession.



Photo 5: Madho and Sugandhi in *Namgottroheen – Manto'rMeyera* (Photo credit: Nagorik)

We, as female members of the audience, feel connected to the women characters on the stage and undoubtedly understand the crisis of the taboo profession, which in this case is prostitution, faced by all the three characters. There are thousands of women in our country who are forced to sell their bodies to earn a living to survive against the odds. The profession later on becomes bearable for them, but what tears them apart is the unacceptance of their profession in society. The same men who enjoy the prostitutes behave contrarily in front of the world, treating the women as dirt. This is what makes Sultana, Neeti, or Sugandhi lash out, voice their frustration, and at last negate the decisions imposed on them by the patriarchal society. Usha Ganguly very relevantly presented this through the adapted play and aptly names it *Naamgottroheen* which presents reality: these tabooed females do not have any name or caste, and are, therefore, a voiceless entity in the society.

The women characters in both the adapted plays are strong in handling their crisis or the tabooed relationships in which they find themselves. Being a prostitute or a single mother out of wedlock is not a personal issue for them. The crisis they fall into is a creation of the society that they live in, a society dominated by males and the decisions imposed on Vivien or Neeti are taken by the male members of the society. The rejection or the exploitation that they go through is also because of the males. The women in the plays want to be recognized as human beings. They all remained passive at first, and then the emotional battle leads them to become active through verbal or physical protestation. What all of them have in common is their unwavering sense of independence in the face of extreme hostility from the men. Taboos like prostitution and incest are taken up by both the adaptation writers to examine the process for handling the crisis, how the female characters respond to the crisis and emerge as strong individuals actively resisting the patriarchal ideologies. The difference in gender, race, culture, or religion is not focused on here. Rather, the truth about considering females as human beings is emphasized. The adaptation writers have experimented by presenting the foreign themes which have relevance in our society. A context is not needed as the voice of the female in such crisis will always be the same. The stories are selected to give voice to the countless females who suffer similarly and face the patriarchal society single-handedly. Hearing those voices on the stage is a unique experience and has mixed reactions among the audience. The change in the audience after watching the plays cannot be predicted. It is the audience who has to decide whether to accept or reject the idea of taboo that the adaptation writers focus on.

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L A N G U A G E



Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in Language Learning: A Case Study

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Abstract

This case study attempts to find out the role of individual differences (IDs) in language learning of an advanced Bangladeshi EFL learner who aims to study at a graduate level program in Education at a North American university. A two-phase structured questionnaire interview has been conducted in which phase one comprises 40 open-ended questions with a general structure that attempts to find out the various personal characteristics of the interviewee, namely 'personal profile,' 'learning history,' linguistic background, etc. In phase two, there are two sub-phases, and the questionnaire in the first sub-phase focuses on four IDs namely 'personality,' 'learning style,' 'anxiety,' and 'willingness to communicate,' with a general research question concerning the effects of these IDs on the interviewee. In the second sub-phase, the researcher narrows down the focus of the research question to the two most important IDs influencing the interviewee's learning of English, namely 'anxiety' and 'willingness to communicate.' For the second sub-phase of phase two, the researcher uses four quantitative measurement scales, two measuring the interviewee's anxiety (adapted from Horwitz and Horwitz, 1986) and the other two measuring her willingness to communicate (adapted from Macintyre, 2001) both inside and outside of classrooms. The results show that the interviewee feels very anxious and addled in the classroom whereas she feels quite the opposite outside the classroom. Naturally, her willingness to communicate in the classroom is very low as

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she does not enjoy the teacher-centered deductive presentations of grammar rules. Also, the interviewee's personality has a decisive effect on her language learning. Being an extrovert outside class and quiet in the class, she does not enjoy her academic success per se. Finally, there is a comparison between the researcher and the interviewee's language learning experience revealing a number of similarities and differences between them.

Introduction

This case study attempts to find out the role of individual differences (IDs) in language learning of an advanced Bangladeshi EFL learner who aims to study at a graduate level program in Education at a North American university. The learner will be addressed as Masha (a pseudonym) who is an exchange visitor on a J-visa living in downtown Washington DC with her husband. A two-phase interview was conducted in which phase one comprises a generally structured open-ended questionnaire with 40 questions that attempts to find out “enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and which people differ by degree” (Dornyei, 2005, p. 644) in relation to the roles they played in Masha's learning of English as a foreign language. Phase two narrows the general focus to more specific ones analyzing the qualitative responses of the phase one interview. In other words, for the phase two interview, only those IDs were chosen which were “consistently shown to correlate strongly with L2 achievement – to a degree that no other SLA variables match” (ibid, 643). For phase two, the researcher used four quantitative measurement scales, two measuring the interviewee's anxiety (adapted from Horwitz and Horwitz, 1986) and the other two measuring her willingness to communicate (adapted from MacIntyre, 2001) both inside and outside of classrooms.

Phase one of the interview took place at 4pm on April 8, 2013 at a local restaurant in Washington DC. The researcher came to know about Masha through a friend of his and contacted her via email first to express his interest in interviewing her. He also added that the interview would not be timed so she could take her time in answering the questions but that it would be audio recorded. As Masha agreed, the date was set for the interview. The interview lasted 1.5 hours and was audio recorded in its entirety. The second phase of the interview (also face-to-face) took place on April 14, but was not audio-recorded since that was an attitude questionnaire in which Masha had to choose from a range of responses.

L2 learning history and the linguistic environment

The interviewee is a 25-year old female from Bangladesh, a country that falls under the outer circle in the three concentric circles as defined by Kachru (1985) in which “English is not the native tongue, but is important for historical reasons and plays a part in the nation's institutions, either as an official language or otherwise.” She completed her B. A. in English Language and Literature from a private university

in Dhaka, Bangladesh. On completion of her B. A. degree, she came to the United States in August 2011 as a J-2 dependent (a non-immigrant visa) with her husband. She works for a coffee shop in downtown DC where she has to interact with a lot of native and non-native speakers of English every day.

In part I of the interview (Personal Profile, Learning History, and Linguistic Background), she identified herself as an advanced user of English as aptly reflected in her IBT TOEFL score (105 out of 120). She spoke Bangla as her native language and also as a medium of learning for the entire pre-tertiary education for 12 years. In other words, the medium of instruction for all the content areas in her school was Bangla, and she had studied English as a subject like other content area courses (e.g., History and Geography) from the very start of her school at the age of five. She was first exposed to an English-speaking learning environment when she enrolled in the B.A. in English Language and Literature program at a university in Dhaka. Till then, she had hardly had any opportunity to practice her English (speaking) beyond classrooms. Moreover, even within the classroom, there was extensive use of L1, which again limited the scope for speaking practice.

Shedding light on her academic learning environment for English, she mentioned that she had four one-hour English classes in the primary level and five 1.5-hour English classes at the secondary level. The English classes were mostly limited to reading, writing, and grammar throughout as there was no systematic teaching of listening and speaking. Masha identified the reason for this discriminatory focus as the result of the exam-oriented education system. Since the tests/exams were limited to only reading and writing, teaching was largely geared towards achieving these skills and thereby preparing the learners solely for the test. Listening and speaking were expected to be learned as a by-product of classroom discussion.

The textbooks were largely reading-based followed by comprehension questions. Usually the writing tasks used to be integrated into the readings as extension activities. A typical example of her secondary English textbook activity would be a reading comprehension, say, on family planning followed by comprehension questions and controlled writing activities like filling in the blanks with missing information. She was then instructed to write a paragraph on selected issues of the reading passage in question. Also, there were literary texts (mostly short stories and poems) to stimulate “creative thinking.” She added that there was not much variation in the class work and homework since both emphasized mostly similar reading and writing activities. In her words, “the homework was mere extensions of the class work.”

However, despite her limited exposure to English in the academia, she used to watch English cartoons since Grade 1 on various satellite channels in Dhaka. As she reached her sixth grade, she started watching Disney movies regularly. She said that natural exposure to English through visual media was extremely helpful in getting her ears attuned to understanding both British and American English. She

said that at the beginning, “it was just a lot of listening, with almost zero speaking” which, according to her, helped to make a solid linguistic as well as pragmatic foundation for her future learning of English.

Relevant personal characteristics influencing language learning

As Ellis (2008) pointed out, the factors in the study of individual differences “overlap in vague and indeterminate ways,” and it is sometimes impossible to figure out the exact roles of a given factor in relation to the other factors (p. 644). As an attempt to systematize the study of the IDs, Ellis (2008) divided them in terms of ‘abilities’ (cognitive capabilities for language learning), ‘propensities’ (cognitive and affective qualities related to language learning), ‘learner cognitions about L2 learning,’ and ‘learner actions.’ However, Dornyei (cited in Ellis, 2008) pointed out that it may not always be easy to decide if an ID constitutes ‘ability’ or a ‘propensity.’ That is why it may be more sensible, as Ellis (2008) commented, to treat them separately. Following is an individual discussion of the four ID factors, namely learning style, personality, anxiety, and willingness to communicate.

Learning Style

According to Keefe (1979a), learning styles refer to the characteristics that indicate “how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment” (p. 4). He also describes it as a “consistent way of functioning” which reflects the “underlying causes of behavior” (p. 4). As for measuring the learning style, there are research instruments that have been borrowed from general psychology, for example, Dunn et al.’s (1991) Productivity Environmental Preference Survey, while others have been specifically designed to investigate language learners, for example, Reid’s (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Questionnaire (Ellis 2012, pp. 667-668).

Dunn et al.’s (1991) Productivity Environmental Preferences Survey measures learning styles in “four areas: a) preferences for environmental stimuli, b) quality of emotional stimuli, c) orientation towards sociological stimuli, and d) preferences related to physical stimuli” (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 668). It is designed to showcase preferences pertaining to both personality and learning style. Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, and Daley (2000) employed this questionnaire among 100 French and Spanish first and second semester students studying at a US university. The study reveals that higher achievers prefer informal classroom design as opposed to “receiv[ing] information via kinesthetic mode” (p. 115).

On the other hand, Reid’s (1987) perceptual learning styles questionnaire was created based on four perceptual learning styles (visual learning, auditory learning, kinesthetic learning, and tactile learning) and two social learning styles (group preferences, individual preferences). She administered the survey on learners of

different language backgrounds and found that learners had a general preference for kinesthetic and tactile learning with a negative attitude (both native and non-native learners) towards group work. However, a modified version of Reid's questionnaire, conducted by Wintergerst, DeCapua and Verna (2003), revealed a contradictory result (learners preferred group work over individual work). The researchers consider time gap and various social learning styles to be responsible for the contradictory results.

Ellis (2012, p. 671)) concludes that since learners' preference towards L2 learning approach varies to a great extent, it is almost impossible to choose the best one. He mentions 'flexibility' to be a plausible reason for learners' success, but it lacks real evidence. He adds that it is unlikely that progress will happen in this respect unless and until researchers know what it is that they want to measure.

Personality

Pervin and John (2001) define 'personality' as an expression of a consistency in the pattern of "feeling, thinking and behaving" (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 672). Both teachers and learners consider it to be a very important aspect of language learning as evidenced in Griffiths' (1991b) and Naiman et al.'s (1978) study respectively, which shows that teachers consider it to be an important aspect in L2 language learning. As for measuring personality, different language specific questionnaires have been developed to determine "dimensions of personality" like tolerance of ambiguity or risk taking. "Eysenck Personality Questionnaire" or the "Myers Briggs Type indicators" are examples of two types of general questionnaires to identify a learner's personality.

Among the many dimensions of personality, the most notable is extraversion/introversion. Two hypotheses have been made for correlating extraversion/ introversion with L2 learning. The first hypothesis, the one which has been widely researched, states that extrovert learners acquire basic interpersonal communication skills better due to the opportunity for more practice leading to a bigger chance of success. The second hypothesis states that cognitive academic language develops more for introvert learners due to their time dedication towards academic reading and writing. Strong's (1983) review of 12 studies revealed that extraversion was at a point of advantage for language acquisition which supports the first hypothesis. However, Dörnyei and Kormos' (2000) study failed to find a positive correlation between language acquisition and extraversion. Dewaele and Furnham (1999), on the other hand, concluded from their study that extrovert learners though may be fluent in both L1 and L2 but it is not necessary for them to be accurate (cited in Ellis, p. 674). Much research has been conducted to prove the validity of the second hypothesis. However, most of those (Busch, 1982; Carell, Prince, and Astika, 1996; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995) have found either an insignificant or a weak relationship (cited in Ellis, p. 674) between extraversion/introversion and academic proficiency.

The Big Five Model, an important theory of personality in psychology, has five dimension of personality (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion-introversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism-emotional stability) (Big Five Personality Test, June 05, 2015). This model has been modified and used by Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) where it was found that children showing interest in belonging and identifying with their target language speaking peers achieve success in learning (p. 373).

Recent studies have seen more success than that of the previous ones in correlating language with personality traits. However, there are limitations like situational dependence of personality, variables like attitude, motivation, situational anxiety influencing the effect of personality, and methodological deficiency.

Anxiety

The learning situation affects the learning process of both naturalistic and classroom learners. Language, according to Pavlenko (2006b), is an “inherently emotional affair” (cited in Ellis, 2012, p.691). Researchers like Horwitz, and Young (1991), Arnold (1999), and Young (1999) (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 691) believe anxiety to be SLA’s most noticeable affective aspect. The three types of anxiety that are present are – trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is the tendency of being anxious all the time, whereas state anxiety is what a learner feels in a particular moment as a reaction to a certain situation (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 691). Finally, situation specific anxiety is the apprehension a learner feels in situations like examination, public speaking, etc. (Ellis, 2012, p. 691).

Among the many techniques of measuring the correlation between anxiety and achievement diary data, questionnaire responses correlating to achievement, experiments, report of learners’ response to language learning condition are mentionable. Spielmann and Radnofsky’s (2001) ethnographic studies containing “rich description of learners’ reactions to their learning situations” address “three issues: 1) the source of language anxiety, 2) the nature of the relationship between language anxiety and language learning, and 3) how anxiety affects learning” (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 692).

Another notable study, the diary study by Bailey (1983, cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 692) has the analysis of 11 learners where she found that when learners find themselves more proficient than their peers, their anxiety decreases. She mentioned tests, teacher-student relationships, etc. to be some sources of anxiety. Ellis and Rathbone (1987) found from their study that teachers’ questions can be another source of anxiety. However, it is really hard to identify the sources of anxiety because Horwitz (2001), from the review of her studies, revealed that in most of the cases the tasks that were considered “comfortable” by some were considered to be “stressful” by others(p.118).

Among the many instruments of measuring anxiety level Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale is notable. Their 33-itemed questionnaire tries to relate to the three sources of anxiety (communication apprehension, test, and fear of negative evaluation) for speaking and listening in L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2012, p. 693). On the other hand, Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) developed a questionnaire to identify the relationship of reading and writing anxiety with general language anxiety (Ellis, 2012, p. 693).

Language learning and anxiety are related to each other and three positions have been identified regarding the relationship between anxiety and language learning. The first position, anxiety facilitates learning, was supported by Eysenck (1979) who said that "low level anxiety" motivates learners to give more effort (Ellis, 2012, p. 694). MacIntyre (2002), Chastain (1975), Kleinmann (1978) assumed a similar position in their studies. The second position, anxiety, has a negative impact on language learning, and was supported by Chastain (1975) and Horwitz (1986) who found a negative correlation between anxiety and grades or marks. Ely (1986a) found that learners having high anxiety levels took less risk. That is, their motivation was negatively affected (Ellis, 2012, p. 694). The third position, language anxiety, the result of difficulty with learning rather than its cause, was supported by a series of studies conducted by Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky (2000) which claims that anxiety regarding L2 learning is a result of language difficulties faced by the learners (Ellis, 2012, p. 695).

An important model on anxiety and the language learning process was proposed by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a), known as the developmental model, which tries to relate learners' developmental stage and situation specific learning experiences with learner anxiety. This model justifies Parkinson and Howell-Richardson's (1990) diary studies which revealed that anxiety develops because of learners' "bad learning experience" (Ellis, 2012, p. 695). Elkhafai's (2005) study showed that beginner learners had more listening anxiety than intermediate or advanced learners as "anxiety reduces as they develop" (Ellis, 2012, p. 695).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) developed their model based on their study in which they used video cameras to observe anxiety levels in the three stages (input stage, processing stage, and output stage). They found the anxiety level to be highest just after introducing the video camera. However, gradually, learners overcame the anxiety and compensated it by increasing performance (Ellis, 2012, p. 696).

Willingness to communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC), in other words, "the intention to initiate communication given a choice" (MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, and Conrad, 2001) is considered to be a variable that is "determined by other variables" (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 697). The factors influencing WTC are situation specific (Ellis, 2012, p. 697).

