



Crossing

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Ever since its re-launch in 2014, *Crossings* has created a stir among the academic community. The launch of Volume 6 coincided with the two-day international conference on “Language, Literature and Community” jointly organized by the Department of English and Humanities, ULAB and the local chapter of the American Center.

Professor Jenny Sharpe of Comparative Literature and Gender Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) presented the keynote paper at the conference held at ULAB on July 10-11, 2015. The two-day conference was inaugurated by the secretary to the Ministry of Education, Md. Nazrul Islam, with deputy chief of US Embassy in Dhaka, Ms. Ann McConnell, in attendance.

A total of 75 speakers, representing Bangladesh, India, South Korea, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, took part in the conference. For this special volume of *Crossings* we have peer-reviewed the papers submitted and selected 23 articles for publication. The underlying themes that connect these papers involve an exploration of the relationship between language and literature within the frame of English Studies.

We are living in a time when liberal arts are threatened by the rise of new consumerism and conservatism. English Studies is responding to the threat by opening up its avenues and becoming interdisciplinary in scope. It is more than a department that teaches language or literature; it is a discipline that shapes and influences our community here and abroad. The papers collected here actively respond to such changes in English Studies. We hope these articles will offer fresh ideas and perspectives, and contribute to the ongoing debates about the questions of language, literature and community.

We must thank our ULAB VC Professor Imran Rahman and Pro-VC Professor Jahirul Haque as well as our friends at the American Center, Ms. Ann McConnell, Mr. George Mesthos, Mr. Calvin Hayes, Ms. Sara Denne-Bolton, and Ms. Raihana Sultana, for their wholehearted support in making the conference and its consequent outcome, this special issue of *Crossings*, possible. We hope our collaboration and cooperation in mutually beneficial areas will strengthen in the future.

Finally, we would like to invite scholarly papers, articles and book reviews for the next volume of *Crossings*. For details, please consult the Note to Contributors.

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L I T E R A T U R E

Life, Labor and the Picturesque: A Colonial Imaginary of East Indians in the West Indies

Jenny Sharpe

Professor of English,
Comparative Literature and
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Keynote Address

Abstract: The keynote address examines the race-gendering of Indian indentured workers in the colonial imaginary through which Jamaica was remade as a tourist destination during the late nineteenth century. It specifically examines the visual portfolio created by photographers of tropical fecundity and idyllic rural life that would dispel the perception of Jamaican plantations being ruined by the emancipation of slaves. While scholars are critical of the Oriental picturesque projected by these photographs, Professor Sharpe makes a case for a “coolie picturesque” depicting Asian Indians as an uprooted people who do not belong in the New World. This colonial imaginary continues to haunt the perception of Indo-Caribbeans as outsiders to the region even until today.

Tangled Encounters with the Indian Other: English Women Travel Writers Confronting India

Zerin Alam
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University of Dhaka

Abstract: *The travel narratives of Emily Eden (1797-1869) and Fanny Parkes (1794-1875), depicting their extensive travel through India, provide valuable insights into the initial encounter in the first half of the nineteenth century between the Europeans and the native Indians from a female perspective. The narratives, which comprise Eden's letters Up the Country (1867) and Parkes' journal Wanderings of a Pilgrim (1850), reveal the competing discourses of gender and imperialism at work that create tensions and ambivalences within the texts. On the one hand, the women as English travelers represented colonial power, but on the other hand, their gender placed them within a secondary or weaker position within the power discourse. Thus they wrote from a liminal position and their descriptions of their encounters with the colonial Other are fraught with anxiety and fractures. These travel narratives present an alternate view to empire building, and they manifest a complicated negotiation with Orientalism, evident in their use of the picturesque and in the moments when Eden and Parkes write about meeting Indian women. This paper argues that even though the women travel writers reinforce the dominant imperial and orientalist view, yet at times, they break away from the hegemony of monolithic Orientalism to present more personal and nuanced responses to India and Indians.*

The history of travel writing starting from Homer's *Odyssey* presents male figures as explorers and adventurers while the women like Penelope remain at home, waiting for the man to return. This was the norm for a long time with very few women undertaking journeys and even fewer writing about them. However, technological advances in the nineteenth century saw a rise in women traveling all over the world; and as England consolidated its power in India, women joined the men serving the East India Company. Consequently, as early as the 1830s, there were a number of women accompanying their male relatives to India. Two of these women were Emily Eden, the sister of the Governor General, Lord Auckland, and Fanny Parkes, the wife of a minor colonial official. They not only traveled through India but produced travel narratives which provide us with rich and significant insights into the discourses of gender, imperialism, and orientalism.

Women have functioned as signifiers in colonialism for both colonizers and the colonized. British women in India represented the domestic values and the emotional resonances of the Empire, including the normative values and attitudes of the center. These British women of the imperial structure were locally known as *Memsahibs*. Due to the close identification with the imperial values, these women (strengthened by a wave

of Raj nostalgia in the 1980s) occupy a negative stereotype of the disdainful white woman as the wives presented in Forster's *A Passage to India* or the immoral women of lust as in Daphne in *The Jewel in the Crown* of the Raj Quartet or Olivia in *Heat and the Dust*. V. S. Naipaul, in examining why the British rule had to end despite the fact that "no other conqueror was more welcome than the British," suggests "some say the arrival in India afterwards of white women. It is possible" (qtd. in Suleri 77). In this regard, Emily Eden who was in India from 1836 to 1842 and Fanny Parkes who was in India for 24 years from 1822 are important for presenting an alternative discourse to the dominant view of Imperialism which is male produced and also heavily implicated in Orientalism. Thus, instead of the failed bridge party of *A Passage to India* they show the possibility of understanding and sympathy between the English and the Indians. According to William Dalrymple (xvi), Parkes was one of the last travelers to witness a close and harmonious relation between the English and the Indians; the closeness which give way to rigid distancing and mutual suspicions after the Mutiny in 1857.

Women's role in imperialism is a contentious issue. Writers such as Pat Barr and Marion Fowler view the *memsahib's* role with sympathy and they valorize the efforts of these women to humanize and essentially feminize the empire. Margaret Macmillan even argues that the *memsahibs* were appreciated and loved by their servants. In contrast, recent post-colonial critics contest this perception and have relentlessly exposed the women's complicity in perpetuating hegemony and prejudices. This conflicting view of the women's role is a consequence of the ambivalent position the women occupy, and the ensuing ambivalence of the women themselves. Sara Mills explains:

The work of women travel writers cannot be fitted neatly within the Orientalist framework, and seems to constitute an alternative and undermining voice because of the conflicting discourses at work in their texts. They cannot be said to speak from outside colonial discourse, but their relation to the dominant discourse is problematic because of its conflict with the discourses of 'femininity,' which were operating on them in equal, and sometimes stronger, measure. (63)

The women travel writers like Parkes and Eden occupy a liminal space. As *memsahibs*, they belonged to the ruling class. They had come to India as part of the imperial mechanism and they represented the supremacy of the colonial race and its power. By writing about India, they were contributing to the discursive formation of India by producing knowledge about India and circulating their depictions.