One of the prominent studies on this variable was done by Yashima (2002) who

illustrated in her study the necessity of knowing what learning a language means in a context before imposing a definition/model developed elsewhere. In other words, the definition and attitudes of language learning should be bottom up as opposed to top-down. Yashima's (2000) study reveals how international posture (general attitude of the international community) figures both as a direct and indirect variable depending on the context (p.62). However, Kang's (2005) study on four Korean adult males learning English where they were paired with native speakers to communicate freely showed no direct relationship between international relationship and WTC (Ellis, 2012, p. 698).

As far as learning the language to communicate is concerned, Ellis (2012) related WTC to CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) as he said that learners who are willing to communicate are benefitted from CLT whereas learners who are not willing to communicate learn better from more traditional approaches. Comparing the difference of WTC inside and outside of classes, MacIntyre et al. in their study found WTC to be a "stable, trait like factor" (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 698), the same both inside and outside the classroom for Anglophone learners of L2 French in Canada.

Adding an interesting dimension, Dörnyei and Kormos' (2000) study revealed a relation between WTC and attitude towards the task. They found that learners with a positive attitude towards the task had more willingness to communicate whereas the correlation was close to zero when the learners had a negative attitude towards the task (Ellis, 2012, p. 698).

The current study

To develop a general understanding of the roles these IDs played in Masha's acquisition of English, the current two-phase study adopts a concatenated approach, or a research-then-theory approach through a structured questionnaire interview with a general research question, "To what extent do learning styles, personality, anxiety, and willingness to communicate account for Masha's L2 achievement?" The questionnaire has 33 questions with separate sections on each of the IDs mentioned above. Analyzing the interviewee's responses to these questions, the researcher narrowed down the focus of the research question to the two most important IDs influencing Masha's learning of English, namely 'anxiety,' and 'willingness to communicate.'

As the researcher analyzes the raw data collected through the questionnaires, he found that Masha was mostly an autonomous learner who learned best by working on her own. She found classroom learning boring and frustrating whereas she learned unconsciously through TV or movies and found it fun. She was very conscious about making errors in class, whereas she did not care much about the errors she made outside classes during her spontaneous speech. She also learned through application, so, naturally, she did not find the grammar-focused classroom instructions very engaging, frequently getting distracted. Moreover, being quite a

talkative person outside class, Masha was quite reserved in the classrooms. Finally, although unwilling to communicate in the classroom, Masha was quite enthusiastic about out-of-class communication.

Summarizing her responses from the general questionnaire, the researcher could detect a very different behavioral pattern in Masha's attitude inside and outside of classrooms. Based on this finding, he decided to further explore Masha's 'anxiety' and 'willingness to communicate' in and out of the classroom. The research question was revised to the following:

- *To what extent do 'anxiety' and 'willingness to communicate' account for Masha's language development in and out of class?*

The researcher adapted each of the scales into two parts: one part investigating Masha's behavior in the classroom and the other part outside of class. Each of the parts had 10 statements to specifically find out Masha's behavioral differences in and out of class (please see the fully developed scales as appendix B, C, D, and E). In designing both the scales, the same items (for example, her level of confidence in and out of class) were used for the researcher to be able to compare the findings with each other. The researcher adapted a well-organized pattern for the interviewee to feel comfortable in answering the questions. In the questionnaire, the interviewee had to check the appropriate box from five options for each item. For analysis, the responses were converted into mathematical figures as follows:

Response	Score
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

The two interpretation keys were developed to interpret the range of responses for anxiety and willingness to communicate:

Range	Level of anxiety	Range	Level of willingness to communicate
50-4	Very low	50-40	Very high
30-3	Moderate	30-39	High
20-3	High	20-38	Moderate
1-19	Very high	1-19	Very low

Results and Discussion

The results of Masha's scale surveys are the following:

Anxiety (in class)	Anxiety (out of class)	Willingness to communicate (in class)	Willingness to communicate (out of class)
29	40	25	44

The scale survey results both in 'anxiety' and 'willingness to communicate' strongly correlate with the findings of the general questionnaire interview in that Masha's anxiety level is very high when she learns in class and extremely low (in fact the lowest) during her outside class interactions. Similar results were found with her 'willingness to communicate': very low in class yet, very high outside of classes.

Anxiety

Masha's response to classroom anxiety is similar to one of the students, namely Monique, in Ellis and Rathbone's (1987) study in which the learner "felt stupid and helpless in class" (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 692). Also, Eyseneck's findings that low level anxiety can lead to more effect is similar to Masha's since her low anxiety outside the classroom was proved to be facilitative in acquiring English. However, unlike Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) findings, Masha's high anxiety level may not entirely reflect her "apprehension at having to communicate spontaneously" (as cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 692). It is applicable only when she is in the classroom.

Willingness to Communicate

As presented in McIntyre's (2001) research, WTC is influenced by variables like "communication anxiety" (cited in Ellis, p. 697) which is strongly reflected in Masha's case as communication anxiety in the classroom prevents her from participating actively in the classroom activities. It can also be concluded that given her autonomous and experiential learning style, she did not enjoy the teacher-centered deductive presentations of grammar rules. Also, Masha's personality had a decisive effect on her language learning. Being an extrovert outside class and quiet in the class, Masha did not like to spend time in classrooms, and therefore, she did not quite enjoy her "academic success" as noted by Griffith (1991) with regards to introverted learners (cited in Ellis, 2012, p. 674).

Conclusion

Finally, as the researcher compared his findings to that of his own learning background and IDs, he finds a number of similarities as well as differences. The major similarities are:

- Both of them are the products of teacher-centered pedagogy
- Both of them studied similar textbooks
- Both of them had a high level of anxiety in the classroom
- Both of them were unwilling to communicate in class

While observing their differences, the researcher found the following:

- The interviewee had access to satellite TV channels while the researcher did not, and thereby could not avail the opportunity of input flooding
- The interviewee's anxiety level was low outside the class, but the researcher had a high level of anxiety both inside and outside of his class till his tertiary level of education
- The interviewee was very willing to communicate outside the classroom whereas the researcher was not until the later part of his tertiary level of education.

Based on the similarities and differences between the researcher and the interviewee, it may be surprising to note that, despite the fact that the researcher did not have much opportunity for input for a long time, and that his anxiety level was pretty high both inside and outside of class, the researcher still managed to learn English and reached an advanced stage of learning. So, it can be concluded that it may be difficult to measure the effect of IDs on language learning since the apparent negative impact of an ID may not be negative and vice-versa.

Limitations of the study

This study has a few limitations. Firstly, the researcher of the study, being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, may not have fully overcome the human subjective bias in selecting and organizing issues that he found pertinent. Therefore, though the researcher was conscious about not influencing the study at all, there may have been unconscious attempts to manipulate the subject's answers, thereby affecting the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study. Secondly, since it is a case study, it may never claim its findings to be truly representative of similar sets of subjects as Hamel (1993) said, "...case stud [ies] [have] basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness" (p. 23). However, the researcher has listened to the tape recorded interview repeatedly to detect and thereby remove any single example of subjective bias to make the findings as objective as possible.

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Appendix A

General Questionnaire Interview

I would like to talk to you about your experiences of learning English. In the first part of the interview, I would like to ask you questions pertaining to when and how and in what sequence you learned English. I may give you a more specific questionnaire later on addressing any one or two of the topics that may emerge out of the interview today. The purpose of the questionnaire would be to collect more in-depth information about the chosen topics.

Part I: Personal Profile, Learning History, and Linguistic Environment

1. Languages spoken at home
2. The first language you learned
3. At what age did you start learning your second language?
4. Where and under what circumstances did you learn?

Possible sub-questions:

- a. From what grade in your school did you start learning English? Typically how many hours of classroom instruction did you have in your school (primary, secondary, and post-secondary)?
- b. Did you learn English as a subject or as a medium of instruction for all the content areas?
- c. Were there separate classes for each of the language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) or was there a general English class?
- d. What about grammar? Was there a separate grammar class? (please mention the level of study, for example, primary school, secondary school, higher secondary school or college, and tertiary level education) while answering this question
- e. Tell me about your textbook: what was it like? Were there a lot of grammar exercises? Did you have to speak or write in the classroom?
- f. What kind of speaking or writing activities did you have to do? Can you give an example? (Please mention the level of study, for example, primary school, secondary school, higher secondary school or college, and tertiary level education).
- g. Do you remember what kind of homework you had to do? What was difficult for you?

- h. What about class work? What type of class work did you find particularly challenging?
- i. Did you have opportunities to practice the language with anyone else outside your classes? At what level of education did you have the maximum opportunity to practice your English beyond classrooms?
- j. Did you watch English movies or listen to the radio? Typically how many movies did you watch? Was there any other source of English input? Please mention each of them.
- k. Which of these languages do you maintain to the present time?
- l. Which of the following statements would be more appropriate as you categorize yourself as a language learner?

	Below elementary	Elementary proficiency	Working knowledge	Advanced
Understanding				
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				

Part II: Individual differences (IDs)

Anxiety (5-11)

5. Many language learners feel very negative about their learning experiences. They say they feel discouraged, frustrated, impatient, or confused by the difficulties of learning a language. Have you ever experienced any of these feelings?
6. There are other learners who say that they feel shy or embarrassed expressing themselves in the foreign language. Have you ever felt this way? Can you explain?
7. When you are learning a language, are you usually:
 - a. highly motivated, and do everything possible to learn the language?
 - b. quite motivated, and try to do what you can to learn the language, but it is not your priority?
 - c. not very motivated, because you are too busy or tired to concentrate on it? You are learning out of necessity.
 - d. not very motivated, because you find learning languages boring?

8. Do you give yourself encouragement, by saying things to yourself like: “I’m doing okay” or “I’m right, I know it”?
9. In your language class, do you often think about other things that have nothing to do with learning the language? Can you explain why?
10. Are you very performance-conscious when you speak English in class? In other words, do you think you should not make any error so that other people have a positive impression about your language ability?
11. How do you feel about giving an unrehearsed talk in class? Can you think of an example to illustrate your point?

Learning Styles: (12-19)

12. How do you usually learn best?
 - ____ working on my own and taking my own time.
 - ____ from an instructor's lecture.
 - ____ from an instructor who works personally with me.
 - ____ working in a small group of people I feel comfortable with.
 - ____ seeing practical application.
 - ____ following written directions.
 - ____ from a small group of people with an instructor available to answer questions.
13. What most helps your learning? (Check as many as you want; rank in order of importance.)
 - ____ having my own routine.
 - ____ talking with others while learning.
 - ____ being able to take my time.
 - ____ having fun while learning.
 - ____ being able to practice what I am learning.
 - ____ getting support and encouragement from instructors/people at home.
14. What occurs to you first when you are learning something?
 - ____ remembering something you did once that was similar.
 - ____ thinking up a picture of how something ought to be.
 - ____ getting as much information as you can about the topic.
15. What is the easiest part or stage of learning for you?
 - ____ beginning something.
 - ____ working on the details and practicing.

- ____ completing something.

16. What is the most difficult part of learning for you?

- ____ beginning something.
- ____ working on the details and practicing.
- ____ completing something.

17. In putting something together, I:

- ____ read instructions first, then look at the pieces.
- ____ look at the pieces, then read the instructions.
- ____ look at the instructions but make up my own way of putting the pieces together.
- ____ try to put pieces together first; then if it doesn't work, I look at the instructions.

18. How do you best learn ideas and theories?

- ____ talking about them
- ____ working on applying them
- ____ reading about them

19. How do you know when you have really learned something? (Check one)

- ____ I feel comfortable doing it again.
- ____ I show or tell my family and friends what I can do.
- ____ Other: _____

Personality (20-25)

20. Would you like to define yourself as a talkative or quiet person? What about your interaction in a language class? Are you the same talkative or quiet person in the outside world too?

21. Generally speaking, do you think you are creative and can come up with new ideas? Please give an example.

22. Are you curious about many different things or just do whatever you have to do?

23. Do you see yourself as someone who is disorganized? Why or why not? I would appreciate an example.

24. How do you handle stress? Do you think you can remain calm in tense situations?

25. Do you make plans and follow through or do you just do things as they come?

Willingness to Communicate: (25-33)

26. If a stranger walks into your class, how willing would you be to have a conversation with him/her, if s/he talked to you first?
27. If you are confused about the teacher's instruction, how willing are you to ask for clarification?
28. Would you be interested to read a long letter from a pen pal closely? Why or why not?
29. If you take a fun quiz from a magazine, will you write down the answers for the quiz after you take it?
30. How willing would you be in describing the rules of your favorite game to a friend?
31. Would you be interested in reading an advertisement in the paper to find a good bicycle that you can buy?
32. Do you write down a list of things that you must buy tomorrow?
33. If you are confused about the direction of a place where you are heading, will you ask someone or study the map more closely?

Appendix B

Directions: Put a check in the boxes that you mostly agree with

Foreign Language Anxiety Scale in the Classroom
(Adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986)

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class					
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.					
3. I stay calm when I don't understand the teacher's instructions and ask for clarification.					
4. It would not bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.					

5. I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.					
6. I never panic when I have to speak in my English class.					
7. I never worry about the consequences of failing in my English class.					
8. I never understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.					
9. I feel confident when I speak in my English language class.					
10. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my English class.					
11. I never get intimidated by other students who are better than I am in my English class.					

Appendix C

Foreign Language Anxiety Scale Outside of Classrooms
(Adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986)

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking the foreign language outside of class.					
2. I don't worry about making mistakes while speaking the foreign language outside class.					

3. I stay calm when I don't understand the other person in a conversation and usually ask for clarification questions.					
4. It would not bother me to speak to a more competent speaker than myself.					
4. I am not embarrassed if the other speaker corrects my mistake.					
5. I never panic when a native speaker starts a conversation with me.					
6. I never worry about the consequences of not having a successful conversation with a native speaker.					
7. I never understand why some people get so nervous speaking English outside of class.					
8. I am never worried about the possibility that a native speaker may find my English not up to the mark outside of class.					
9. I always put active effort in making the other person understand me without being embarrassed.					
10. I never feel pressured to sound correct all the time when I speak in English.					

Scoring key:

- Strongly Agree: 5
Agree: 4
Neutral: 3
Disagree: 2
Strongly Disagree: 1

Range of anxiety:

- 50-40 = Confident/very low-level of anxiety
30-39 = Moderate level of anxiety
20-38 = Anxious
1-19 = Extremely anxious

Appendix D

Directions: Put a check in the boxes that you mostly agree with Foreign Language Willingness to Communicate Scale in the Classroom (Adapted from MacIntyre *et al.*, 2001)

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I usually speak to my teacher in or after class if I don't understand the homework					
2. I usually talk to my classmates in English during break.					
3. I am comfortable reading a passage assigned by the teacher in a language class.					
4. I ask the teacher questions about the reading if I don't understand anything even if I try.					
4. I usually take notes in my language classes and write down all the important instructions.					

5. I quickly jot down a new word or phrase that the teacher has used and ask him what it means.					
6. I feel comfortable speaking with my peers during pair/group work.					
7. If a new student joins a class, I am comfortable talking to him first.					
8. I am happy to answer my peer's question related to a task during group work.					
9. I like to volunteer answers to questions asked by the teacher.					
10. I am willing to participate in the small talk initiated by the teacher.					

Appendix D

Directions: Put a check in the boxes that you mostly agree with Foreign Language Willingness to Communicate Scale in the Classroom (Adapted from MacIntyre *et al.*, 2001)

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I love to talk to a group about my summer vacation.					
2. I usually talk to my classmates in English during break.					
3. I talk to my English teacher about homework after class.					
4. I am willing to help out a stranger with directions on the street					

5. I read articles in the newspaper that interest me.					
6. I frequently write letters/emails to my friends in English.					
7. I feel comfortable talking to a native speaker of English at a grocery store.					
8. I am willing to join an English conversation club to practice speaking.					
9. I am willing to write an article in English for a newspaper about a favorite topic of mine.					
10. I enjoy reading novels or story books in English.					

Scoring key: Range of willingness to communicate:

Strongly Agree : 5

Agree : 4

Neutral : 3

Disagree : 2

Strongly Disagree: 1

50-40= Confident/Very low-level of anxiety

30-39=Moderate level of anxiety

20-38=Anxious

1-19= Extremely anxious



Testing English at Tertiary Level: An Overview

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Abstract

The universities in Bangladesh, with their autonomous academic systems, formulate, design, and introduce their own course curricula and syllabi for teaching English. Here, the testing methods are crucial-for the success or failure of teaching or learning is determined by testing the students on their acquired knowledge of language. Unfortunately, the proficiency that the learners achieve at graduate and postgraduate levels is painfully disappointing. Students can hardly write a discourse in acceptable English, nor can they speak the language fluently and correctly. This failure is due not only to inefficient teaching methods but also to outdated and century-old testing systems. For language courses, the learners are usually tested on their typical knowledge of some set items of language, especially; they are tested on reading and writing abilities rather than listening and speaking skills. For literature courses, no skill-based test is taken. So, the present research is an endeavor on the existing testing methods to find out the drawbacks and failures of testing English at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. The researcher proposes some new and effective methods of testing which, if considered and introduced, can substantially contribute to upgrading the teaching and testing standards of these higher education institutes.