However, women had to undertake a complex negotiation with conflicting discourses that affected them. By disseminating information about the colonies the women were impinging on the male preserve of knowledge and thus risking the violation or transgression of the normative gender roles of their time. Mills argues that the women preserved their given gender roles by circumscribing the scope of their narratives to domestic details and innocuous description of lands and peoples. The women were careful not to present scientific, political or authoritative data. The decision to focus on the domestic side of the empire created a safe feminine area for women to describe. In addition, the women also adopted the confessional genres as the mode of writing. Thus they published their travel texts as letters and journals in genres that are not valued as authoritative or scientific. Parkes published her journal and Eden letters which she had written mainly to her elder sister and friends. These choices were made to ensure the femininity of the writers. They mitigated the potential transgressions risked by travel and by publishing when they positioned themselves as a dutiful daughter maintaining a journal for her mother and a dutiful sister writing home regularly.

Following Mills, I would like to argue that Fanny Parkes and Emily Eden operate within the dominant imperial discourse but at times they undermine the hegemonic view. They were constrained by the social conventions of gender and also the dictates of national interest or their own race. However, their narratives reveal that women could negotiate with the discourses that governed them. The travel narratives of the women travelers present a female gaze but one that is implicated within the colonial discourse. Also the journey and the encounter with the Other impacted upon them so that they would change and undergo shifts in perspectives. This paper will analyze moments in their texts when both orientalism and imperialism are fractured.

The two major discourses which the women writers adopted in their travel narratives are that of the picturesque and orientalism. The writers, Parkes and Eden themselves, have used the term "picturesque" and "oriental"

separately. Following their use of the words, this paper will argue that the picturesque is a mode used to depict the external landscape of India and “oriental”/Orientalisms is employed to describe the privileged internal spaces that the travelers were privy to. The paper draws on the pictorial and aesthetic connotations of picturesque and the political and literary associations of orientalism in the discussion. Although these two discourses are very similar and overlapping, it is necessary to separate the two strands. David Spurr in his book on travel writing and journalism, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, has addressed this issue of coalescing or overlapping terms. He points out that a range of tropes were available for representation, “the repetitions and variations of these tropes are seen to operate across a range of nineteenth and twentieth century contexts” (3). Thus, any attempt to classify these modes “involves a certain degree of abstraction, not to say reduction: it subordinates the complexity and discreteness of any moment to the need for understanding it within a larger context” (3).

According to Indira Ghose, much of women’s travel writing falls under the picturesque mode (38). The picturesque emerged in the eighteenth century and continued in the next century as the prevalent mode of depicting landscapes. Originating in painting, it was an influential movement that crossed into literary texts and it was very popular in both travel guides and narratives in Britain as well as abroad. The concept was initially developed by William Gilpin who included the uneven or the rugged in sceneries to enhance the beauty of nature. The theory was further developed by Uvedale Price and he set out the suitable elements for the picturesque to include ruins, dilapidated buildings, and even gypsies and beggars. One can easily connect the features of the picturesque with the romantic sensibility which also stressed on the antiquated, the remote, and all with a touch of melancholy.

The picturesque was appropriated by female travel writers to depict the unfamiliar East as it gave them a framework from which to view the unknown Other and to contain the depiction within a familiar paradigm. Parkes and Eden both used the picturesque as an organizing principle of their descriptions. The connection with colonial power is made clear by Jill Casid who maintains that travel narratives used the picturesque as a mode of aesthetic and political control. She explains the picturesque served to domesticate the foreign by recomposing it into an already familiar model. At the same time, this domestication of the exotic was a means of containing the unfamiliar/foreign within known boundaries (46). She further argues that the picturesque provided a rhetoric of possession because the spectator can master the land by sketching or describing it from the vantage point of a spectator.

This imperial appropriation is also noticed by Sara Suleri in her statement:

For the female as colonizer, the picturesque assumes an ideological urgency through which all subcontinental threats could be temporarily converted into watercolours and thereby domesticated into less disturbing systems of belonging ... the picturesque becomes synonymous with a desire to transfix a dynamic cultural confrontation into a still life, converting a pictorial imperative into a gesture of self-protection that allows the colonial gaze a license to convert its ability not to see into studiously visual representations. (76)

Both Parkes and Eden made use of the picturesque. In Parkes’ case, she draws attention to it in her title *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*. Her journal contains a series of word paintings of different scenes of India ranging from Calcutta to Allahabad to Delhi over a period of the 24 years that she lived in India. She uses the word very often to capture the pleasure that a particular rural or exotic scene offers her. Thus she writes about the beauty of a Bengali temple:

We have just passed a ruined ghat, situated in the midst of two Hindu temples of picturesque form: an old peepal tree overshadows them; its twisted roots are exposed, the earth having been washed away during the rains. (285)

The dilapidation of the run down temple and the ruggedness of the twisted roots happily fulfill the picturesque expectations. In keeping with the conventions of the picturesque, exotic natives also fall under the purview of the spectator gaze. While the rural poor, beggars, and gypsies were the focus of the picturesque in England, similarly the disempowered and dispossessed natives are the focus of the colonial gaze. So along with the ruined temple, Parkes finds the Bengali women bathing and carrying away water along the ruined ghat to be a scene worthy of

sketching. Later when she encounters fakirs at the Chandpaul ghat, she asserts “I forgive them the sin of rascality, for their picturesque appearance” (286).

Following the conventions of the picturesque, Parkes delineates the shrines and historical ruins of India. By focusing on the antiquities, there is a suggestion that India’s present has nothing to offer and its glory was in the past. Thus Parkes can freely appreciate the Indian monuments such as the Taj Mahal. She presents detailed and exuberant description of the Taj which she visited in January 1835.

I have seen the Taj Mahal; but how shall I describe its loveliness? Its unearthly style of beauty!
It is not its magnitude; but its elegance, its proportions, its exquisite workmanship, and the
extreme delicacy of the whole, that render it the admiration of the world. (179)

Parkes was able to inscribe her appreciation of India because this was an India of the past which no longer held any threat to the British hegemony. Also, she praises the Taj only after she has mentioned in an earlier journal entry that the Taj is under British power and may be sold off by the Governor General. Interestingly, it was also in this entry that we find Parkes subverting the picturesque by including a criticism of colonial policy. It was rather daring for a government official’s wife to question the decisions:

The Governor General has sold the beautiful piece of architecture, called the Mootee Masjid, at Agra, for Rs 125,000 (about £12,500) and it is now being pulled down! The Taj has also been offered for sale! But the price required has not been obtained . . . If this be true, is it not shameful? The present king might as well sell the chapel of Henry VII in Westminster Abbey for the paltry sum of £12,500: for any sum the impropriety of the act would be the same. By what authority does the Governor General offer the Taj for sale? Has he any right to molest the dead? To sell the tomb raised over an empress, which from its extraordinary beauty is the wonder of the world? It is impossible the Court of Directors can sanction the sale of the tomb for the sake of its marble and gems. (120-121)

Here Parkes has embedded her criticism of colonial rule through a comment on art and aesthetic concerns. As it was not possible for the women writers to publish or publicly present direct criticism of the colonial policies, the lapses and the wrongs can out in indirect means through an anxiety over art or, as in the case of Eden, concern for humanity and the English themselves.

Emily Eden, like Parkes, recorded her stay in India. She was in a more privileged position as the sister of the Governor General and his hostess. She accompanied him on his political tour to the Northern Provinces and she was witness to the durbar presented to Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab. Yet the Hon. Emily Eden, daughter of a prominent Whig family, who biographers claim to have been politically conscious does not present any political detail or commentary in the letters that she published. In keeping the gender conventions of her time, she limits her topics to domestic arrangements and picturesque views of India. Her publication of her letters that she wrote during the four year march from Calcutta to Upper Provinces describe her witnessing the Great Game, the political conflict of Britain and Russia that had spread to Afghanistan and northern India, but she refrains from commenting on the political dimension. Instead she presents the hardships of the journey, the social on-goings among the English officials and with the natives along the way and, of course, the scenery and the weather. Pablo Mukherjee has commented that Eden’s failure to provide useful knowledge was the strength of her work. He cites the *Athanaeum*’s praise of Eden’s work in presenting a picturesque account of Indian life, and this picturesqueness he explains was associated with anti-utilitarianism and antiquarianism (25-26).

Eden in a similar fashion to Parkes appropriates the discourse of the picturesque to focus on the ruined aspects of India and the exotic different people of India. Like Parkes, she too focuses on the contemplation of a historic monument of India instead of highlighting the grandeurs of the present. For instance, she quickly glosses over the grand home of Dwarkanauth Tagore though she appreciates the fireworks he put up (*Letters from India* 255). In *The Golden Interlude*, a retelling of Fanny and Emily’s letters, there is mention of the books and grandeur of the Tagore home (51). Yet in the letters that Emily Eden published for a public readership she neglects to include this. It is for this public persona of a staunch imperialist that Eden has been much criticized and vilified. Many see her as closely aligning herself with the official colonial discourse. However, I would like to argue that Eden, like Parkes,

situates herself very firmly within the colonial discourse but also counters this discourse with her criticisms.

Emily Eden was not as enthusiastic or as emotional as the Indophile Fanny Parkes. From the beginning of her journey, she complains about the unfamiliarity and strangeness of the land and repeatedly inscribes her homesickness for her own land and people. However, this does not mean that Eden was as waspish or prejudiced as many contemporary researchers regard her. For Eden, like Jane Austen, was an ironist who always regulated her emotions and who presented her criticisms through sardonic wit and ironic self-deprecations. This ironic mode is extended to Eden's treatment of the picturesque as well. She too has focused on the ruins of the past glory of India and on the exotic Otherness of its people. In *Up the Country*, Eden presents Delhi, the seat of the Moghul or native Indian emperor, as a city of ruins. In her entry dated Camp, Delhi, Feb. 20, she writes "Four miles round it there is nothing to be seen but gigantic ruins of mosques and palaces" (94). Even the "king of Delhi's palace" is a place of ruins. The picturesque discourse strongly emerges in the following description of the palace: "It is a melancholy sight-so magnificent originally, and so poverty stricken now. The marble hall where the king sits is still very beautiful, all inlaid with garlands and birds of precious stones" (97). She then quickly deflates this grandeur with the "but the garden is all gone to decay too, and 'the Light of the World' had a forlorn and darkened look"(97).

Interestingly it is in the very moments of the picturesque that Eden embeds her debunking of the imperial discourse. In a very casual light-hearted tone, she presents her caustic assessment of English policy in the following excerpt:

In short, Delhi is a very suggestive and moralizing place – such stupendous remains of power and wealth have passed and passing away – and somehow I feel we horrid English have just 'gone and done it', merchandized it, revenueed it and spoiled it all. (98)

In a deft movement, Eden has segued from dwelling in the past to arriving at the present and registering her condemnation of current English practices. Still maintaining a flippant tone that would not be out of place in drawing rooms of London, Eden inserts a further scathing comment: "I am not very fond of Englishmen out of their own country"(98). This is definitely an anti-imperialist moment.

Indira Ghose notices another introspective comment on English shortcomings in Eden's description of the Kutub Minar:

Well of all things I ever saw, I think this is the finest. Did we know about it in England? I mean did you and I in our old ancient Briton state, know? Do you know, without my telling you, what the Kootub is? Don't be ashamed there is no harm in not knowing, only I do say it is rather a pity we were so ill taught. (99)

Besides the acknowledgment of ignorance, Eden also appreciates the magnificence of India when she writes, "I expected the Kootub would have been rather inferior to the Monument. One has those little prejudices. It happens to be the Monument put at the top of the column in the Place Vendome, and that again placed on a still grander base" (99).

Another passage which many critics read as Eden's undermining of dominant discourse is her ironic role reversal of what would happen if an Indian "black Governor-General" would go to England and look at ruins.

Perhaps two thousand years hence, when the art of steam has been forgotten and nobody can exactly make out the meaning of the old English word 'mail coach' some black Governor-General of England will go and look at some ruins, and doubt whether London ever was a large town, and will feed some white-looking skeletons, and say what distress the poor creatures must be in; they will really eat rice and curry; and his sister will write to her Mary D. at New Delhi, and complain of the cold, and explain to her what snow is, and how the natives wear bonnets, and then, of course, mention that she wants to go home.(66-67)

Ghose reads this as a "deconstructive move" (83) where the ironic gaze is fixed at Eden herself and her own culture. She sees Eden breaking away from colonial discourse which always presents the home culture as superior even while meditating on the past glories of Oriental culture. Ghose explains this as "In the ironic

distance from her own culture that the text enacts, lurks a suspicion of the absurdity and transience of British colonial rule. And finally, what Eden's text sets up for mockery most of all is her own persona: that of a letter-writing, perspiring, bonnet-wearing homesick traveller" (84).

Pablo Mukherjee has also commented on this passage as an important instance of Eden's debunking of dominant discourses. He, however, reads in this passage a shift from the picturesque which he calls "uneven" or "unevenly" picturesque (26). He connects the starving white mass to the victims of famine that Eden had witnessed on her journey to Delhi. The descriptions of poverty were not neutral dispassionate depictions of pictorial merit but heart-wrenching sympathetic accounts. In a text noted for its witty detached tone, Eden's concern for the starving Indians registers a strong emotional response.

After seeing starving children and women at Powrah, Cawnpore, looking like skeletons, Eden goes on to write: "I am sure there is no sort of violent atrocity I should not commit for food, with a starving baby. I should not think about the rights or wrongs of the case" (65). She is moved to write "I am sure you would have sobbed" (66) to describe the effect of seeing a starving baby being fed by an equally emaciated elder sibling of 6 years age.

Mukherjee rightly points out that the distress of seeing the famished masses led her to imagine the white skeletons. He also explains that the strong compassion that Eden displays "disturbs the norms of the picturesque that binds Eden's writing" (35). The reference to the starving Indians "injects a tonal and thematic excess that cannot be domesticated under the sign of melancholy which Leask sees as one of the fundamental signs of the picturesque" (35). The strong emotional note of the passage fractures the aesthetic distance of the picturesque. Here Eden has moved beyond the imperial discourse to enter into a moment of empathy and emotional intimacy with the colonial subjects.

Another discourse which the women travelers appropriated was the discourse of Orientalism. By the very act of describing India and circulating knowledge about India they were operating within the framework of Orientalism. As Ghose explains, the power hierarchy in this discursive formation as "The Oriental is consistently denied the power to know and represent himself or herself By denying agency to the Oriental object of knowledge, the Western Orientalist subject appropriates for him or herself—it is he(or she) who has the power to produce the Orient through his/her production of knowledge (24). By appropriating the discourse, women were able to negotiate a form of gendered power which allowed them to contest and compete with the male preserves of scientific and scholarly discourse.