Keywords: Acquisition, backwash, communication, equipment, performance, testing

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Introduction

Both teaching and testing are so closely related that it is virtually impossible to work in one field without the other. Language testing is central to language teaching. “A test, in plain words, is a method of measuring a person’s ability or knowledge in a given domain” (Brown 384). It ensures goals for language teaching and it monitors, for both teachers and students, success in reaching those goals. It provides a methodology for experiment and investigation in both language teaching and learning/acquisition. The standard of teaching is measured by the standard of testing. A good classroom test will help to locate the crucial areas of difficulty encountered by the class or by the individual learner. The test enables the teacher to ascertain which parts of the language program have been found difficult by the class. Thus the teacher can evaluate the pragmatic values of the syllabus as well as the methods and materials he is using. A well-constructed classroom test will provide the learners with an opportunity to unveil their latent potentialities. The purpose of teaching English in the universities is to help learners to acquire the four basic skills of English-listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To test one’s proficiency in English, an accurate testing system should be developed. With the change of time, a lot of instruments have been invented to assess the language acquisition of the learners but we are yet to use them. Language laboratories are hardly found in our universities but without them, implementation of equipment-based testing systems is not possible. Most of the tests are paper-based and administered under sub-standard conditions. Answer sheets are returned to the teachers for scoring and analysis. Although the common target is to teach the four skills to the students, little attention is paid to teaching or testing the two important language skills, i.e., listening and speaking.

Computer Assisted Language Testing (CALT)

“Tests that are administered at computer terminals, or on personal computers, are called computer-assisted tests” (Brown 45). Today, computer technology is used enthusiastically in developed countries to assess the achievement of the learners accurately. So it is regarded as an inseparable part of the education system. “CALT is growing and reshaping, innovating and revolutionizing the field of language assessment and testing by adapting itself successfully with the new challenges in technology and assessment practice”(Pathan 34).It diminishes the administrative and logistical burdens in case of testing as it helps to transmit test materials electronically within seconds. “CALT encompasses computer-adaptive testing (CAT), the use of multimedia in language test tasks, and automatic response analysis” (Chapelle and Douglas 107). It provides more precise and shorter results than traditional paper-and-pencil tests. According to José Noijons, CALT is “an integrated procedure in which language performance is elicited and assessed with the help of a computer” (38). The Educational Testing Service (ETS) has administered the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) by computer in

many parts of the world. The use of computer technology has allowed ETS to introduce a new variety of selected-response type items not easily presented in the paper-and-pencil format. The best known formal procedure is the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). It measures language proficiency of the learners more effectively and appropriately in practical life. CALT ensures tests that are suitable for each learner. Language tests should be conducted through online process, video-based, and face-to-face assessments with high levels of validity and reliability. Pathan has given some advantages of CALT:

1. CALT provides self-pacing
2. CALT requires less time to finish
3. CALT helps in overcoming administrative and logistic burdens
4. CALT assures enhanced authenticity and greater interaction
5. CALT provides more accurate assessment of the test-taker's language and it guarantees immediate test results and feedback
6. CALT creates a more positive attitude toward tests (34-36)

Research Methodology

This study is a critical evaluation of existing English language testing systems at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. So it tries to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the testing systems and give recommendations to upgrade the existing testing systems. The researcher has followed the content analysis, observation, and survey methods to complete this work. So this is a qualitative and quantitative research. To clarify the concept, books, journals, articles, research papers, review papers, and question papers of different universities on language tests which are related to this research have been studied. As it is an empirical study of English language tests at the tertiary level, the researcher prepared two sets of questionnaires for both teachers and students. Before distribution, model questionnaires were sent to specialists in the field concerned. Incorporating all valuable comments and changes suggested by them, the researcher made the final versions of the questionnaires. These were distributed among 50 teachers and 220 students of Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Islamic University, Kushtia University, Khulna University, and Northern University Bangladesh. Of the total number of questionnaires received from the respondents, 208 from students and 43 from teachers were found valid. Simple random sampling has been applied for this study. To analyze data, the researcher has used the Likert Scale with its five-point items. The Likert Scale allows the respondent to specify an opinion on statements which relate to the subject being researched. The data have been analyzed according to the objectives and findings portrayed and arranged in various tables. For the sake of precision and easy calculations, the researcher has divided the choices in three groups and given them the following patterns accordingly: Strongly Agree+ Agree= Agree (1st group); Undecided=2nd group and Disagree +Strongly Disagree= Disagree (3rd group). The

data are presented and analyzed through visual tables. Each of the tables is then followed by a short analysis of the data.

Analysis and Evaluation of Primary Data from Teachers

Data Analysis: (N= 43)

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The testing methods for English in different universities are outdated and need immediate change.	10	23.3	7	16.3	26	60.5

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 1st statement

According to Table1, of the total number of teachers, 10 disagree, 7 are undecided, and 26 agree to the statement. This means that 23.3% teachers disagree, 16.3% are undecided, and 60.5% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
2	The existing English language testing methods are effective for developing language abilities.	30	69.8	5	11.6	8	18.6

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 2nd statement

According to Table 2, 30 teachers disagree, 5 are undecided, and 8 agree to the statement. This means that of the teachers, 69.8% disagree, 11.6% are undecided, and 18.6% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
3	The existing English language testing methods are effective only for developing reading and writing skills.	6	13.6	5	11.6	32	74.4

Table 3: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 3rd statement

According to Table 3, 6 teachers disagree, 5 are undecided, and 32 agree to the statement. This means that 13.9% teachers disagree, 11.6% are undecided, and 74.4% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
4	The idea of communicative language teaching is up-to-date and essential.	9	20.9	5	11.6	29	67.4

Table 4: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 4th statement

According to Table 4, 9 teachers disagree, 5 are undecided, and 29 agree to the statement. This means that 20.9% teachers disagree, 11.6% are undecided, and 67.4% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
5	Language testing items should be more practical than theoretical.	8	18.6	3	7	32	74.4

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 5th statement

According to Table 5, 8 teachers disagree, 3 are undecided, and 32 agree to the statement. This means that of the teachers, 18.6% disagree, 7% are undecided, and 74.4% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
6	Technology based communicative language testing system should be introduced to evaluate students' language abilities.	3	7	2	4.7	38	88.4

Table 6: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 6th statement

According to Table 6, 3 teachers disagree, 2 are undecided, and 38 agree to the statement. This means that of the teachers, 7.0% disagree, 4.7% are undecided, and 88.4% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
7	The language skills covered by the syllabuses and testing system have little relevance to the professional needs of the students in practical life.	10	23.3	5	11.6	28	65.1

Table 7: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 7th statement

According to Table 7, 10 teachers disagree, 5 are undecided, and 28 agree to the statement. This means that 23.3% teachers disagree, 11.6% are undecided, and 65.1% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
8	The main targets for designing the existing English syllabuses and testing system are to enhance students' grammatical knowledge.	5	12	3	7	35	82

Table 8: Frequencies and percentages of teachers on the 8th statement

According to Table 8, 5 teachers disagree, 3 are undecided, and 35 agree to the statement. This means that 12% teachers disagree, 7% are undecided, and 82% agree to the statement.

Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

On the objective of learning English, 82% teachers hold the opinion that the existing English syllabi and testing systems aim at developing students' grammatical knowledge only. About 65.1% teachers are of the opinion that the language items covered by the syllabi and our testing system have little relevance to the professional needs of the students in their practical life. The tests are related to the development of the student's reading and writing skills, but listening and speaking skills are largely neglected. The teachers say that the purpose of testing of English courses should be to test the learner's abilities and command in all the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), especially the student's use of English to understand other people and other cultures as well as to express himself/herself. Only 18.6% teachers support our present testing system. Again, 67.4% teachers strongly support that communicative competence in English is the demand of the twenty-first century. They strongly believe that the communicative

competence in English should be the prime goal of English Language Teaching (ELT) at the undergraduate level. On the basis of the teachers' valuable suggestions, the researcher can conclude that the teaching items and testing systems should be closely related and complimentary to each other. As testing plays a vital role in determining the potential language abilities of the learners, it calls for a fresh definition and structuring. The survey shows that most of the teachers are in favor of a change in the field of testing language abilities, particularly in listening and speaking. Maximum teachers (88.4%) think technology-based testing systems can be a pragmatic substitute in this case.

Analysis and Evaluation of Primary Data from Students

Data Analysis: (N= 208)

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Literature courses are more effective than language courses for learning English.	147	70.7	32	15.4	29	13.9

Table 9: Frequencies and percentages of students on the 1st statement

According to Table 9, 147 students disagree, 32 are undecided, and 29 agree to the statement. This means that 70.7% students disagree, 15.4% are undecided, and 13.9% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
2	Language courses are more effective than literature courses for learning English.	35	16.8	23	11.1	150	72.1

Table 10: Frequencies and percentages of students on the 2nd statement

According to Table 10, 35 students disagree, 23 are undecided, and 150 agree to the statement. This means that 16.8% students disagree, 11.1% are undecided, and 72.1% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
3	The existing testing systems contribute very little to language learning abilities.	52	25	28	13.5	128	61.5

Table11: Frequencies and percentages of students on the 3rd statement

According to Table 11, 52 students disagree, 28 are undecided, and 128 agree to the statement. This means that, of the students, 25% disagree, 13.5% are undecided, and 61.5% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
4	The existing testing methods promote reading and writing abilities rather than listening and speaking skills.	8	3.8	5	2.4	195	93.8

Table 12: Frequencies and percentages of students on the 4th statement

According to Table12, 8 students disagree, 5 are undecided, and 195 agree to the statement. This means that, of the students, 3.8% disagree, 2.4% are undecided, and 93.8% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
5	Technology-basedcommunicative language testing systems are more effective for language learning.	8	3.8	14	6.7	186	89.4

Table 13: Frequencies and percentages of students on the 5th statement

According to Table13, 8 students disagree, 14 are undecided, and 186 agree to the statement. This means that 3.8% students disagree, 6.7% are undecided, and 89.4% agree to the statement.

No.	Statement	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
6	Current testing system is only for passing the examination and getting certificates.	33	15.9	34	16.3	141	67.8

Table 14: Frequencies and percentages of students on the 6th statement

According to Table 14, 33 students disagree, 34 are undecided, and 141 agree to the statement. This means that, of the students, 15.9% disagree, 16.3% are undecided, and 67.8% agree to the statement.

Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

In their response to the first statement on whether literature courses are more effective than language courses for learning English, 70.7% respondents disagreed. In their second opinion on the priority of language courses over literature courses, 72.1% agreed that language courses are more effective than literature courses. Most of them (61.5%) believe that the existing tests contribute very little to language learning abilities. 93.8% students think that the existing testing methods promote reading and writing abilities rather than listening and speaking skills. They (89.4%) argue that technology-based communicative language testing systems are more effective for language learning. Most of the learners (67.8%) believe that the current testing system is only for suitable for passing examinations and getting certificates. In their opinion on the ELT-oriented testing system, they believe the teachers can more profitably motivate the students to develop and consolidate communicative competence.

Criteria for an Ideal Language Test

An ideal test should be formed with some important elements and meet the essential criteria for testing. These criteria include:

1. Validity

Test validity ensures the degree to which a test actually measures what it is intended to measure. “Validity,” in the words of Robert Lado, “refers to whether or not a test measures what test validity refers to the soundness of the interpretations of test scores for a particular purpose” (330).

2. Test reliability

Test reliability means the stability of test scores. A test cannot measure anything accurately unless it measures consistently. A reliable test score will be consistent across different characteristics of the testing situation.

3. Practicality

Practicality is the most important consideration or characteristic for an ideal test. Effectiveness and acceptance of a test largely depends on practical considerations. Tests should be economical and practicable in terms of time and cost.

4. Interactiveness

The interactiveness of a given language test task can be characterized in terms of the ways in which the test taker's areas of language knowledge, metacognitive strategies, topical knowledge, and affective schemata are engaged by the test task.

5. Impact

Another quality of tests is their impact on society and educational systems, and upon the individuals within those systems. The impact of test use operates at two

levels, a micro level in terms of the individuals who are affected by the particular test use, and a macro level in terms of the educational system or society.



Figure 1: Impact of Testing
Source: Bachman and Palmer 30

6. Planning

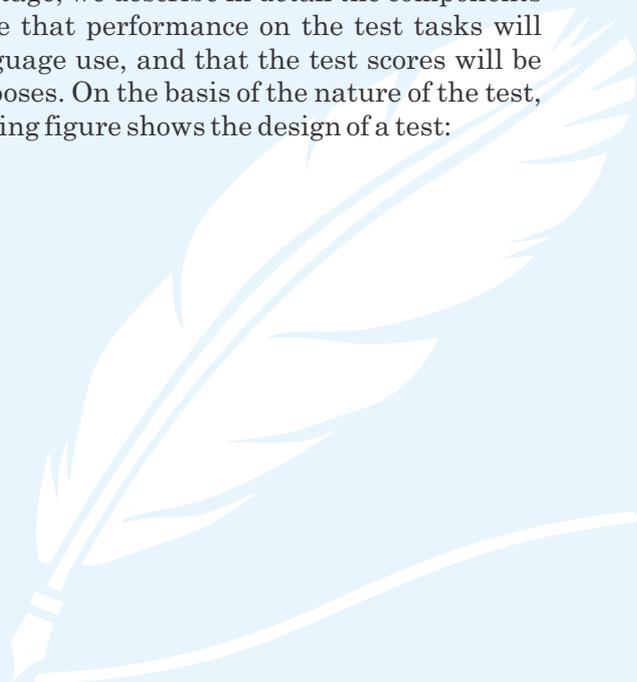
Planning involves deciding how to utilize language knowledge, topical knowledge, and effective schemata to complete the test task successfully.

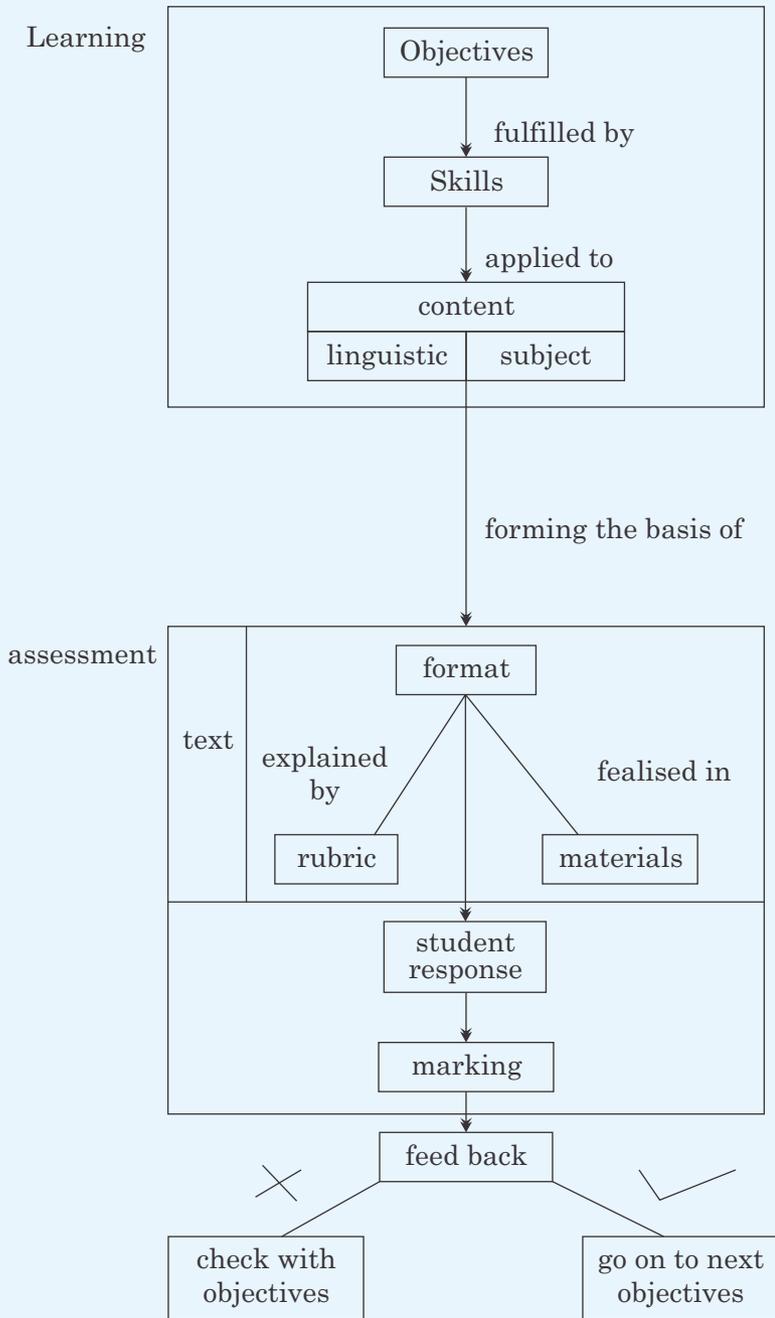
Test development

Test development is the entire process of creating and using a test, beginning with its initial conceptualization and design, and culminating in one or more archived tests, and the results of their use. So test development may be organized conceptually into three stages: design, operationalization, and administration.