Orientalism emerges as the repetition of certain tropes and images that fix the Other in particular stereotypes. Besides emphasizing an alterity with the English/European Self, Orientalism also mystifies the Other as exotic and alluring. Like the picturesque discourse, this discourse too provides the writer/spectator with familiar idioms and frameworks with which to depict and thus circumscribe the foreign Other. This accounts for why both Parkes and Eden draw on a tradition of Oriental tales to situate their depiction of India. Parkes places herself in the Orientalist tradition when she writes: "The perusal of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's work has rendered me anxious to visit a *zenana*" (35).

The Oriental strand is clearly manifested in the accounts of the *zenana* that the women produced. By writing about Indian domestic spaces, the English women were able to incorporate Oriental practices within their own sphere of experience. Describing Indian women who were in seclusion provided the women travelers an entry into the discourse of Orientalism. Since men did not have access to the inner spaces or *zenana*, the female quarters of upper class Indian households, the women could legitimize their writing as a necessary contribution to imperial knowledge. Representations of upper class and aristocratic Indian women form a large part of women's travel writing. It is foregrounded in Parkes' title, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque, during Four and Twenty Years in the East: with Revelations of Life in the Zenana*. Dalrymple's abridged edition of the journal also gives prominence to the *zenana* descriptions in his title, *Begums, Thugs and Englishmen*.

Parkes' depictions of the *zenanas* are situated within an Orientalist discourse. In one of the early accounts written in 1823 she includes a letter from a friend who had visited the King of Oude's *zenana*, and the royal women are described as follows: "But the present King's wives were most superbly dressed, and looked like creatures of the Arabian tales. Indeed, one was so beautiful that I could think of nothing but Lalla Rookh in her bridal attire" (55).

Parkes herself gives us a voyeuristic view of sensuous languid women she meets in the zenana of Colonel Gardner. Her friendship with this Anglo-Indian family gives her access to the inner quarters and the stories of the women. When she herself has the chance to enter and meet an Indian princess, she perpetuates the stereotype in her voyeuristic gaze. She delineates almost every aspect of Mulka Begum's physical beauty from her eyes to her lips and teeth. Parkes exclaims "How beautiful she looked! How very beautiful" (193). She goes on to state: "Her figure is tall and commanding; her hair jet black, very long and straight; her hands and arms very lovely! Very lovely" (194).

In her depictions of the Begums of Awadh, she is actually quite critical of their intrigues and power plays. Interestingly, though she gives a negative view of the meddling Begums, the very act of registering the interference or influence of the Begums is a fracture in the stereotype.

While Parkes reinforces the Oriental tropes in her inscriptions of zenana life with its multiple wives and cloistered lives of women, she simultaneously both upholds and subverts the feminine discourse of her time. In comparing the Muslim women with English women, Parkes valorizes the English. Regretting that James Gardner, her friend the Colonel's son, was not sent to England for education she writes: "I fancy the begum, his mother, would never hear of her son's going to England for education; and to induce a native woman to give way to any reasons that are contrary to her own wishes is quite out of the power of mortal man" (226). In contrast, "A man may induce a European wife to be unselfish and make a sacrifice to comply with his wishes, or for the benefit of her children" (226). In describing her first visit to the zenana of a rich Calcutta native gentleman, she writes: "I was glad to have seen a zenana, but much disappointed: the women were not ladylike" (35).

At the same time, however, the zenana visits provokes a sympathy for women's condition and Parkes transcends the racial differences to generalize on the universal suffering on women. Thus she transgresses the nineteenth century discourse of femininity and approaches a radical feminism for her time when she asserts "It is the same all the world over; the women, being the weaker, are the playthings, the drudges or the victims of the men; a woman is a slave from her birth; and the more I see of life, the more I pity the condition of the women" (276). This is a comment made after she contemplated the zenana.

Parkes is able to finally overcome her initial prejudice and attain a moment of cultural empathy and mutual understanding when she meets the deposed queen of Gwalior, the Mahratta Queen Baiza Bai. Unlike the passive, stay at home Muslim princesses and wives of her earlier encounters, the Bai is an active woman who lives in camps and likes horse-riding like Fanny Parkes herself. Perhaps these common interests provided a common ground from where the English traveler could objectively view her Indian counterpart and form a friendship. Parkes decenters the Oriental view she had been promoting throughout her journal when she praises her friend the Baiza Bai: "I visited the Bai several times and liked her better than any native lady I ever met with" (247). It is in this encounter also that Parkes re-evaluates the British superiority. In a moment of self-reflection she acknowledges the flaws of English culture when she admits to the suffering of the widows in England.

An English lady enjoyed all the luxury of her husband's house during his life; but on his death she was turned out of the family mansion, to make room for the heir, and pensioned off; whilst the old horse was allowed the run of the park, and permitted to finish his days amidst the pastures he loved in his prime. (248)

This negative view of England however is countered by a reminder that the Hindu widow's plight is worse as they are not allowed to remarry.

Nevertheless, the meeting with the Bai is very important because here Parkes also confesses to an Indian/native that the women's condition in England is not better. One of the rationalizations for British rule in India was to rescue the women in the zenanas and the widows who were sent to the pyres for the sati. So Parkes' dialogue over the "severity of laws of England with respect to married women, how completely by law they are the slaves of their husbands, and how little hope there is of redress" is of significance for multiple reasons.

First of all, here Parkes is destabilizing the dominant discourse of Orientalism by exposing the weaknesses of the Occidental power. She is criticizing the situation of women both in India and in England thus undermining the discourse of gender. And perhaps, most importantly, she is narrating a moment of dialogue. Here the Indian

woman is not the object of her gaze but someone who asks her questions and who probes her. Here the Indian woman's voice is represented and she is treated with respect and admiration. The Bai's wit is also recorded when the Bai asks who made the laws in England. Hearing it is the men, instead of denouncing male chauvinism, the Bai answers "I doubted it... 'since they only allow themselves one wife'" (247). Parkes's fondness for the Bai throws positive light on both colonial and Indian women indicating that friendship was possible between the two cultures.

The interest in depicting the zenana was also shared by Emily Eden. Her treatment of the Indian women is also like Parkes': ambivalent and contradictory. She gives details of the dresses and the appearances of the women she meets. She emphasizes the body and its physical merit in pointing out how one chief ranees, the mother of Pertab Singh was "one of the prettiest little creatures I ever saw" and the other queen "was immensely fat, and rather ugly" (226). In her encounter with some of Runjeet Singh's wives, she is again evaluating rather than describing. She measures physical worth when she judges the women. She declares out of five of the ranees, "Four of them were very handsome; two would have been beautiful anywhere" (232). On the one hand, she follows the Orientalist mode by highlighting the allure and beauty of the zenana women. She makes notes of the fabulous jewelry, "the huge strings of pearls" and "crescents of diamonds" (233) they wear. On the other hand, however, she undermines the glamour and like Parkes draws attention to the flaws. When she went to meet the Rajah of Benares, she describes the reception of being seated on a velvet sofa and watching a dance as "The whole thing was like a dream, it was so curious and unnatural" (28).

Yet, in a narrative that functions as a theatrical presentation of the spectacle of the British, with the emphasis on the 12,000 men march, durbars and rajahs/rulers that the Edens met on their travel to Punjab, the descriptions of the women are anti-climactic. Thus when she and Fanny are taken inside to meet the women she does not continue in the dream sequence. Here mortality and decay punctures the fabulous because the queen, the grandmother, is old and ill, and being forced to kiss her "was not very nice" (29). More disappointingly, the women were not dazzling, the Rajah's sisters are "very ugly."

Like Parkes, she is employing the discourse of Orientalism when she sends back her reports of the inner quarters of Indian households/palaces. She focuses on the queens rather than the servants and other lower class women she must have surely seen and met. She writes only about Rozina, her lady's maid, rather than about all of them. However, there is an uneasiness in meeting the Indian women. Both Parkes and Eden display an anxiety when confronted with the otherness of the Indian women. Parkes at first presents them as idle and even ugly as in the case of Mulka Begum. It is only after seeing Mulka Begum for the second time in the evening that Parkes is so eloquent in her praise of the Indian princess and later she mentions that the Begum was a great help to her husband in running their estate.

Eden is a more reticent writer than Parkes. While Parkes described India and its scenery and people in her journal, Eden remained focused on life around the Governor General's retinue, with the Anglo-Indian social life and the various receptions the Edens visited. Yet her representations of the women are curiously limited. One would imagine that she would want to share the private glimpses of the secluded zenana. The aristocratic traveler does not present us with any memorable female like Parkes' Mulka Begum or the Baiza Bai. In fact, Indrani Sen has pointed out that Eden was very unimpressed with the Mahratta Queen (47). Eden finds her a "clever looking little woman." She does not even appreciate the Queen's subterfuge to allow the sisters to retain the "splendid" jewels that she presented to them. Perhaps Eden having met with reigning princes was not much interested in the deposed queen who was probably trying to garner favor from the English to re-establish her position. Also Eden's lack of enthusiasm or admiration of the women could be due to the fact that she was in India for only 6 years and she was very restricted in her movements due to protocol so she could not freely mix with any Indian individual. In fact, this is a point she regrets in one letter after she visited the wives of the Sikh nobility in their tents. She writes, "I should like to see some of these high-caste ladies several times, without all this nonsense of presents, &c., but as to hear their story, and their way of life, and their thoughts" (227).

So Eden too undergoes a change. The encounters do create a destabilizing of received notions, and both travelers do feel more open to learning and accepting the new culture. It is while meeting the women that Eden is aware of how she is the object of a reverse gaze and how even the disempowered Indian women can have fun

with her. Twice she complains that the women purposely spoiled her gowns with attar and that they enjoyed doing so. She even admits that Runjeet Singh's wives "laughed at our bonnets" (223).

In conclusion, these excerpts taken from the journals and letters of two nineteenth century travel writers are moments worthy of critical attention. True they are not evidence of a completely alternative reading. The two women remain entrenched within an imperial discourse so this article is not an apology for their imperial orientalist tendencies. However, this article has tried to show that opinions and attitudes were not intransigent.

Both Eden and Parkes began their journeys with diffidence and prejudice. However, in the case of both women, a shift in perspective is noticed. They are at times able to transcend their colonial perspectives and be both self-critical and open. Their relations with India was tangled and not clear cut. The ambivalence they experienced gave way to the freedom to open up. Parkes definitely moved towards decentering her imperial notions in her fulsome articulation of love and eagerness for India. Dalrymple notes that Parkes was regarded suspiciously by the British in Delhi for taking an interest in the descendants of the Mughal king (xvi). She had to pay a price for countering official colonial discourse. As Dalrymple writes she was "one of the last of the generation who was able to express unequivocal admiration for India. Even so her attitudes were subject to criticism from her peers" (xvi). This pressure or criticism she faced in India probably accounts for the ambivalences in her attitude to India. Eden as the sister of Governor General had to align herself more closely with the official discourse. Yet she too is anxious that her views about India may have been too sympathetic and she defends her position in her preface. Eden and Parkes will remain important for destabilizing hegemonic discourses and creating textual spaces for cross-cultural understandings.

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Literary Histories and Literary Futures: The Indian Novel in English

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Abstract: *The debate between authors who write in English and those who write in the South Asian vernaculars – or bhashas – is well known in South Asian literary studies. The debate is not only about language, but about a writer’s desired audience and her commitment (or lack thereof) to cosmopolitanism on one hand and nationalism on the other. This paper traces some of the key moments in this debate in order to suggest that in contemporary Indian literature we are witnessing the beginnings of a new relationship between English and the bhashas that requires a complication of the cosmopolitanism/nationalism framework. For one, English is no longer the language of the West but has become an Indian language – such that for the first time in India’s history, literature written in English does not rely on an international readership. But the kinds of English writings we see in Indian literature today reflect a thematic shift as well; for instance, new commercial English writings by authors such as Chetan Bhagat and Anuja Chauhan paradoxically reflect a turn inwards – inventing what I call new literary provincialisms: a move away from the diasporic cosmopolitanism of the 1980s and 1990s, and towards India’s regional cultures – but paradoxically, through rather than despite the use of English. These writings are often set in Tier II cities such as Varanasi and Ahmedabad rather than Mumbai or Kolkata, and represent a world not of cosmopolitan elites but lower middle-class protagonists struggling to learn English. These works represent aspiration as the new sensibility of English literature in India.*

The conventional story of the history of the English-language novel in India might begin with the nineteenth-century indigenous elite’s first dabblings in the writing of English, influenced by colonial education and the allure of modernity, and driven by reformist impulses. It might then take us to the movement known as progressive writing in the early twentieth century, when the novel was put to the service of a range of nationalist visions – and then to the early postcolonial decades, a period when English novels and their *bhasha* counterparts went in a number of directions. It would then linger a bit at 1981 when, it is said, the Indian English novel finally found form with the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*. Such a history would trace Rushdie’s impact on the genre and contrast the pulp forms of contemporary Indian English writing to the literary heavyweights of the preceding generation. This straightforward historical trajectory, based in three formative periods that cover around a century, mark the Indian English novel at three defining moments: its emergence, its “realist” phase and its “modernist” one.

However, this narrative has significant limitations. What happens to the novel *between* and *within* these supposedly distinct eras? How are texts not only expressions of their historical period but also complex entities, whose meaning emerges in form, aesthetics, and genre? How does such an account accommodate the contemporary novel, which is not necessarily a continuation of or development on the Rushdie generation? And, lastly, can we really isolate and tell the story of the Anglophone novel as if it were a self-contained history apart from the *bhasha* novels and Indian literature more generally?

Across the board, the Indian novel had its more spectacular start in the *bhashas* – Malayalam, Odia, Marathi, Bangla – than in English. English was of course a colonial language, brought to India by colonial education, and instituted by means of a deliberate policy, as articulated most famously by Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1835, “to form a class who may be interpreters between [the British] and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (237). With literacy rates in any language at 3.5% in 1881 (P. Joshi 42 and 268-9 n. 13), and even lower in English, one can see how tracing the rise of the English novel might simply offer a highly selective genealogy of India’s native elite.