1. Design

The success of a test depends on its proper design. The more accurately this can be drawn up the better. Test design justifies the interpretations we make on the basis of language test scores and continues with the gathering of evidence to support our intended interpretations. In the design stage, we describe in detail the components of the test that will enable us to ensure that performance on the test tasks will correspond as closely as possible to language use, and that the test scores will be maximally useful for their intended purposes. On the basis of the nature of the test, the design should be different. The following figure shows the design of a test:





Text design
Source: (Harrison, 17)

2. Operationalization

Operationalization is the process using the components of the design statement that is produced in the design stage to guide us in developing test tasks, a blueprint for the test as a whole, and actual tests.

3. Test administration

Fair administration is the precondition of good testing. The best test may be unreliable and invalid if it is not well administered. Preparing the testing environment, arranging the place of testing, material and equipment, personnel, time of testing, and physical conditions are the crucial factors of test administration. The physical conditions under which we administer the test include a spacious, quiet, well-lit, uncluttered room, with least disturbances from outside. Advanced preparation is essential to ensure successful test administration.

Backwash Effect

The effect of testing on teaching and learning is called backwash. The effect of a test could be positive or negative. If a test has positive backwash effect, it will exert a good influence on the learning and teaching that takes place before the test. Negative backwash, in contrast, has a negative or bad effect and hinders the process of teaching and learning. Davies says “the good test is an obedient servant since it follows and shapes the teaching”(5). Ideal language testing practice should ensure positive backwash effect from tests.

Testing Literature Oriented Courses

Most courses in English departments for undergraduate and masters programs are literature oriented. But no test is usually taken by the teachers to assess acquisition of language skills or grammatical aspects based on literary texts. Traditionally, the thematic and stylistic sides of the selected texts are tested. It is real that “one of the hallmarks of literary texts” is to provide an ample scope to explore the multidimensional use of language, which facilitates language learning in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). These can, of course, play a vital role in teaching the four skills if practical measures, such as role playing, group discussion, pair discussion, debate, stage performance, linguistics, and basic grammatical functions are introduced in case of testing. Unfortunately, literature courses are taught more for aesthetic and philosophical purposes than for teaching the four skills. Douglas Brown says, “In short, wherever you look in the literature today, you will find reference to the communicative nature of language classes” (244). And in this regard, literary texts provide a huge opportunity to learn numerous usages of language according to the context. Lazar emphasizes, “Literature provides wonderful source material for eliciting strong emotional responses from our students. Using literature in the classroom is a fruitful way of involving the learner as a whole person, and provides excellent opportunities for the learners to express their personal opinions, reactions and feelings” (3). There is a

well-knit bridge between literature and language as literature uses language which is not amorphous, but is rather structured or organized in such a way that gives a literary text a particular shape. Literature helps to develop students' interpretative abilities. Lazar says, "Literature is a particularly good source for developing students' abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretations" (19). It is clear that literature is one of the best sources of learning language but it is true that there is no acceptable testing process by which the skill based learning will be introduced.

In the following, a matrix is given to test different skills of the learners on literary courses. If this structure is followed in case of testing literary texts, skills based learning will be ensured.

Matrix showing correspondence between program learning outcomes and course learning outcomes in literary courses.

Course Learning Outcomes

	Program Learning Outcomes	Knowledge Skills						Cognitive Skills				Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility				Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills				Psychomotor Skills			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Knowledge Skills	Mention the modern trends of literature and linguistics																						
	Define grammatical, morphological, and syntactic rules of English language																						
	Recognize linguistic and literary styles and expressions used in English language.																						
	Mention the historical and cultural aspects of English-speaking communities																						
	Specify the different aspects of other human disciplines that help staff members in their majors																						

giver may set questions from 1-6, Cognitive Skills 1-6, Interpersonal Skills 1-4, Communication Skills 1-4, and Psycho-Motor Skills 1-4. So the test items cover all the course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. We have to follow this matrix to test the learners on literary courses so that the students are able to develop their language skills.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The analysis of testing systems of different universities and the survey results above indicate that the traditional testing of English language in Bangladesh is defective and lacks the qualities of validity, reliability, and practicality. The major opinions of both teachers and students are in favor of an immediate and thorough change. The reasons for this, in all cases, are related closely to students' needs and teachers' perceptions of the contexts in which they work. The data suggest that students want to achieve a good command in all the four skills which the existing testing systems do not ensure. Both teachers and learners are aware of the disadvantages of the traditional testing methods. So we strongly believe that teaching and testing can only meet the challenges of the 21st century if we introduce technology assisted language testing in all public and private universities and institutes in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, the existing testing methods of English language at universities in Bangladesh seriously lack many of these basic requirements for standard testing. There is inconsistency between the course contents and testing systems. Little correspondence can be found between the objectives of teaching English as stated in the curriculum and the proficiency that the learners gain when they complete their courses. So there must be something seriously wrong with both our teaching and testing methods. As the Departments of English in Bangladesh usually integrate both literature and language courses in their programs, there should be a proper distribution of these courses. There is no harm in that. The literature courses may also play a vital role in teaching English, if these are properly designed and efficiently taught. In that case we have to ensure learning language through literature.

Therefore, on the basis of the findings of the empirical study and other theories and strategies discussed above, the researcher would like to make certain recommendations for the implementation of standard language tests in Bangladesh:

1. The century-old testing systems should be replaced by CALT.
2. To develop the learners' communicative performance in English, emphasis should be given on free writing, conversations, presentations, debates, extempore speech, set speech, pair discussions, group discussions, seminars, workshops, and so on.
3. The tests of literature-oriented courses should be designed in such a way that the test givers can examine the language and linguistics acquisition of

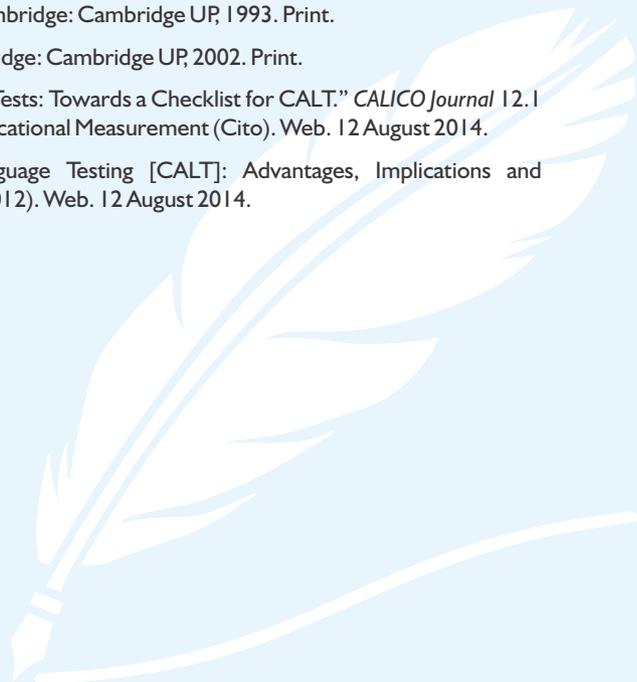
the learners and, if it is possible, the given matrix can be used.

4. An English environment should be established within the classroom, at the department, and on campus, so that all types of communication between the teachers and learners, and among the learners themselves, are carried out in English, i.e., artificial acquisition atmosphere should be introduced.
5. The syllabi should be task-based and student-centered, and teachers should act as facilitators. Student-teacher relationship should be friendly and co-operative.
6. Test validity, acceptability, and reliability must be ensured.
7. The Government should establish a National English Language Institute (NELI) where university teachers (particularly, lecturers and assistant professors) will be placed to complete a ten-week intensive (40 hours per week) course. They will be required to speak no other language but English and take classes on all four skills. The training should be conducted by native speakers of English.
8. Language testing items should be more practical than theoretical.
9. As test administration of the universities is not free from bias, free and fair test administration should be ensured.
10. The test items should be skills-oriented in both literature and language courses.
11. Test related equipment should be available for equipment based testing. These are word processors, multimedia projectors, tape recorders, video recorders, computers, machine scoring devices, computer discs, and so on.
12. The test givers should encourage the development of listening skills and the use of listening strategies by using the target language to conduct classroom business: making announcements, assigning homework, describing the content and format of tests. Listener-speaker rapport should be maintained to ensure standard listening tests.
13. The test givers should carry out the speaking and listening tests in a quiet room with good acoustics.
14. The test items should be selected according to the level of the students.
15. To ensure high scorer reliability of a writing test, the tasks should be restricted or guided and the test-takers should be given little or no choice of tasks so that the test performances of different test-takers can easily be compared and evaluated.

In this research work, the researcher has tried to identify the essential weaknesses of testing methods in the English Departments of our country, and stressed the need for change, keeping pace with international standard testing systems.

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Errors in Writing: Identification of Problems and Need for Refinement

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Abstract

With regard to written composition, students often want to focus on grammar when they first seek help with writing. Most have problems with structure and organization. But the study of second/foreign language teaching reveals that making errors is universal and natural. When teachers complain about errors of structure or syntax, they are usually responding to the symptom, not the cause – which is often unclear thinking. Although teachers are familiar with the types and sources of errors usually made by students, the non-availability of proper instruction, emphasis on fluency, and communicative practice rather than on explanation and understanding of grammatical rules result in written work that abounds in errors. This study identifies fifteen types of errors in writing usually made by students. These are categorized under the sources of interlingual and intra lingual errors. Therefore, this paper aims to look not at each and every error in writing, but will attempt to analyze some recurrent and systematic errors which will help students to write socially acceptable and academically correct English in Bangladesh.

Introduction

As practicing teachers, we know too well that learners make errors. The flawed side of learner speech or writing and error analysis constituted the first serious attempt to investigate learner language. The analysis of learners' errors has long been a part of language pedagogy dealing with finding out the practical reasons for errors and discovering ways of refinement. According to Krashen and Seliger (1975 in Kenneth Croft, 1980, p. 157),

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“correcting learners’ errors helps them discover the functions and limitations of the syntactical and lexical forms of the target language. Error identification and refinement are especially useful to adult second language learners because it helps them learn the exact environment in which to apply rules and discover the precise semantic range of lexical items.”The errors categorized in this research paper in presenting the data or writing task are a collection of learners’ common sentence errors in writing.

The research topic explains that while writing, writers have to take care so that their sentences express intended meaning clearly, correctly, and effectively. For this reason, knowledge of probable errors in writing is essential. In Bangladesh, students of different levels follow certain instructions for writing to develop their writing skills, but the question is how effective are these instructions and how can the awareness of errors help students overcome these common sentence errors in writing. Errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and show him that parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention.

Again, it is crucial to make a distinction between mistakes and errors, technically two very different phenomena. Brown (1994, p. 205) says: “A mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a ‘slip,’ in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. An error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of learner.” It is to be mentioned that while identifying problems in writing in this paper we will deal only with errors.

The research examines learners’ common errors, like subject-verb agreement, sameness of structure/parallelism, use of passive voice, use of the infinitive, choice of appropriate words, use of prepositions, omission of prepositions, omission of verbs, misuse of verbs, omission of *that*, pluralization, double auxiliary, double negative, and so on in writing, and discusses the need for refinement. Even after having twelve years of instruction, especially in writing, learners in Bangladesh still find formal writing troublesome-the same common errors they made during their early school and college life reoccur at the tertiary level. The investigation focuses on the errors students make and why these errors occur.

Theoretical Background and Justification for Error Analysis

It has long been accepted that the application of a scientific discipline to the solution of practical problems provides feedback to a theory. The applications provide confirmation or disproof of a theory. In this respect, linguists like experiments which test the prediction of the theory. The study of learners’ errors is such an application.

The theoretical climate of the late fifties and the early sixties provided the ultimate rationale for the error analysis approach. Chomsky's "Review of B.F. Skinner's Verbal Behaviour" (1959) questioned the very core of behaviorist habit theory as an account of language learning. The paper provided the catalyst for efforts that virtually turned the field of developmental psycholinguistics around overnight. Chomskyan generative linguistics, along with Piagetian psychology, has succeeded in highlighting the previously neglected mental makeup of learners as a central force in the learning process. As a consequence, error analysis came away with a rich source of explanation for the many as yet unexplained but frequently observed student errors. The error analysis movement can be characterized as an attempt to account for learner errors that could not be explained or predicted by contrastive analysis or behaviorist theory and to bring the field of applied linguistics into step with the current climate of theoretical opinion. In these respects, error analysis has been most successful. It has made a significant contribution to the theoretical consciousness-raising of applied linguistics and language practitioners. It has brought the multiple origins of learners' errors to our attention. Finally, it has succeeded in elevating the status of errors from complete undesirability to the relatively special status of research object, curriculum guide, and indicator of learning stage.

Literature Survey and Significance

The study of learners' errors by ELT researchers has been a primary focus of L2 research during the last decade. As Corder (1967 in Brown, 1993, p. 205) noted: "A learner's errors are significant in (that) they provide to the researcher evidence of how long is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language." Sridhar (in Kenneth Croft, 1980, p. 85) describes the goals and methodology of traditional error analysis and points to a newer interpretation of "error" stemming from interlanguage studies: the learner's deviations from target language norms should not be regarded as undesirable errors or mistakes; they are inevitable and a necessary part of the learning process.

According to Corder (1973), errors may arise, on the one hand, as a result of the nature of the samples, their classification and representation or, on the other, from the actual activity of processing the data. Teaching is concerned with the data and its mode of presentation; we can control and manipulate it in various ways. What neither the learner nor the teacher can do is entirely manipulate or control the learning process. This is part of human psychology.

Corder (1973, p. 283) says: "Errors are a result of partial knowledge because the teaching-learning process extends over time. Language, as we have seen, is a self-contained system, all parts being interconnected, a system of systems. In a sense nothing is 'fully' learned until everything is fully learned. Changing the grouping or sequencing of the data merely makes the nature and timing of the errors different in

certain respects. It cannot eliminate them or reduce the total amount of error below some, at present unknown, lower limit.”

Corder (1967) observes that the opposition between systematic and non-systematic errors is important. We are all aware that in normal adult speech in our native language we are continually committing errors of one sort or another. These, as we have been so often reminded recently, are due to memory lapses, physical states such as tiredness, and psychological conditions such as strong emotions. These are adventitious artifacts of linguistic performance and do not reflect a defect in the knowledge of our own language. We are normally immediately aware of them when they occur and can correct them with more or less complete assurance. It would be quite unreasonable to expect the learner of a second language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue (or pen), since he is subject to similar external and internal conditions when performing in his first or second language. We must therefore make a distinction between those errors which are the product of such chance circumstances and those which reveal his underlying knowledge of the language to date, or, as we may call it, his “transitional competence” (Corder, 1967, p. 5). The errors of performance will characteristically be unsystematic and the errors of competence, systematic. As Miller (1966 in Richards, 1974, p. 25) puts it, “it would be meaningless to state rules for making mistakes.”

It will be useful, therefore hereafter, to refer to errors of performance as “mistakes,” reserving the term “errors” to refer to the systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, that is, his “transitional competence.”

According to Dulay (1982), studying learners’ errors serves two major purposes:

1. It provides data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made.
2. It indicates to teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types detract most from a learner’s ability to communicate effectively.

Since S. Pit Corder’s initial arguments for the significance of learners’ errors appeared in the Winter 1967 issue of the *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, researchers and teachers in numerous countries have spent countless hours extracting errors from student compositions and conversations, submitting them to close scrutiny, and using them as a base for theory construction and classroom practice. The instant and widespread appeal of error analysis (EA) stemmed perhaps from the refreshing alternative it provided to the then prevailing but more restrictive “contrastive analysis” approach to errors.

In an early, seminal article, Corder (1967) noted that errors could be significant in three ways:

1. They provided the teacher with information about how much the learner had learned.
2. They provided the researcher with evidence of how language was learned.
3. They served as devices by which the learner discovered the rules of the target language.

Corder (1974 in Rod Ellis, 1994, p. 48) suggests the following steps in EA research:

1. Collection of a sample of the learner language
2. Identification of errors
3. Description of errors
4. Explanation of errors
5. Evaluation of errors

Richards (1971 b) characterizes the field of error analysis as follows: “The field of error analysis may be defined as dealing with the differences between the way people learning a language speak, and the way adult native speakers of the language use the language” (Oller and Richards, 1973, p. 114).

Richards (1971a) proposes a three-way classification of errors:

1. Interference Errors
2. Intralingual Errors
3. Developmental Errors

The interference errors are those caused by the influence of the learners’ mother tongue on their production of the target language in presumably those areas where the language clearly differs. The intralingual errors are those originating within the structure of English itself. The developmental errors reflect the strategies by which the learner acquires the language.

Johanna Klassen (1991 in English Teaching Forum, p. 10) opines that teachers still face the problem of “which” errors to correct and how to correct errors. She believes that the gravity of the error should determine whether a correction is necessary. She suggests that for a first draft, global errors should be corrected and local errors on the second.

S. Pit Corder (1973) observed that learners of language are certainly liable to lapses and mistakes, and for this reason, the great majority of their errors are of a different kind. They result in unacceptable utterances and appear as breaches of the code. Corder has termed these breaches of codes as errors in the case of a native speaker. They are not physical failures, but the sign of an imperfect knowledge of the code; that is, the learners have not yet internalized the formation rules of the second language.

Corder (1967) introduces an important distinction between “errors” and “mistakes.” Mistakes are deviations due to performance factors such as memory limitations (e.g., mistakes in the sequence of tenses and agreement in long sentences), spelling

pronunciations, fatigue, emotional strain, etc. They are typically random and are readily corrected by the learner when his attention is drawn to them. Errors, on the other hand, are systematic, consistent deviances characteristic of the learner's linguistic system at a given stage of learning.

Research Questions

1. What basic sentence errors do the students have in writing even after having English as a compulsory subject during the first twelve years of their education?
2. Why do these errors still occur?

Hypotheses

Two assumptions were taken into account regarding this research work on error analysis in writing:

Students commit errors in writing English because:

- a. The present system of learning English is still based on memorization of grammatical rules rather than the use of these rules at the sentence level. Therefore, learners are not getting an opportunity to practice academic writing skills with appropriate use of grammar.
- b. Students need both practice and discussion on grammatical elements in English classes as the present communicative approach focuses more on fluency than on accuracy in teaching the English language.

Research Methodology

The research method involves forms of data collection, document analysis, and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies (Creswell, 2009, p. 15). The methodology of error analysis, in so far as traditional error analysis is concerned, consisted of the following steps:

- a. Collection of data (a "free" composition by students on a given theme);
- b. Identification of errors;
- c. Classification into error types (e.g., errors of agreement, articles, verb forms, etc.);
- d. Statement of relative frequency of error types;
- e. Identification of the areas of difficulty in the target language (TL)

(Croft, 1960, p. 103)

The researcher has tried to follow the above steps in this research paper. Since the study depends mostly on the teachers' self reported analysis based on detection of errors and their frequency, both quantitative and qualitative data are used to conduct the research. Therefore, the study is based on a mixed method model.

This research provides data from first year students of Jahangiragar University

from two different departments — the Department of Bangla and the Department of Drama and Dramatics. The researcher collected the data while working as an adjunct faculty in the two departments. The students from these departments were taking an English language credit course of one hundred marks. Their syllabus included:

- a. Basic Writing Skills
- b. Remedial Grammar
- c. Practical Writing
 - Composition
 - Personal and Business Correspondence
 - Application and CV
- d. Reading Comprehension
- e. Speaking
- f. Listening

The learners completed their SSC and HSC programs in Bengali medium with English as one of their compulsory subjects. The subject was marked out of two hundred and the students sat for a first paper and a second paper each out of 1200 marks at both levels before getting admitted into Jahangirnagar University. All of them came from different academic groups, e.g., Science, Humanities, and Commerce. Most of them also came from rural areas and a few of them from Dhaka city. Their level of proficiency in English was assumed to be pre-intermediate from the analysis of their classroom performance.

Most syllabuses are devised for homogeneous groups and the most important aspect of homogeneity is the linguistic one, namely, that the group should be formed of speakers of the same mother tongue. The researcher collected data from two groups of learners whose mother tongue was Bangla. Some degree of similarity in their personal characteristics was also expected: intelligence, motivation, social background, and experience of the world, age, maturity, and so on.

We cannot, of course, expect full equivalence in all these dimensions. However, the first year students of Jahangirnagar University were fairly homogeneous in all these important respects. The widest divergence was in motivation and personality. It was, therefore, with suitable qualifications, reasonable to regard them as a homogeneous group, a majority of whom made the same errors.

The materials for this research consisted of free writing a composition on one of two topics with a word limit of 120 words. The exercise was given to a mixed group of pupils from both Bangla and Drama and Dramatics Department. The two topics were “Unfair Means in Examinations” and “Dowry System in Bangladesh.” After giving formal instructions, they were given another topic titled “Acid Violence.”

Even after getting formal instructions, almost all the students made the same errors again and therefore, an interview was conducted by the teacher and a set

questionnaire was provided to the students to investigate the reasons behind their errors in writing.

The researcher has used some techniques, that is, error correction symbols, to identify all errors. To identify confusing sentence structures, he has placed a question mark above a confusing phrase or structure. In case of missing prepositions, he inserted an caret (^). Subject-verb agreement errors were identified by symbols like AG/S/V; infinitive errors by INF; incorrect verb forms by VB/F; faulty parallelisms by PAR; choice of inappropriate words by WD/CH; and so on. All these symbols are included in the Appendix. In most cases, the researcher has supplied the correct form or structure.

Data Analysis

As this paper deals with common errors in writing, selected types of errors are identified from students' writing tasks for data analysis. Data of these students before formal instruction and after formal instruction have been presented in Table 1 and in Table 2 respectively. In the tables, "s" refers to students.

The data analysis consists of several steps:

- a. Writings containing errors were collected from the learners' writing tasks;
- b. Writing task of every individual student was checked;
- c. The data analysis table displays errors of each individual learner;
- d. Syntactic category and error type of every individual student were identified;
- e. Possible sources of each type of error are mentioned in the table. For example, the *omission of verb* in the verb phrase was classified under intralingual category and error in *subject-verb agreement* is classified under interlingual category;
- f. The interlingual errors are those caused by the influence of learner's mother tongue on his production of the target language in presumably those areas where the language clearly differs. The intralingual errors are those originating within the structure of English itself. The developmental errors are errors similar to those made by children learning the target language as their first language;
- g. Learners' errors in each category were counted;
- h. Learners' sentences have been copied into the table as they were written in order to show examples of errors;
- i. In a single sentence of a learner, only particular types of error were identified and other types of errors were ignored because this paper deals with only fifteen types of selected errors;
- j. Errors like lack of *subject-verb agreement*, incorrect use of possessive case, incorrect formulation of passive sentences, faulty parallelism are committed by most of the learners and for this reason, these types of errors are classified as common type errors. On the other hand, errors like omission of *that*, using double

negative and double auxiliary are committed by a few students and these types of errors are characterized as idiosyncratic errors;

- k. Table 2 demonstrates whether the learners acquired the grammatical rules after formal instruction had been given to them;

It is to be mentioned that while looking for errors, at times it was difficult to distinguish between ‘errors’ and mistakes.” Broadly speaking, this paper dealt only with errors in writing and the data analysis process was completely based on errors.

Table 1

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
S1	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. Mainly our country and our people <i>depends</i> on agriculture b. Here the bride and his family <i>takes</i> dowry	Interlingual	3
	A. Morphology a. Adverb of Place	a. So many young and literate men are unem <i>ploetein here</i> . (Originally <i>unemployed</i>)	Overgeneralization	1
	A. Morphology 1. Possessive Case incorrect a. Omission of 's	a. In other way, <i>Brides parents</i> or family sometimes pray many things to the <i>daughters parents</i> . b. Dowry means- something gives the <i>Bride grooms</i> family from the <i>daughters family</i>	Intralingual	3
	A. Passive sentences a. Problems with formation of passive sentences	a. Dowry means- <i>something gives</i> the bride grooms family from daughters family.	Intralingual	1

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
	A. Syntax a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Misuse of Preposition	a. So if <i>they wants</i> more money, <i>throughout</i> girl's family give her there.	Intralingual	1
	a. Choice of appropriate words b. Omission of 's	a. So they want to earn money from <i>difference</i> way b. For dowry system our <i>womens</i> society fall in <i>toarcher</i> . (originally <i>torture</i>)	Interlingual	2
	A. Morphology a. Pluralization	a. Most of the <i>villages</i> poor <i>womens</i>	Intralingual	1
S2	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. I do think <i>this two</i> is the main cause of unfair means in exam. b. So passing and good result is becoming ... c. He or she never <i>read</i> the main text. d. As a result they <i>tries</i> to copy in the exam.	Interlingual	4
	Double	a. As a result they <i>are don't</i> read out the text.	Intralingual	1
	A. Passive sentences a. Problems with formation of passive sentences	a. Because of unfair means a boy or girl _____ deprived	Intralingual	1
	A. Syntax a. Omission of 'that'	a. and I think as a real citizen of anation _____ no one should supportunfairness	Intralingual	1

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
	Choice of appropriate	a. In <i>maximum</i> part of the nation ...	Interlingual	1
	A. Parallel construction a. Parallelism / similarity of structure	a. So passing and _____ <i>good resultis</i> becoming more important	Intralingual	1
	A. Syntax a. Preposition	a. He or she never read the main text rather they misuse their most <i>important times behind copying</i> .	Intralingual	1
S3	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Subject-Verb	a. Most of the people of our country <i>is</i> poor b. Most of the people of our country <i>is</i> farmer	Interlingual	2
	Choice of appropriate words	a. Our country is a <i>development</i> country b. Of our country the <i>girlbride partyvictims</i> of the dowry	Interlingual	2
	A. Syntax a. Misuse of Preposition	a. <i>Of</i> our country the girlbride party victims of the dowry b. In our society female is deprived <i>by</i> all the rights	Intralingual	2
S4	A. Passive sentences a. Problems with formation with passive sentences	a. From childhood <i>theyteachby</i> their parents or their relatives that passing exam is their aim.	Intralingual	1

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
	A. Parallel construction a. Parallelism/ similarity of structure	I think learning means not only <i>memorize</i> the correct answer of a particular question but also know about something in our own style.	Intralingual	1
	Choice of appropriate words	a. So, they don't have agear to know about something. b. Without that, the situation of our <i>educational place</i> , the unconsciousness of some	Interlingual	2
	A.Sentential Complement a. Use of Infinitive	a. And when we will try to <i>doing</i> such, there is no need to copy or talk or memorizing anything.	Intralingual	1
S5	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. According to my knowledge the student who <i>havedone</i> this they are harmful to the society. b. The students who does <i>notgoes</i> to school or his educational institutes ...	Interlingual	2
	A. Parallel construction a. Parallelism/ similarity of structure	a. A student should <i>learn</i> and <i>lesson</i> accurately and properly so than he can enrich himself and <i>toexpanse</i> the world of his knowledge.	Intralingual	1
	A. Syntax	a. It has a big bad effect <i>on</i> the student life.	Intralingual	1
	Choice of appropriate words	a. Actually they have no right to <i>sit</i> the examination. b. They are <i>complicant</i> to sit examination.	Interlingual	2

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Misuse of Verb	a. We are <i>alsoknow</i> that when a student turn in to habit in unfairmeans.	Intralingual	1
S6	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. I am against it, because it <i>spoil</i> the merit of students.	Interlingual	1
	A. Syntax a. Omission of 'that'	a. Even we can say____ they have no connection with books	Intralingual	1
	A. Sentential Compliment a. Use of infinitive	a. It is not proper system to <i>grownup</i> real creativity.	Intralingual	1
	A. Passive Sentences a. Problems with formation of Passive	a. For this reason their merit can not <i>be bloom</i> .	Intralingual	1
	A. Morphology a. Pluralization	a. For <i>these reason</i> students are not get the education accurately.	Intralingual	1
S7	A. Syntax 1. Verb-Phrase a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. They <i>hates</i> education do for trapping of parents	Interlingual	1
	A. Passive Sentences a. Problems with formation of passive sentences	a. In society education a student____ always pressurized.	Intralingual	1

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
	A. Verb Phrase a. Misuse of Verb	a. Some are <i>support</i> that some are not. b. But in my position, I <i>amnot support</i> unfair means in the examination. c. But I am not like them who <i>arebelieve</i> in others	Intralingual	3
	Choice of appropriate	a. We see not only students but also parents <i>areadopted by this</i> .	Interlingual	1
	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. It <i>spoil</i> a student life. b. When student follow this way he could not understand. c. The child do <i>notread</i> properly. d. Teacher <i>are</i> finally guilty for this.	Interlingual	4
S8	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Omission of verb	a. It __ not only affected a student but also destroy the whole society.	Intralingual	1
	A. Parallel construction a. Parallelism/ similarity of the structure	A. when a student <i>follows</i> this way, he <i>could not</i> understand the sylebas or he could not learn his lesson clearly.	Intralingual	1
	Choice of appropriate words	a. some of the students in our country did study in the beginning of <i>theclass</i> .	Interlingual	1
S9	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. There are many reason behind it. b. It is also harmful for a brilliant <i>students</i> .	Interlingual	2

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
	A. Syntax a. Preposition	a. It helps him to depend____other.	Intralingual	1
	A. Parallel construction a. Parallelism/ similarity of the structure	a. it may include to do <i>copy, speaking</i> with other follow other article.	Intralingual	1
	A. Sentential Compliment a. Use of infinitive	a. They have no <i>ability to teaching</i> .	Intralingual	1
	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Misuse of Verb	a. But it is true that; some student <i>are take</i> unfairmeans in the	Intralingual	1
	A. Syntax 1. Verb Phrase a. Omission of Verb	a. I__ against the copy or unfairmeans in the exam hall.	Intralingual	1
	A. Syntax a. Preposition(misuse and omission)	a. Every student is a asset for a nation. b. Theylike__spend time with	Intralingual	3
	A. Syntax a. Preposition(misuse and omission)	Their friends specially__ girl friends. c. Some students are not regular on their study.	Intralingual	2

Sl.	Syntactic Category &	Example of Learner Error	Possible Sources of Error	Frequency of Error
	A. Morphology a. Pluralization	a. But it is true that; some student <i>are takeunfair</i> means in examination. b. So, I always against these student. c. anyway, we can understand that why <i>some student</i> included the unfair means.	Intralingual	3
	A. Choice of appropriate words	a. Anyway, we can understand that why some student <i>included</i> the unfair means	Interlingual	1
	A. Negative information a. Double negative	a. Never <i>I cannot support</i> unfair means in the examination.	Intralingual	1

After identification of errors, the students were given formal instructions and the researcher conducted three consecutive discussion classes of the errors identified. Table 2 shows whether the students have committed the discussed errors and it shows how far they are able to improve themselves. On the basis of their performance from Table 2, a summary and discussion on results will be dealt with. In the table below, the plus (+) sign represents students' acquisition of correct forms of particular errors detected in their writing task. The minus (-) sign represents students' inability to acquire the correct forms of errors discussed in the classroom.