Yet in fact, although the Governor-General Lord Bentinck did largely adopt Macaulay’s policy as outlined in his Minute on Indian Education, the actual process of “forming” this class was not as seamless as he might have imagined it. For one, the question of whether or not to structure education in English or the *bhashas* was not one that all colonial officials agreed on. Although English was seen as a means to wrench the native elite out of what were seen as their inherent cultural limitations, some officials saw *vernacular education* as better equipped to transmit the moral learning that was part of the civilizing mission. Indeed, India’s modern written *bhashas* emerged in the very crucible of colonial modernity, and thus any false opposition between India’s “authentic” or untouched *bhashas* and the colonial language of English is in fact inaccurate. In this way, both English and the vernaculars were the site of the consolidation of colonial power – and the site of potential resistance as well. What we see across nineteenth-century *bhasha* writings is a profound sense of literary experiment: evident in the writings of Bengali author Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, whom Sudipta Kaviraj reads as reflective of the “unhappy consciousness” characteristic of colonial modernity; and in the epistemic experiments of Fakirmohan Senapati in his Odia novel *Chha Mana Atha Guntha*, to name only two. Bilingual writers characterize these ambivalences more literally in their movements between languages, as seen with bilingual poets Michael Madhusadan Dutt (R. Chaudhuri, *Gentleman* 86-126) and Henry Derozio (R. Chaudhuri, “Politics”; and “Cutlets”), and in the embattled writings of Toru Dutt, Krupabai Sathianadan, and Rabindranath Tagore. As the range of these early writers shows, neither writing in English nor in the *bhashas* expressed straightforward political or ideological alliance with colonialism but rather evinced a complex interrogation of the contradictions of colonial modernity itself (A. Chaudhuri, “Modernity” xix).

Thus early English fiction did not emerge in a distinct sphere of its own but rather in relation to and in dialogue with innovations in the *bhashas* that were taking place at the same time (M. Mukherjee, *Perishable* 9). Often, individual authors wrote in *both* English and one of the *bhashas*. Thus less than a decade after publishing his one and only novel in English, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay founded a Bengali magazine, *Bangadarshan*, in which he hoped to invigorate the Bengali language in public life, where English had largely found sway.¹ Likewise, Toru Dutt and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain wrote both in Bengali and English – and, in the case of Dutt, in French as well. These examples demonstrate that the modernity that emerged in India was always already polyglossic. Thus we not only dispel associations of foreignness attached to the nineteenth-century Anglophone novel in India, but also see how an analysis of the English novel cannot be separated from accounts of colonial modernity across languages.

Interchange among the various linguistic traditions continued beyond the nineteenth century. While early twentieth-century Anglophone authors Mulk Raj Anand, Ahmed Ali and Raja Rao are often lumped together as nationalist/socialist writers who wrote in English, this grouping provides only a partial understanding of the richness of literary cultures in this period. Anand and Ali were both affiliated with the All-India Progressive Writers’ Association, which brought together authors writing in a range of languages, including Sajjad Zaheer in Urdu and Premchand in Hindi. Ahmed Ali wrote in both Urdu and English, and was involved equally in literary

¹See “Bangadarshaneer Patra-Suchana,” Bankim’s Foreword to *Bangadarshan*.

debates with his fellow Urdu writers as he was with other English writers. Raja Rao, too, wrote in Kannada and French along with English (Amir; Jamkhandi 133). Seeing these authors as essentially linked just because they wrote in English overlooks the richness of engagement of both figures in their respective languages. In the postcolonial decades as well, the “existentialist” (Gupta 53) Hindi writer Nirmal Varma spent most of his life abroad and often set his works in Europe. Kiran Nagarkar’s first novel, *Saat Sakkam Trechalis* (*Seven Sixes are Forty-Three*, 1974), was written in Marathi, and only later did he switch to English (Lukmani xii). Partition literature also crossed linguistic boundaries; a novelist such as Qurratulain Hyder crafted her own English translation of her Urdu novel *Aag ka Darya*, demonstrating engagement in both languages’ literary and public spheres.

These myriad, interlingual histories tend to get obscured in contemporary literary criticism, which often privileges English as a distinct and more cosmopolitan language than any of the *bhashas*. This is partly because of the slippage between English and cosmopolitanism advanced by many English-language texts themselves: for instance in the “altered vision” (5) with which Adam Aziz returns to Kashmir in the first pages of *Midnight’s Children*, a perspective that makes him “[resolve] never again to kiss earth for any god or man” (4). From this moment onwards in the Indian novel, travel (and English) is cast as broadening and perspective-changing, constructing, in turn, staying home (and, consequently, writing in the *bhashas*) as myopic and provincial. Rushdie stated this view more directly in his Foreword to *Mirrorwork*, an anthology he edited of writing from India from 1947-1997, in which he included only one piece – out of 32 – in translation; the others were all originally written in English:

The prose writing – both fiction and non-fiction – created in this period by Indian writers *working in English*, is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 “official languages” of India, the so-called “vernacular languages,” during the same time; and, indeed, this new, and still burgeoning, “Indo-Anglian” literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books (Introduction viii, emphasis in original).

While celebrating English over the *bhashas*, Rushdie simultaneously asserts its marginality, as by putting the phrase “official languages” in quotes, he suggests at least to the book’s non-Indian readership that English is only recognized “unofficially” by the Indian state, and thus that writing in English carries an *inherently* non-nationalist or cosmopolitan imaginary.² From this perspective, English is not only global, but it is inherently progressive; this is not the progressivism of social realism, but a righteous refusal of the narrowness of nationalist belonging.

The backlash to this brand of cosmopolitanism from academics in India “defending” the *bhashas* led to a further entrenchment of the English-*bhashas* divide in the 1990s and early 2000s. Literary critic Meenakshi Mukherjee suggested that “in the English texts of India there may be a greater pull towards a homogenisation of reality, an essentialising of India, a certain flattening out of the complicated and conflicting contours, the ambiguous and shifting relations that exist between individuals and groups in a plural community” (“Anxiety” 2608). Yet those are precisely the authors that are more widely read, “interviewed . . . [and] invited for readings” (Mukherjee, “Local” 51). In response, several Anglophone authors took increasingly entrenched positions in defense of English. Vikram Chandra, for instance, argued that Indian critics such as Mukherjee, whom he dubbed “commissars” and “self-proclaimed guardians of purity and Indianness” have constructed a “cult of authenticity” around a nationalist fantasy of Indianness (“Cult”). Through this type of polarizing debate, the stakes of the question rose dramatically, crescendoing into rigid – and ultimately useless – binaries: authentic vs. traitorous; *desi* vs. *pardesi*. Despite the material realities of market inequality and differential access to international celebrity-status, the English writers framed their position in such a way that increasingly, any call for attention to vernacular writing was cast as backwards, provincial and an expression of a knee-jerk nativism.