Table 2

User Serial	Error Type	Acquired (+) Avoided Not Acquired (-)
S1	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Adverb of Place c. Possessive Case Incorrect (Omission of 's) d. Passive sentences (problems with formation of passive sentences) e. Misuse of preposition f. Choice of appropriate words g. Pluralization	Not Acquired(-) Avoided Avoided Acquired(+) Not Acquired(-) Not Acquired(-) Not Acquired(-)
S2	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Double Auxiliary c. Passive sentences (problems with formation of passive sentences) d. Omission of 'that' e. Choice of appropriate words f. Parallelism g. Preposition	Not Acquired (-) Avoided Avoided Avoided Not Acquired (-) Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+)
S3	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Choice of appropriate words c. Preposition	Not Acquired (-) Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+)
S4	a. Passive sentences (problems with formation of passive sentences) b. Parallelism c. Preposition d. Choice of appropriate words e. Use of infinitive	Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+) Acquired (+) Not Acquired (-) Avoided
S5	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Parallelism c. Preposition d. Choice of appropriate words e. Misuse of Verb	Acquired (+) Not Acquired (-) Not Acquired (-) Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+)
S6	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Omission of 'that' c. Use of Infinitive d. Passive sentences	Avoided Avoided

User Serial	Error Type	Acquired (+) Avoided Not Acquired (-)
	(Problems with formation of passive sentences). e.Pluralization	Avoided Not Acquired (-)
S7	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Passive sentences (Problems with formation of passive sentences). c. Misuse of Verb d. Choice of appropriate words	Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+) Acquired (+) Not Acquired (-)
S8	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Omission of Verb c. Parallelism d. Choice of appropriate words	Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+) Acquired (+) Acquired (+)
S9	a. Subject-Verb Agreement b. Preposition c. Parallelism d. Use of Infinitive	Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+) Not Acquired (-) Avoided
S10	a. Misuse of Verb b. Omission of Verb c. Preposition d. Parallelism e. Choice of appropriate words f. Double negative	Acquired (+) Not Acquired (-) Acquired (+) Not Acquired (-) Not Acquired (-) Avoided

Discussing Findings in Relation to Research Question

The research question focuses on the basic and common error types in formal writing. Investigations of the incidence of interlingual and intralingual errors summarize that the following common mistakes are identified in formal writing:

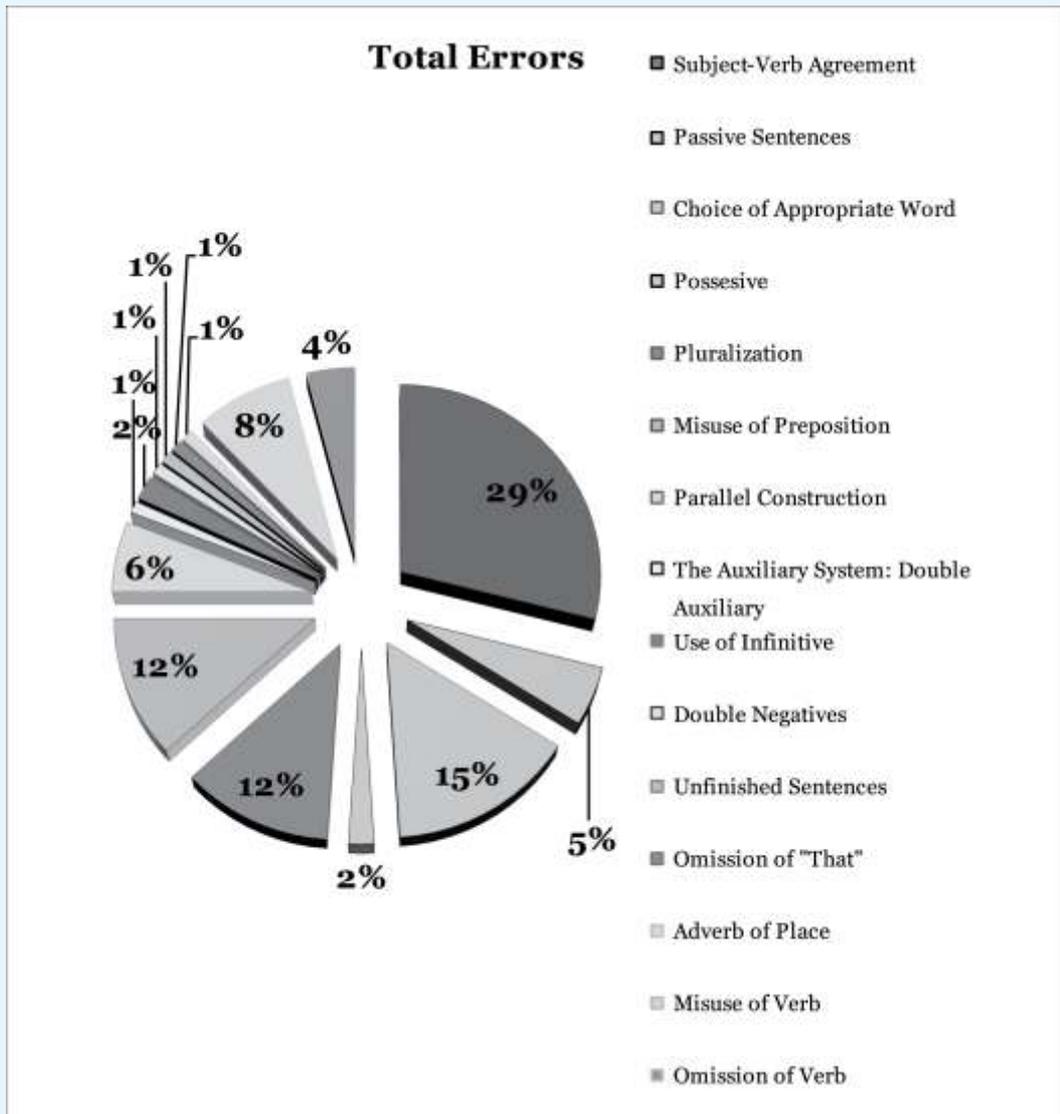
Table 3

Error Type	Linguistic Category	Problem Type
a. Subject-Verb Agreement	a. Syntax	a. Common
b. Possessive Case Incorrect (Omission of 's)	b. Morphology	b. Common
c. Passive Sentences (Problems with formation of passive sentences)	c. Passive Sentences	c. Common
d. Choice of Appropriate Words	d. Vocabulary	d. Common
e. Parallelism	e. Parallel Construction	e. Common
f. Preposition	f. Syntax	f. Common
g. Adverb of Place	g. Morphology	g. Idiosyncratic
h. Omission of that	h. Syntax	h. Idiosyncratic
i. Double Auxiliary	i. The Auxiliary System	i. Common
j. Use of Infinitive	j. Sentential Complete	j. Common
k. Misuse of Verb	k. Syntax	k. Common
l. Omission of Verb	l. Syntax	l. Common
m. Double Negative	m. Negative Transformation	m. Idiosyncratic
n. Unfinished Sentences	n. Sentence Fragments	n. Idiosyncratic
o. Pluralization	o. Morphology	o. Common

The analysis of data identified fifteen types of errors among which most commonly occurring errors were categorized under common errors and those errors, which were made by a few learners (may be one or two), were categorized under idiosyncratic errors (for example, in Table 3). But the analysis shows that almost all the errors seemed to be a deviation from the learner's grammar. The analysis of data demonstrated that learners tried to use the knowledge of grammar they had acquired during the last twelve years of their education. Each error was classified under a syntactic category, which proved that their errors were systematic. The use of inappropriate grammatical rules then became the cause of error. It was also assumed that proper instruction and explanation of grammatical errors could refine these errors. Table 2 above demonstrated that some learners acquired the grammatical rules after formal instruction had been given and some students did not. The importance of these two tables was to emphasize the significance of formal instruction at every level of the education system.

So far we have discussed errors, which seem to fall into definable patterns: they show a consistent system, are internally principled, and free from arbitrariness. They are therefore systematic. These systematic errors may be looked upon as rule-governed for they follow the rules of whatever grammar the learner has learned.

Now let us observe the following pie chart from which we will get an idea of which errors were used most frequently and which were used less frequently by the students.



The analysis of the pie chart demonstrates that most frequently occurring errors were subject-verb agreement, problems with formation of passive sentences, choice of appropriate words, misuse of prepositions, pluralization, use of infinitives, and so on.

Discussing Findings in Relation to Hypothesis

The researcher conducted an open discussion with the students regarding their problem areas and reasons behind them. The teacher also provided some open-ended questions (Appendix A) among the students in order to get their opinion about the teacher's instructions they received over the twelve years of their learning, and about the present communicative approach to teaching. The following table summarizes their opinions:

Table 4

Subject Matter	Total Students	Comments	
		Yes	No
Teacher's explanation of grammatical rules was not clear.	10	7	3
The present communicative approach emphasizes practice rather than explanation		9	1
The teacher's explanation did not make students attentive to their lesson		8	2
Errors in writing were hardly detected earlier by their teachers		8	2

If we look at the above table, we will find that the two hypotheses are compatible with the findings because majority of the learners supported the assumption of the researcher.

Finally, the number and proportion of interlingual, intra lingual, and other errors (due to over generalization) point to a general conclusion: that the majority of errors committed by learners are not interlingual but intra lingual. The following table demonstrates this idea:

Interlingual Errors	Intralingual Errors	Other Errors
39	44	1

Conclusion

Error analysis, like contrastive analysis, was the outcome of the concepts put forward by Lado and Fries in the '50s. Then it was inspired by the generative linguistics movement of the '60s, which focused on the creative aspects of language learning. This focus has helped to raise the status of errors from unwanted forms to the relatively important status of indicators of learning and guides to teaching. Relatively speaking, the fact that errors cited in this paper are from the competence data (refers to the systematic errors of the learners) and analysis of these data presents that in certain areas of language use the learner possesses construction rules which guided the researcher to categorize the errors into morphology, syntax and vocabulary. The three main categories were further divided according to different parts of speech or parts of sentences. The researcher's goal in this research paper was to go a few steps beyond simply presenting identification and analysis of errors. He wanted to highlight the reason behind the poor, ungrammatical production of sentences in formal writing. Proper training should be given to every elementary level teacher in every corner of Bangladesh so that they are able to deal with the errors in a planned way in their teaching.

Finally, in an effort to bring this research to bear on the presentation of the descriptive aspect of error analysis, the literature has been comprehensively surveyed and research findings demonstrated that the reason behind the formation of errors lies in the unsystematic approach towards both teacher training and the classroom teaching. The highlights are recapitulated below:

1. Second language learners in Bangladesh manipulate (subconsciously) surface elements of the languages they are learning in systematic ways, including;
 - a. The omission of grammatical morphemes – items that do not contribute much to the meaning of sentences.
 - b. The regularization of rules.
 - c. The addition of grammatical morphemes where none is required.
 - d. Problems with sentential complements (problems with infinitives).
 - e. Problems with verb phrases.
2. The majority of the grammatical errors found in the language output of second language learners are similar to those made by L1 learners of the target language rather than the structure of the L2 learners' mother tongue.
3. Some common types of errors frequently occur among a great many students.

Errors comprise a significant portion of a learner's language performance. Together with the analysis of the linguistic category and sources of errors, and the findings in writing, errors provide an important insight into the process of second language instruction in formal writing.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for students (Open-Ended)

1. Do you think you memorized a lot of grammatical rules but did not know how to use them in your writing?
2. Do you think your teacher's explanation of grammatical rules was not clear enough to apply in sentence level?
3. Do you think the present communicative approach focuses more on fluency than on accuracy in teaching English language?
4. Do you need both practice and discussion on grammatical elements in your English learning?
5. Do you think your teachers used to ignore a few mistakes in your writing?
6. Do you think there was no rigorous checking of grammar in your writing in your early education in school and college?



Linguistic Imperialism Revisited: An Analysis of the Role of English in Bangladesh

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Abstract

English language has gained the status of being the *lingua franca* of today's world. It enjoys more privileges in the territories which used to be under British rule. Bangladesh, being one such postcolonial country, emphasizes the role and importance of the English language in its education system and society. In spite of Bangla being the state language, English enjoys the privilege of being the dominant language in major domains such as education. The results of the national examinations, where the reason for failure for most of the students is lack of competence in English, only asserts the importance of English in our education. Therefore, it can be said that this privileged language is pushing Bangla to the threshold, making it a vernacular in a country where majority speaks Bangla. Consequently, it evidently creates "structural and cultural inequalities" (p. 47) within the society as asserted by Phillipson (1992) and reconfirms the notion of linguistic imperialism in the context of Bangladesh. The obvious manifestation of inequality created by the role of English language in the education system can be observed in the three mediums of schooling existing in Bangladesh which ultimately produces three categories of citizens for the country. Thus, this paper aims to discuss the current role of English in Bangladeshi education and society, and also intends to explore linguistic imperialism in 21st century Bangladesh. The paper will consider views from both proponents and critics of linguistic imperialism. It will try to come up with an answer regarding the relevance of linguistic imperialism and whether this notion should have a preference or not in this age of globalization.

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Keywords: Linguistic Imperialism, Cultural Imperialism, Bangladesh, Globalization, New Perspectives

Introduction

The hegemony of the English language in all domains of life such as social, cultural, and, most importantly, educational is a clichéd claim to be restated, due to the status of the English language being the *lingua franca* of today's world, much to the concern of the non- native speakers of English. This is because this dominant and powerful language of international communication poses not just inequality but also stress and anxiety to the speakers whose first language is not English. History goes a long way back to examine the reasons for the widespread use of English and the current position it has today. This extensive spread of English has not been treated without criticism and some critics such as Phillipson and Pennycook argue that English is not only spreading all over the world, it is also contriving and imposing a cultural and financial dominance on other countries and thus posing threat to different indigenous languages. Phillipson (1992) calls this phenomenon “linguistic imperialism.”

Considering the existing and growing concerns regarding the positive and negative roles of the English language which have drawn immense criticism, the issue this paper wishes to address is, whether imperialism and dominance of the English language are always imposed from the core countries by the native speakers of the language. Thus, the paper will discuss the reasons for English becoming the global language and the effects it has on the world. The paper will also evaluate various views on “linguistic imperialism” and review the relevance of the notion of “linguistic imperialism” in the context of postcolonial Bangladesh in a globalized world.

The Global Spread of English and Linguistic Imperialism

In order to pose a threat to other languages and cultures, a language has to be in the dominant position. To discuss the notion of English linguistic imperialism, it is therefore necessary to consider the reasons for the spread of English. According to David Crystal (1997), “A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country” (p. 2). Therefore, in order to be a global language, a language has to ensure its usage even in the countries where there are no native speakers of that particular language. The use of a language in non-native countries can be established in two ways – by using the language in education, government and in other important domains, thereby giving it official status, and by prioritizing the language in the foreign language teaching of a country without giving it official status (Crystal, 1997). English is used in most of the countries of the world either as a second or foreign language and it is evident that English is the global language of today's world. However there are some reasons behind the widespread use of English.

According to Crystal (1997), the growth of Britain as a colonial power and the US financial supremacy are the two main reasons for the global status of English today (p. 53). This notion regarding the status of English is strengthened by two essential criteria of becoming a global language identified by Crystal (1997) which are “political power of its people” and financial power “to maintain and expand it” (pp. 7-8). Since English is the language of both of these powerful nations, the importance of English has amplified in accordance with globalization and with the increasing political and financial power of the aforementioned countries. Apart from these factors Crystal (1997) points out some more practical and obvious reasons for the spread of English in today’s world. English is the dominant language in international communication, in major international organizations, in international media, press, and even in film media. The role of English in the educational sector is unquestionable as Crystal (1997) states “English is the medium of a great deal of the world’s knowledge” (p. 101). English is the dominant language for conducting research and for publishing science articles (Ferguson, 2006). Last but not the least, the force that has geared the growth of English most is the current technology- internet. According to Crystal (1997) “English is the chief *lingua franca* of the internet” (p. 107) and “about 80% of the world’s electronically stored information is currently in English” (p. 105). All these reasons indisputably provide the status of the *lingua franca* of the modern world to English language.

However, the current status and spread of English has been viewed as a growing threat to other cultural and linguistic identities in the world by critics such as Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994). Language is not merely a medium of communication, it also embodies culture, values, and beliefs, and the dominance of one may endanger other languages and societies through cultural, political, and economic means.

Phillipson (1992) in his widely acclaimed book *Linguistic Imperialism* discusses the role of English between “core” and “periphery” countries (p. 17) – a concept which reflects Kachru’s (1985) three circles of English. “Core” countries or the “inner circle” countries, as Kachru termed them, refer to the states where English is spoken as a native language. Phillipson then distinguishes between two types of “periphery” countries – the first type are the countries where the role of English is limited to “international link language” and the second represents countries which used to be British colonies “and where the language has been successfully transplanted and still serves a range of intranational purposes” (p. 17). These two types are equivalent to Kachru’s notion of “expanding” and “outer circle” countries. This discussion clarifies that English plays a major role especially in the second type of “periphery” countries in many significant domains such as education. As a result, English continues to secure its position in those countries till date.

According to Phillipson (1992), “English linguistic imperialism is that the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and

continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (p. 47). Being the dominant language in a significant number of domains in most of the countries of the world, English promotes inequality between its proficient and incompetent users which is referred to as “Linguicism” by Phillipson (1997). He defines Linguicism as “ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (p. 47). Phillipson's concept of “Linguistic Imperialism” is based on the “imperialism theory” of Galtung (1980, p.107 cited in Phillipson, 1992, p.52) which regards the relationship between societies as dominant and dominated ones. “English Linguistic Imperialism” implies this relation between “core” and “periphery” countries.

In today's world where English is the global language, particularly in “periphery” countries, it is considered as the medium which provides access to knowledge and power, and is creating a division between people who can access it and those who cannot.

Pennycook (1994) illustrates this notion further as he states that since English plays a dominant role in most of the educational domains in the world, it has taken the position of determining opportunities for people regarding “further education, employment, or social positions” (p.14). He also states that in countries which had been British colonies before “small English speaking elites have continued the same policies of the former colonizers, using access to English language education as a crucial distributor of social prestige and wealth”(p. 14).

Therefore, it can be said that English continues to maintain its “hegemonic position” (Phillipson, 1992, p.72) throughout the world. Bisong (1995) summarizes the notion of linguistic imperialism as “the linguistic relation between the Centre and the Periphery has been and continues to be one of dominant and dominated languages” (p. 123). Bisong also states, that according to Phillipson, English is also responsible for the extinction and displacement of “indigenous” languages in periphery countries. Bisong further investigates Phillipson's notion and relates culture with the imposition of English and states, “The dominance of English has also resulted in the imposition of the Anglo-Saxon Judaeo-Christian culture that goes with it, so that indigenous culture have been undervalued and marginalized” (p. 123). This proves that, as language is an essential part of culture, linguistic imperialism involves cultural imperialism as well (Phillipson, 1992, p. 53).

Phillipson (1992) considers the “British Council,” “Ford Foundation” as tools of linguistic imperialism because, according to him, the core countries use these agencies for the sake of their interest in promoting their language throughout the world. He relates the notion of “Linguistic Imperialism” to the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession and marks it as a mechanism of imposing the dominant language because ELT benefits the core countries more. In recent years, ELT has

become one of the most profitable commodities in the market. This perception of viewing ELT as a marketable product is reflected in the statement of the Director General of the British Council in the 1987/88 annual report cited in Phillipson (1992) where it was stated, “Britain’s real black gold is not north sea oil but the English language” (pp. 48-49).

However, the global spread of English is not without its effects. Ferguson (2006) points out four major negative aspects of the global role of the English language. According to him, English promotes discrimination between native and non-native speakers of English because native speakers naturally have greater command over English and thereby it creates inequality (p. 125). Secondly, English is the cause of inequality even within society. As the elites in “outer circle countries” (Kachru, 1985) consider English as a prestigious tool and use as a medium of social achievement, they do not want it to be accessible to all the classes of society, resulting in creating disparity within the society. Again, in many postcolonial countries of Africa and Asia, English is still used as the medium of instruction though it hinders the progress of learning (Ferguson, 2006, p. 126) whereas, studies have proved that providing education in students’ mother tongue brings associated benefits which in turn facilitates acquisition of the second language (Benson, 2010). Ferguson also points out that the worldwide spread of English may endanger and marginalize the role of other languages “by squeezing them from public domains, such as scientific communication and higher education” (p. 126). Finally, English is also responsible for “cultural homogenization” – a phenomenon termed “McDonaldization” by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1997, p.28), which means, along with language, the norms and beliefs of a society are also influenced by English.

The above discussion provides an adequate picture of the pervasive role of the English language in the world and directs the discussion to explore the role of English in post-British settlements. The paper will now review the role of English and its effects, and examine the notion of *Linguistic Imperialism* in the context of Bangladesh.

The role of English in Bangladesh

Phillipson (1992, p. 1) in his masterpiece *Linguistic Imperialism* shows interest regarding the role of English in third world countries. At this point “English linguistic imperialism” will be discussed in the context of Bangladesh – a third world “periphery country” under represented in linguistic research. The discussion here relevantly needs an overview of the educational system in Bangladesh. It will illustrate the importance of the English language in our society and education. It will also reveal the reasons for the existing class division in Bangladesh. Some of the reasons for the division in society owe their origin to English and hence the attempt of this paper is to explore *Linguistic Imperialism* from a different perspective in the Bangladeshi context.

I. Educational System in Bangladesh: Bangla plays a major role in the spirit of nationalism in Bangladesh because the Bangla Language Movement is the foundation stone in the process of the independence of Bangladesh (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007, p. 243). However, in spite of the importance of Bangla, English plays a very important role in the education system of Bangladesh. As indicated by Hossain and Tollefson (2007), there is no consistent language policy in Bangladesh and practically there are three kinds of schools in the educational system in Bangladesh which are “Bangla-medium school, English-medium schools and Madrasah education” (p. 248).

In Bangla medium schools, the medium of instruction is Bangla apart from the subject English and most of the children in Bangladesh attend Bengali-medium schools and study English for 12 years. However, there is a difference between Government Bangla-medium schools and private Bangla-medium schools. The private Bangla-medium schools offer more facilities than the government schools, focus heavily on English, and cost more than the government ones. Students from both types of schools take part in the two most important national examinations among others. These are the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations. The medium of instruction is English in English-medium schools which are located mostly in urban areas and accessible only to the wealthy social class (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007). The students of English-medium schools appear for O’ and A’ Level exams which are “prepared in England, administered in Bangladesh and marked in England” (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007, p. 253). The third type of school is “Madrasah Education” which offers free education and is attended mostly by poor rural students. These schools are mainly “religious schools” where the heavy focus is on religious studies and the Qu’ran, and usually do not provide students with science, technology, math or English studies (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007, p. 254). The amount of English taught, the qualification of teachers, and the English text books used in these three medium schools vary significantly, adding to the discrepancy in school and college education of Bangladesh.

This three-stream educational system is chiefly responsible for creating social class and division in society, an opinion echoed in Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam’s words in an interview with the daily “Prothom Alo” where he stated “We have an education system divided into three streams and with each stream comes a built-in class system.”

II. Social Hierarchy: Since the choice of educational system largely depends on social and financial status (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007, p. 254) and, given that there are three kinds of schools, these clearly produce students with different proficiency levels in English. These students face discrimination while pursuing higher education as English is the medium of instruction in higher studies (253), and in employment. Indeed, competency in English is an essential criterion to get a good

job. Students who attend English-medium schools have a greater advantage compared to students of the other two mediums both in higher education and employment. Bangla-medium students fall in between whereas the students from Madrasah Education are the most deprived ones and are faced with the most difficulty in seeking employment (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007).

This whole system creates a vicious cycle because education depends on social class; employment depends on education, and if one does not acquire a highly paid job, s/he will not be able to send their children to the schools where English is best taught. The discussion concerning the educational system of Bangladesh makes it clear that “English education contributes to significant class divisions” in Bangladesh (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007, p. 255) which can be called “English Linguistic Imperialism” as one of the claims made by Phillipson is that English creates inequality even within the society. Imam (2005) strengthens this claim by stating “Within Bangladesh global English functions as a tool for social-political differentiation and discrimination since English education is restricted to a specific class only” (p. 248). She provides a clearer view of the situation by explaining that students from English-medium schools consider themselves superior to the students of Bangla/ Madrasah medium schools and this phenomenon “reproduces Anglo-American hegemony” (p. 479). A similar view is echoed by Choudhury (2008) as she states that the small number of local elites in Bangladesh enjoy greater success and prestige in their educational, social and professional life because of their competence in English and the same language becomes an obstacle for the rest of the population on their way to achieving success because of their lack of proficiency.

The discussion and the views by scholars pointed out a class within Bangladeshi society reaping and enjoying the benefits of English education the most, compared to the other sections of the society and creating a social divide within the society. From this critical perspective, ELT now can be seen as the new tool to impose dominance of the English language on non-English speaking countries of the world. Consequently, if the practice of English language teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh is examined, it may reveal the interest of the core countries and a particular section of the society to ensure the sustainability of class division and hegemony.

III. ELT in Bangladesh: It has been suggested earlier that core English speaking countries promote English for the sake of their own interest and ELT is currently a profitable business. Phillipson (1992) views ELT as aid from the core countries in order to promote English including “teacher training and curriculum development activities” (p. 11).

Being a third world country, Bangladesh has to depend on the aid provided by the core countries. Naysmith (1987) claims that the teaching of English language “has become part of the process whereby one part of the world has become politically, economically and culturally dominated by another” (cited in Pennycook, 1994, p.

21). With this process of aid, Bangladesh government started a project named English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) in 2000, jointly funded by the Government of Bangladesh and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK (Chowdhury and Ha, 2008). Subsequently, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in the educational sector with a view to improving the standard of English among students. However, Hamid and Baldauf, Jr.(2008) have pointed out that the infra-structure needed for CLT practice is absent, particularly in rural Bangladesh. The subsequent lack of teacher training results in the poor performance of students and thus, increases discrimination between urban and rural areas. Moreover, Chowdhury and Ha (2008) point out the “cultural incompatibility” of CLT in Bangladesh and claim that the relationship between teachers and students which is based on respect is one of the obstacles in implementing CLT in Bangladesh. In this respect, ELT can be seen as a tool of “Linguistic Imperialism” imposing a language teaching methodology on a country without considering its social and cultural aspects.

From this point, the paper will direct the discussion towards the current status of English and the manifold views associated with it in Bangladesh. It will try to negotiate the relevance of holding the English language responsible for having a superior status over Bangla in Bangladesh, and for pushing Bangla to the verge of being a vernacular in the country which has a glorious history of Bangla language. To address the issue, the theories provided by the opponents of *Linguistic Imperialism* who vehemently refute the claims of the proponents will be taken into consideration.

Different Views

This section deals with the alleged role of the English language in creating inequality within Bangladeshi society for the benefit of the core countries. Although English has been identified as creating severe class division in Bangladesh, the fault lies more at the door of the local elites rather than the core countries. Hossain and Tollefson (2007) state that in Bangladesh, “the urban middle and the upper classes depend upon their exclusive, high-quality English-medium education in order to sustain their privileged access to higher education and employment” (p. 255).

Therefore, although the situation coordinates with Phillipson’s notion that English creates “inequality” even within a society, it is the local elites who are in favor of the situation and benefit the most as Davies(1996) rightly “ironizes” the concept of *Linguistic Imperialism*– “imbalance is not imposed from without but from within” (p. 490). Moreover, the attitude towards English in Bangladesh is more positive including the people in villages who see English as a gateway to improving their condition and English is not considered “a colonial burden”(Hossain and Tollefson, 2007, 2005). Ferguson (2006) suggests making English accessible to all classes of society in order to improve the social condition and reduce disparity (p. 141).

Thus, the opposition's view toward Linguistic Imperialism sheds a different light on the situation in terms of the use of English language in Bangladesh and proposes to explain the scenario from a different perspective. The situation in Bangladesh and the role of English therefore is not as much an imposition from the core countries for the benefit of the native speakers as it is for the local elites. It is within our own country where the status of English has been maintained throughout to uphold the privileged elite class, as a result of which the society has been divided into several classes. Though English language is absolutely not the sole responsible factor for class division in the society, its responsibility cannot be denied to a great extent. At the same time, it is also true that the hegemonic position of English lies within the interest of this periphery country. Therefore, instead of emphasizing on the dividing nature of the *Linguistic Imperialism* theory, it is in our interest that Bangladesh being a developing country should focus more on enhancing the skills of English language among our people in order to compete in the global world.

Other than threatening and marginalizing a language, a further claim that the spread of English may endanger other languages, can be refuted by arguing that instead of English endangering other languages it is the local dominant language which causes threat (Ferguson, 2006, p. 128). An example from Bangladesh may further illustrate this event that though there are number of other ethno-linguistic groups in Bangladesh, no language policy for them exists in the country (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007, p. 243). The children of these communities have to pursue their education in Bangla and here Bangla is causing a threat to these indigenous languages.

In terms of cultural influence, English being the international language does not signify a particular culture only and learning English does not mean that the learner has to follow the culture and values of the “core” countries (Smith, 1987).

Conclusion

Linguistic Imperialism as a notion does exist to some extent as it has been discovered in the context of Bangladesh; however, it is the result of the power relations between the elites and the masses of a country than the “core-periphery” power relation. English is the global language of today's world and its importance cannot be questioned. Bisong (1995) argues that today, people learn English for practical reasons. Therefore, in order to develop, to foster economic growth of a country, and to be in the global community, English is indispensable. English language, then, can be viewed as an opportunity provider and a medium for representing a peoples' own culture and belief to the world rather than considering it a new tool of supremacy and imperialism.

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Appendix: 1

Questionnaire for Teachers

[The following questionnaire has been prepared only for research and academic purposes. Your opinion is highly confidential and your name will never be mentioned anywhere in the research procedure. So please feel free to check the appropriate option and return the set in a week's time]

Name: [Optional]:

Gender: [Male] [Female] Age:

Teaching experience: [1-5 years], [5-10 years], [10-15 years], [above 15 years]

Education qualifications: B A, B A (Hons) (Literature/ Linguistics), M A (Literature/ Linguistics), M Phil (Literature/ Linguistics), PhD Literature/ Linguistics, Others

Mother language:

[Please check the right option according to your own teaching experience.]

1. I think the testing methods for English in different universities are outdated and need immediate change.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. I believe that the existing English language testing methods are effective for developing language abilities.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I believe that the existing English language testing methods are effective only for developing reading and writing skills.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. The idea of communicative language teaching is up-to-date and essential.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Language testing items should be more practical than theoretical.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I think technology based communicative language testing system should be introduced to evaluate students' language abilities.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. The language skills covered by the syllabuses and testing systems have little relevance to the

practical professional needs of the students in later life.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I think that the main targets for designing the existing English syllabuses and testing system

are to enhance students' grammatical knowledge.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please write your valuable suggestions to develop the existing testing system of our public universities.

Respondent's Signature &Date
Signature & Date

Data Collector's

Thank you for your help.



Appendix: 2

Questionnaire for Students

This questionnaire is designed for the survey of evaluation of English language tests at the universities in Bangladesh. This paper aims solely at research. The privacy of the information given here will be maintained strictly and will be used for academic purposes only.

Background information of the respondent

1. Name of the respondent:
2. ID No.TermYear
3. Name of the Discipline/Department:
- 4: Name of the School/Faculty:
5. Contact number: Date

Questionnaire

(Please put a checkmark (☐) on the appropriate statement, or write down if you have any suggestions.)

1. I think literature courses are more effective than language courses for learning English.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. I think language courses are more effective than literature courses for learning English.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I think that the existing testing systems contribute very little to language learning abilities.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I think that the existing testing methods promote reading and writing abilities rather than listening and speaking skills.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Technology based communicative language testing systems are more effective for language learning.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. Current testing system is only for passing the examination and getting certificates.

Strongly agree Agree Not Decided Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please write your valuable suggestions to develop the existing testing system of our public universities.

.....
.....

Name & Signature of the Respondent

Name & Signature of Data Collector

.....

.....

Thank you for your help.

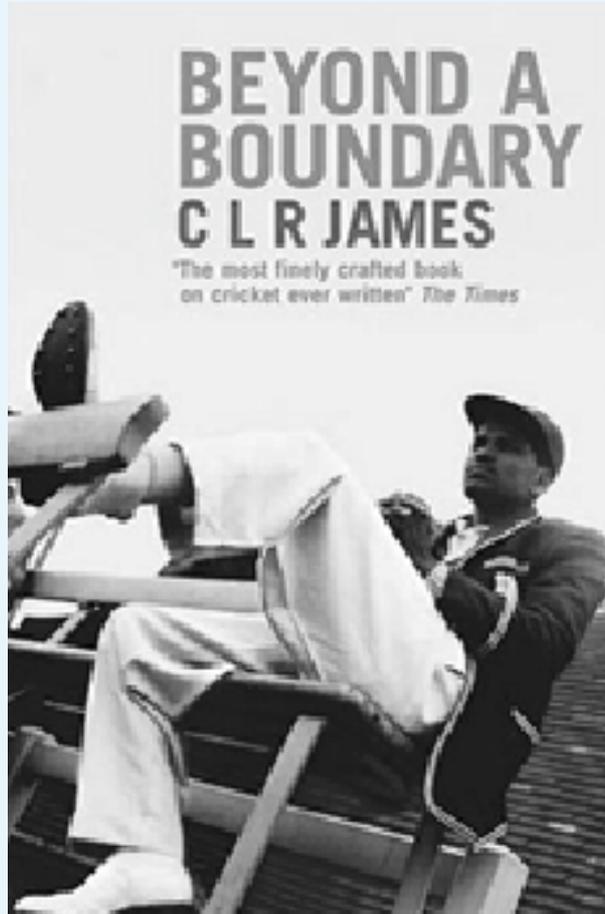


B O O K R E V I E W



Can cricket be an agent of change, and break barriers?

Manzoorul Abedin*
University of Cambridge



Beyond a Boundary

C.L.R. James

Durham: Duke UP, 50th Anniversary edition,
originally published in 1963. June 2013. 267 pp.

ISBN-10: 0822355639;

ISBN-13: 978-0822355632

* Manzoorul Abedin recently obtained his PhD from the University of Cambridge for his dissertation on English Education Policy in the Developing World.

One thing is certain. *Beyond a Boundary* is neither a ghost-written celebrity biography, nor a cash-in publication following the economic rise of the postcolonials in cricket, particularly the Indian subcontinent. A stark contrast to the lassitude and superficiality of the contemporary sports writing—often a compliant servant of the profit mongers, C.L.R. James’ (1901-1989) *Beyond a Boundary* explores the place of cricket in the Caribbean and England, arguing that what happened inside the “boundary line” in cricket affected and was a reflection of life beyond it. The new edition of C.L.R. James’ 1963 book came out recently to celebrate fifty years since its first publication, and fittingly at a time when cricket has become a multi-million dollar industry with far-reaching social and economic ramifications seemingly as never before: corruptions are abound, books cooked, matches fixed, performances enhanced and much more. James has not talked about all these issues, but points out, carefully and provocatively, how the sport mirrors the complex nature of the society and the time in which it lives. During the course of the book’s 260 odd pages, he has combined his incisive sociological analysis and fervent passion for cricket, which in his words, “neither cricket reminiscences nor autobiography.”