² In fact, English has a higher position than the “16” other languages, being, along with Hindi, one of India’s two national languages. The point is not to demonize Rushdie, however, which has been done by many, but rather to underline that leaving aside his particularly strong language in this Introduction, his views on the superiority of Indian English writing over *bhasha* writing is not unique. Bharati Mukherjee, another Indian English diasporic writer, said that living in the diaspora, “I have joined imaginative forces with an anonymous driven underclass of semi-assimilated Indians with sentimental attachment to a distant homeland, but no real desire for permanent return . . . Instead of seeing my Indianness as a fragile identity to be preserved against obliteration . . . I see it now as a set of fluid identities to be celebrated” (qtd. in Mukherjee, “Anxiety” 2610). In her introduction to the reference book *South Asian Novelists in India: An A-to-Z Guide*, Sanga similarly writes: “Also unmistakable is the enduring quality of writing in English” (xiii); other, similarly subtle valorizations of English writing appear widely

This valuation of Indian English writers over *bhasha* writing was only strengthened by an increasing interest in the west – the place where, until very recently, literary fortunes were made – in a certain type of writing coming from India, marked by an easily digestible blend of exotic difference and legibility (in short, different but not too different): “otherness [that] is validated only if it fits into certain pre-established paradigms of expectation: a magic realist ambience, mystical spice women, small town eccentrics, the saga of women’s suffering, folk tale elements blended into contemporary narrative, so on and so forth” (Mukherjee, “Local” 52). This contradictory desire is encapsulated in a June 1997 issue of *The New Yorker* which featured eleven of “India’s leading novelists” (Buford 6) – all writing in English – who, the article’s author reported, represented, “in a hopeful, even exhilarating way: the shape of a future Indian literature” (8). In the photograph of the eleven writers, they are all dressed in shades of black, suggesting a kind of staged hipness; yet despite this well-meaning attempt to convey the modernity and futurity of the Indian novel, the cover of the issue still relied on tired, Orientalist imagery for representing India, showing the surprise on the intrepid, white explorers’ face when they find a statue of Ganesh not meditating, but reading – and reading fiction, to boot. English – in particular the “Indian English” celebrated so enthusiastically by the article – provides precisely that mix of difference and legibility that makes Indian writing marketable to an audience unfamiliar with India. This is not the “small-town tedium, frustrated youth, couples incapable of communicating with each other, the impossible gulfs between aspiration and reality” of the Hindi novel *Raag Darbari* – the “India that the West does not like to think about for too long” – but “the florid, sensuous, inclusive, multicultural world of the post-Rushdie, postcolonial novel,” through which “the West can settle down to contemplate, not India, but its latest reinterpretation of itself” (Orsini 88).³ One might say that Chinua Achebe’s determination that the African writer “should aim at fashioning an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience” (63) was commodified and neatly assimilated in this period into a particularly American multiculturalism that values the exotic only when it appears in faintly familiar garb.

And yet, although the ripple-effect of these debates continues to affect what gets published and what authors write in the first place, it appears that the relationship of English to the vernaculars in contemporary writing has begun to shift in the last decade or so. For one, many of today’s authors seem to be more aware of the richness of the *bhasha* literary spheres, now that the euphoria surrounding cosmopolitanism’s children has somewhat died down. Thus, for instance, although Booker-winning author Aravind Adiga writes in English, he has published articles celebrating regional writing, and has confessed that when he is in Bangalore, he only reads the Kannada-language press (contrast that with Rushdie’s dismissal of all *bhasha* writing in his 1997 introduction to *Mirrorwork*). Chetan Bhagat, who writes deliberately in opposition to the “highbrow” literary culture of the Indian novel, contributes a weekly column to both *The Times of India* and the Hindi newspaper *Dainik Bhaskar*. Bhagat’s books are translated into Hindi and other *bhashas*; and the settings of some of the recent ones in Tier II towns like Ahmedabad, Varanasi and Patna (rather than Kolkata and Mumbai, more typical of Indian English fiction) speaks to his desire to reach a wider audience *within* India rather than outside of it. This is something we see in the works of bestselling contemporary author Anuja Chauhan as well, who brings a notable Hindi-Punjabi inflection to her light, “rom-com” novels resonant of popular Hindi romance films. Although at times they appear similar, I suggest that these examples constitute a phenomenon different from Rushdie’s “chutnification” – because the intended audience is not the cosmopolitan or diasporic elite but precisely those Indian readers who might potentially read in English *and* one of the *bhashas*. Today’s texts no longer ask their readers to be versed in the hybrid history of Moorish Spain or the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, but in Facebook, Premier League cricket, and Bollywood gossip. Many are decidedly low-brow; but nonetheless, they carve out a new space where English and the *bhashas* can meet again.

In Bhagat and Chauhan we also see a closer tie between literature and India’s most significant mass cultural product: Hindi popular film, also known as Bollywood. Although connections between literature and popular film have existed in the past, with notable Hindi and Urdu writers such as Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai,

³ Rajan and Shailja similarly recount how some US readers of *The God of Small Things* found its use of Indian English alienating, as it “distracted them from getting the meaning.” In its audiobook version, however, the novel was found less alienating: when “read in a well-modulated but slightly accented voice, many... nodes of cultural differences were delicately mediated” (153).

⁴ William Mazzarella describes the “euphoria” that undergirded India’s economic liberalization as “ar[sic] out of a sense of temporal overcoming, a rejection of the historical stalemate that the developmentalist/modernizing paradigm had bequeathed” (89).

Krishan Chandar (R. Bose 62), K.A. Abbas (Khair, “Indian” 73n.14), Javed Akhtar and Gulzar working in both domains, in English the divide has been historically greater. Likewise, although Rushdie includes many filmic references in his novels (described in detail by Stadtler), his true interest lies in auteur filmmaking (Mishra), and he uses Bollywood as a cultural source mostly generative of parody. Sangita Gopal shows how the connections between popular film and literature have only heightened in recent years, with novels like Bhagat’s seemingly written for film, and their adaptations becoming huge box office successes (Gopal). Again, what looks like a crass commercialization might simultaneously be seen as another instance of a renewed relationship between English and the vernaculars.

Moreover, today’s English fiction actively rejects the westward orientation that was clear – if not necessary (for publishing purposes) – among the earlier generation. Bestselling novelists such as Anuja Chauhan, Chetan Bhagat, Ashok Banker, Amish Tripathi and others do not market their books to the west; many of them have not even been published outside of India – something unthinkable for an earlier generation. Likewise, notably absent in these books are glossaries or other attempts at translating food or other cultural items to a western reader. The assumption, then, that writing in English means a western orientation or foreign intended audience is no longer valid; and in consequence, the terms of the earlier debate – the sense of English as a “foreign” language on one hand, and a cosmopolitan one on the other – have largely dissolved.