Does one have to be a cricket fan to appreciate *Beyond a Boundary*? Although the book contains an introductory note that explains the basic rules of the game, some interest in the historicity of the game is probably warranted. James asks the seething question “what do they know of cricket, who only cricket know”, that captures his purpose of making connections between cricket and its politico-historical variables. He begins with the place of cricket in his family history, in his childhood and schooling in Trinidad, and in the social stratification of the West Indian society. He was born into the Black middle-classes of that island and his gifts for literature and sport earned him a scholarship to the local public school as well as a chance to play in the thriving post World War One Trinidadian cricket scene. It was there that he encountered a number of the great West Indian players from the era approaching their introduction into the test arena. This section of the book shows how his schooling, and in particular cricket, instilled a code of ethics that were to stay with him for the rest of his life. The obeying of umpiring decisions, subordinating personal desire for the sake of the team, not complaining about misfortune, and of most significance to the pre-independence Trinidad, restraint and loyalty. James then recounts his personal experiences of some of the great West Indian cricketers, including George John, Wilton St Hill, and Learie Constantine. In the three essays on Constantine, his personal friend, James also discusses league cricket and his own move to England, and to a society whose class divisions he likens to those of the West Indies. An essay on George Headley, the former West Indian Captain, provides an interlude before James moves on to talk about W.G. Grace, the legendary English cricketer, as both player and a change-maker in the ‘elitist’ English cricket on the verge of the Victorian era. This is followed by a somewhat over the top argument that cricket is a form of art. He begins with a general argument for

the importance of sport in social history, going back to its Greek roots, to the Olympic games and then compares the dramatic qualities of cricket to the Athenian drama. The text eventually comes to a full circle as it returns to the West Indies of the late 1950s with the two final chapters covering the unrest during an English tour of the West Indies in 1960, and more generally the complex interaction of race and politics of the West Indian cricket, in such matters as the selection of teams and captains. James mounts a powerful manifesto, at least as so appears, for Frank Worell to become the first full-time 'Black' captain of the West Indies.

Selma James, CLR's wife, writing in *The Guardian* (2 April, 2013), believes that this is a book he "had to" write: "he considered himself more scrupulous about the game's technique ... saw the game not only as it was played but as it was lived." In "Writing the modern game" (from Bateman and Hill [eds.], *Cambridge Companion to Cricket*, 2011), Rob Stein asserted that the first cricket writers to see cricket beyond its two-dimensions were Neville Cardus and Raymond Robertson-Glasgow, but"(n) either, though, went beyond the field of play to see the place where the cricketer was born and brought up, where he went to school or what community he represented" (p.238). C.L.R. James, Stein believes, was "the first to see and write about cricketers in their social context". However, one has to remember that *Beyond a Boundary* was written in 1963 with passages from articles by the author that pre-date the book's publication. Inevitably therefore, there are times when the language feels dated, and discussions of negative tactics and attitudes in the late 1950s, the reader might feel, are overshadowed by the increased tempo of the game as it is now played. Similarly, the rise and fall of the West Indies cricket, the economics of the game, the instant gratification formula are all new developments that 'modern' cricket has been through since the first publication of the book. Yet, *Beyond a Boundary* retains subjects that benefit from shattering boundaries and remains relevant for today's cricket lovers. Readers are invited to see cricket beyond the constraints of the stadium, and explore its diverse interconnections, without which, James argues, we are prevented from knowing our own reality-what do they know of cricket, or anything, if it is walled off from every other aspect of life and struggle? So my final verdict is, this is perhaps not the book to take to a match and flick through in-between deliveries, rather here is a book that demands to be read at leisure, with enough time to mull over the serious issues that it contains.



Where Words Go To Die

Fatema Johera Ahmed*
Melbourne, Australia



The Book is Dead (Long Live the Book)

Sherman Young

New South Wales: U of New South

Wales P, 2007. 192 pp.

ISBN 978-0-86840-804-0

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Perhaps the book was doomed to die – its inevitability preceded by Roland Barthes’s eulogy for authors when he declared the “Death of the Author.” Sherman Young writes about books in an age of near saturation, where everyone writes and no one really reads, where the honorary distinctions between writer and author are obfuscated, and books are confused for objects. Young categorizes the types of books published into functional books that one consults for information, anti-books that are devoid of content and are circulated by their sheer brand worth or impulse buying, and ‘real’ books, the “ideas machine” (30), which preponderates towards ideas, critical and intellectual engagement, empowerment, conversation, and reflexivity. Young’s allegiance is obvious.

An examination of Barnes & Noble’s top-grossing books reveals that ‘frontlist’ titles yield 30 per cent of their revenue which include cook books, mass market books, bestsellers, and self-help books. The flip side is that the vast majority of titles sell fewer than two copies a year. This disappointing state of demand and supply is further consolidated by the reluctance of publishers to consider worthy manuscripts if they cannot be buzz-worthy.

As an experiment, the *Sunday Times* sent out twenty manuscripts of the first chapters of VS Naipaul’s *Free State* in 2005, changing its title and withholding the name of the author. The novel that won Naipaul the 1971 Booker Prize failed to excite their imagination. What sort of doom does this spell for serious authors and book lovers when the rush to mass produce is rivaled by the television, the entertainment industry and the Internet, and the only way to resuscitate the industry is to cater to the popular imagination? In the philistines war cry for instant gratification, one can almost hear a modern day, idiot-box-addicted Mr Gradgrind from *Hard Times* who insists on digestible, piecemeal entertainment with which he can hammer his proselytes into stupefaction. There is nothing a seeker will discover here to retire with and ponder over; there is no thought, no consciousness, no transformation, and no enlightenment.

The fractures between best sellers, consumerism, and ‘real’ books challenge the structural coherence of books as an industry in itself. Also, how does one negotiate with the market place when authors need to eat even as they pursue a calling in their rented ivory towers? How can authors hope to sell and be read if they cannot be relevant? Does the answer lie in striking a balance, a compromise between the two seemingly irreconcilable states? These queries are the refrains of “art for art’s sake,” and Young does not seem to be anywhere near the answer.

Young examines the contemporary book culture from various angles as he laments for an age when “[t]he author was central to the publisher’s existence and success; a success that was not measured in revenue, but in reviews. And in the social and cultural impact of the book” (86). He sees the book reduced to a commodity in the nexus between publishing and the commercial aspirations of a profit-making

enterprise that relies on brand power and unyielding promotion to draw in buyers, not readers. The paradox resides in the book's contribution to dialogue about the nation-building narrative while the publishing process is a business that produces goods with a Product Life Cycle.

The mythic role of the publisher as a nurturer of ideas is replaced by a marketing department that assesses the revenue-making potential of a title; the patron of culture of the bygone age is displaced by the panderer, and content is sacrificed for the cover. This trend perpetuates the decline of the small bookstores in favor of the book superstore which works by pushing the bestsellers. This 'low brow' move caters to mass appeal whilst reading is a niche activity with a niche market, where specific back listed topics will meet the interest of only a particular community of people.

This raises the question as to how much control Leonardo da Vinci had when he was commissioned for his "Mona Lisa," or if he did not yield his paintbrush according to the styles of his time? By the same logic, the change in the way Renaissance art is now perceived as high art is a reflection of the changing attitudes, that well-known tendency to regard the past as the lost, golden age of human civilization when caught in the mire of an ever dystopian present. The concept of self-publishing becomes a viable option coupled with blogging on the Internet where the publisher is done away with altogether.

In this context, the importance of the book's very physicality becomes the cause for its demise because of the fixedness that comes with a printed text. Once acquired, the buyer/reader is unlikely to invest in a new edition. The sub text of its existence allows no further scope for revisions where "the fixedness of the printed book assumes a rigidity to the author's thinking" (107). Yet, one forgets the book existed but electronically from conceptualizations and research, to writing, rewriting and editing, all until the final go-ahead given in the supreme act of recognition in publication.

Young explores alternative avenues to revive the book culture where the tendency is to blur the lines between the object and the concept. This includes print-on-demand technology, collaborated websites like Wikipedia, Amazon dot com, Project Gutenberg, the repackaging of the *World Book Encyclopaedia* from book to CD, the grand plan of making all books digitally available by Google Book Search, and the reconfiguration of books into e-books and e-readers. In the era of the new media, publishers' websites remain reticent about the ways in which books can be made more accessible to readers in their hesitation to look beyond the printed object. Young terms this as cultural inertia; the resistance to new post-modern ways of telling stories is a form of anti-reading, a passivity that insists on handing the author the lead. Yet it is not the author but the profit-maximizing/popular-culture-brewing publishing enterprise that is dictating the terms.

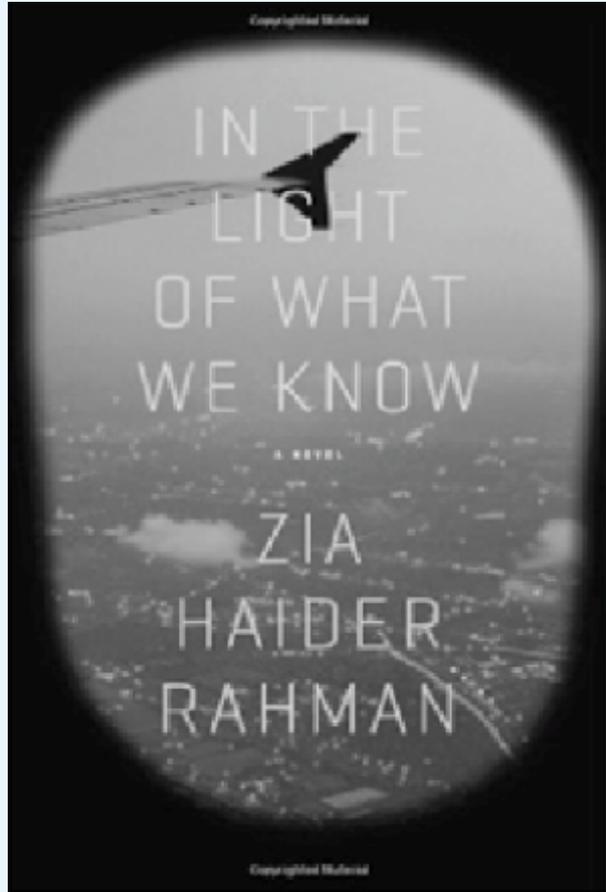
Finally, Young charts a trajectory of evolution towards the Heavenly Library as

similar to the digital camera and iTunes that can only be helped by advances in portability, affordability, and fidelity. The technological hurdles can be overcome if the intellectual one survives its current mercenary slump to exert its influence. The impossibility of stocking all books can then be solved through the existence of an online archive that can be accessed from anywhere. Young relegates the romance of the printed page, the object, to a minor role of illustrated books, gift books, and blockbusters for casual readers. For the continuing dialogue about high culture and low, about the printed book, blogs, and e-books, as an intertextual case in point for the arguments explored in *The Book is Dead (Long Live the Book)*, and for future additions, modifications, and recantations Young may have to add to the discourse, he invites us to his www.thebookisdead.com.



In the Light of What We Know: A Novel of Its Time

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In the Light of What We Know

Zia Haider Rahman

NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014. 512 pp.

ISBN-10: 1250062373; ISBN-13: 978-1250062376

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It is not easy to define the boundary between knowing and knowledge. Being informed and being knowledgeable can be two different intellectual states. Knowing history can lead to a partial understanding of the present until one can interpret the present through history. Knowledge is the conclusion that one reaches after knowing and interpreting. For a novelist, his or her plot should inform the historical context and provide the readers with the scope to interpret the present through the facts of the past. A successful novel triggers constant interpretations as well as makes the readers doubt their interpretations. Also, a successful novel knows the necessity of its time. Keeping all these aspects in mind, it seems appropriate to coin Zia Haider Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know* as a novel of its time. However, it is problematic to say that the novel offers knowledge or the scope of interpretation for readers. A novel needs to manifest the triggering events in its plot that fetches diverse interpretations from different cultures and countries. Rahman's novel seems to refer to a lot of intellectual works and historical facts, but it is not clear how the readers will interpret the events by connecting the references with the events of the fiction.

Knowledge illuminates, but it also becomes troubled for being incomplete and partial. Rahman's disconcerting debut novel is a thorough examination of global politics, identity crisis, and postcolonial remorse that roams from Bangladesh to Oxford, Afghanistan to New York, and that has already received comparisons with Sebald, Conrad, and Waugh, and been nominated for the Goldsmiths Prize. The novel has been distinguished by some in London and New York as a work of utmost acquisitiveness that wrestles with almost every major issue of modern times: migration, xenophobia, globalized capitalism, and the War on Terror. Yet, Rahman seems reluctant to include what should have been its most vital element: his protagonist's intellectual intensity and personal story.

With the most traditional beginning of any novel, the appearance of Zafar, suddenly knocking at the door in his disheveled and apparently homeless stature at his friend's extravagant home in west London, we are presented with a figure with a captivating story to tell: the child of pre-modern Bangladeshis, raised on an East End council estate, who wins his way to Oxford and then to Wall Street, before being entangled in shady trickeries in Afghanistan. Like the incomplete presentation of the character's personality, his story is also partially visible in the novel. Instead, the reader is confused with countless evasive digressions that discuss the world in imposing abstraction: through mathematics, biology, economics, psychology, physics, and history.

The narrative fails to make characters vivid and engaging. Zafar's involvement with the NGO in Afghanistan and his actions at Wall Street, which could provide a significant scope for critical interpretations, are not detailed for the readers' comprehension. Similarly, his banker friend in West London, the unnamed narrator, focuses at length on the corrupt practices that he is involved in without

ever saying what exactly his mischief is. The book has inconsistencies in such important narratives.

Whenever the story delivers a starting point for fleshing his characters out, Rahman consistently, albeit purposefully, fails to explain it. Zafar's uneducated parents visit him in Oxford, substantiating a painful moment of social gawkiness. His mother's friend — disapproved of because of her mixed-race children — throws herself from a tower block. His mother dislikes his use of English terms like “please” and “thank you” in the house. All of these relevant and interesting details are dealt with cursorily and left unexplored: Zafar thus never comes alive as a character.

Rahman, intentionally or unintentionally, makes his characters Eurocentric; a trait for which this novel became so popular in the west. The characters lack the respect for their roots in Pakistan or Bangladesh; rather they are quite obsessed with the UK or USA. “If an immigration officer at Heathrow ever said ‘Welcome home’ to me,” Zafar says, “I would have given my life for England, for my country, there and then. I could kill for an England like that.” The storyline presents Zafar's lack of empathy for Bangladesh and the attempt to create a bonding with England. Zafar is prone to associate his nationality with England and regrets to fail in his attempts. Similarly, the unnamed banker seems to be Eurocentric as well. Their intellectual affinity to their roots does not form any narrative in the novel.

Instead, the reader is lost among unremitting lofty assertions on the human condition and the perilous state of world affairs. Westerners are consistently exposed as naïve and soulless, while the darker skinned are awarded with a certain knowing and mystical nobility. “Unlike the Westerners, ours is not a spiritual poverty but a material one,” proclaims Zafar's Afghan colleague. This avowal, which does not identify how much of the Islamic world's economic inertia is predicated by its “spirituality,” goes unopposed.

Rahman's approach towards female characters is vague. The presentation of Emily, Payne, and Lauren does not provide any complete picture of their personalities. The reader seems to misunderstand or not understand their relations with the male characters. Zafar develops an infatuation for the wealthy young woman, Emily, who seems to induce in him a lust which is both sexual and social. There is a constant tension in their relationship. There are even references of pregnancy and marriage, but Emily is an obscure creature. The reader fails to grasp her accountability in the novel.

Zafar bounces and interlaces through various time periods and events, dropping mysterious suggestions about this or that – the Colonel in Pakistan, the envelopes in Afghanistan, the doctor in Britain – to return to them later. In theory, this is a convenient technique, allowing suspense to build while the reader waits impatiently for the big disclosure, and also has the useful effect of protracting what is after all a rather straightforward series of events. The drawback, however, seems

that much of the material used to delay the suspense is dull. Rahman also confuses us with a fair amount of material that is either tedious or simply oblique, such as the prolonged description of Emily's father, a character who hardly suits the story. There are narratives on other characters which turn out to be irrelevant to the progression of the story. Also, there is a four-page footnote concentrating on map projections, a discussion on the Poggendorff optical illusion, and long paragraphs on the navel-gazing prose, which seems to be irrelevant for the thematic development.

Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know* seems to present the incomplete story of the characters and inspire the readers to complete the story with their interpretations through the provided history and facts. It seems to lead the readers to comprehend the relationship between knowing and knowledge to motivate the readers to interpret the truth. Despite its compelling storyline, it fails to provide the spirituality of the truth and knowledge for the readers; rather, it turns into a series of research essays in the format of a novel loaded with footnotes and references.





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