This shift corresponds with a larger change in urban Indians’ self-perception vis-à-vis their own national history as well as the west⁴ that has largely grown out of the liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s. This has also resulted in a de-fetishization of the diaspora, as the lifestyle for the wealthy in India’s big cities is no longer radically different from how emigrants might live abroad. The changes in urban India’s consumer economy, in addition to new multinational companies hiring both Indians and foreigners, means that there is more back-and-forth movement between India and its diaspora. The wide availability of imported products and a new “global” urban aesthetics (such as malls, multiplex cinemas, coffee shops and so on) have further reduced this gap. The image at the beginning of *The Satanic Verses* of diaspora as a moment of utter freedom – a space where “anything becomes possible” (*Satanic 5*) – repeated in various ways in more recent novels such as Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland* (2013) – has now been reevaluated. It is not that the allure of diaspora no longer exists, but its experience is no longer represented as a sea-change. In *The White Tiger*, Ashok, Balram’s boss, has lived in “America” – therefore, unlike the rest of his family, he wears different clothes, knows the correct pronunciation of “pizza,” and is slightly more liberal than his brothers in his treatment of his driver. But the novel simultaneously suggests that (western/ized) liberal condescension is just as bad as (homegrown) feudal hegemony; thus it is Ashok who becomes Balram’s eventual victim. Aesthetically as well, in a graphic novel such as Sarnath Banerjee’s *Corridor* (2004), New Delhi’s streetscapes elicit the same feeling of alienation that might arise in any modern city, and thus “challenge the negative images of the postcolonial metropolis as a ‘third world’ megalopolis with problems ranging from the ill-health of its urban poor, and increasing numbers of inhabitants, to slumification” (Standten 512). It is thus not that contemporary novels efface the cultural differences between “east” and “west,” but they de-fetishize them; they render them banal.

Today’s authors, too, not only move – but *move back*: Chetan Bhagat and Aravind Adiga both lived for many years abroad, but now live in India. This kind of movement complicates the one-way trajectory that was true for most of the *New Yorker*-featured writers. But at the same time, contemporary writing cannot be reduced to these sociological trends. I suggest that these new itineraries are accompanied by new literary concerns – and, perhaps more importantly, *new literary forms*, which have emerged in relation to these changes. In turn, these forms require new methodologies that might entail breaks from more classically postcolonial theoretical concerns.

One example of this is Chetan Bhagat, one of India’s bestselling English-language authors, but virtually unheard of abroad. Together, his six novels have sold seventy lakh copies. His fifth novel *Revolution 2020* (2011) sold ten lakh copies in a mere three months and several of his other books took only a little longer to do the same. He writes in a simple English that is available to a range of education levels and fluencies. His stories are straightforward – they are plot driven, contain mostly flat characters, and eschew the allegorical, magical and meta-textual features that had defined Indian English literature in the 1980s and 1990s. For this reason they are disliked by most critics in India, who decry the commercialization and standardization of the Indian novel his works represent. But Bhagat’s novels do offer a vision for Indian literature, even as it is one opposed to the cosmopolitan ethos of the Rushdie

generation. I call this vision a new provincialism. If Rushdiean cosmopolitanism was a modernist celebration of exile and critique of the nation, the new provincialism is skeptical of the west and grounds its ethos in a certain understanding of the *aam aadmi* or common man. The new provincialism is based in India's small towns rather than its global megalopolises; it offers an imagination of national futurity that is based in India rather than abroad; and it offers Indian English as thoroughly indigenized into the pragmatic political imaginary of India's middle class, rather than as the language of the modernist elite.

One Night@ the Call Center is Bhagat's only novel set wholly in Delhi; the others are set in smaller or less cosmopolitan towns: Chennai, Patna, Ahmedabad, Varanasi – and that is not by accident. The earlier generation of cosmopolitan writers used Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata as launching pads to locate their otherwise globe-spanning tales: think of Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, or Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*. If characters lived outside the big cities, as in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* or *Midnight's Children*, they quickly left their homes behind. Bhagat, by contrast, redefines India's provincial towns as places of growth, both economic and personal – in short, as sites of futurity. In *Half Girlfriend*, Madhav leaves a lucrative job with a multinational bank in Delhi to run a rural school in Bihar. In *Revolution 2020*, Gopal abandons his plans of becoming an engineer to start a successful coaching business in Varanasi instead. In these plots, entrepreneurial achievement requires not migration, but a change of perspective. In Delhi Madhav felt inferior because of his Bhojpuri-accented English; in Bihar he feels empowered rather than submissive to the forces of cosmopolitan elitism. Once he stops worshipping Delhi and loving Bihar, he is able to mature as a young man and prosper at the same time.

Bhagat's works thus imagine India – all of India – as a place of possibility, and for a nation where the English-language novel has been tied up with a sense of loss and disappointment, this is no small feat. Many in India have criticized Bhagat's aspirational vision for its investment in individual empowerment and entrepreneurialism, its neoliberal critique of the state, and its embrace of free market capitalism. In his speeches, newspaper columns and other non-fiction writings, Bhagat has been critical of welfare initiatives such as farm subsidies; for him, individual innovation is the only path to development. He is a proponent of teaching simple English to all Indians, which he believes opens up avenues of social mobility. These are, for Bhagat, admittedly practical rather than ideological solutions to the nation's problems. To put it simply: capitalism, a culture of individualism, and a celebration of youth are changes to the environment in India which will encourage the most talented to stay, rather than emigrate abroad. Provincialism thus becomes a pragmatic means of imagining India's future. The *content* of that future might not be one that all Indians share – capitalist and anti-cosmopolitan – but it is a future nonetheless, and it is the new Indian English that paves the way there.

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Banglaphone Fiction: British Sylhetis in Writing by Londoni Authors

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Abstract: *Around the time the Raj was disintegrating, Bengalis, many of them from Sylhet, were coming to Britain in large numbers. Settling in areas such as London's Spitalfields, these Sylhetis pioneered Britain's emerging curry restaurant trade, labored for long hours and with few rights in the garment industry, and worked as mechanics. Sylhetis' inestimable contribution to the fabric of British life is recognized, for example, in their association with Brick Lane, a popular road of curry houses in East London. However, too often their contribution to literature is reduced to one novel, Brick Lane, Monica Ali's novel about the famous street and its denizens. This paper seeks to broaden the debate about English-language literature from Londoni writers across the Bengaliyat. In 1793, Sake Dean Mahomed published his The Travels of Dean Mahomet. What is unique about this text is that it was originally written in English to give European readers a glimpse of India. Its creation was probably part of the author's attempt to integrate in Ireland, where he was living. Two centuries later, we are witnessing an efflorescence of Anglophone writing from the two Bengals about Britain. I discuss Amitav Ghosh's portrayals of Brick Lane in his 1988 novel The Shadow Lines as an early precursor to fellow Indian novelists Neel Mukherjee's A Life Apart (2010) and Amit Chaudhuri's Odysseus Abroad (2014), which also demonstrate a fascination with Sylhetis in London and their material culture. From Bangladesh and its diaspora, Manzu Islam's Burrow (2004) and Zia Haider Rahman's novel In the Light of What We Know (2013) come under the spotlight. What we might call "Banglaphone fiction" is, I argue, currently experiencing a boom, and portrayals of Sylhetis in London, their cuisine, and other aspects of popular culture form an enduring fascination among the male writers of this fiction, at least.*

In the 1940s, around the time that the British Raj was disintegrating, Bengalis were coming to Britain in large numbers. (Smaller numbers had travelled to the country from as long ago as the seventeenth century onwards.) Many of them hailed from Sylhet in what is now northeast Bangladesh. Some of these new residents had previously been lascars, working on the crews of ships or as cooks. Settling in areas such as East London's Spitalfields, Sylhetis pioneered Britain's emerging curry restaurant trade, labored for long hours and with few rights in the garment industry, and worked as mechanics. As Geoff Dench, Kate Gavron and Michael Young put it,

The East End of London is the backside of the City. As the City of London evolved over six centuries into the centre of global capitalism, the areas on its eastern fringe evolved too in symbiotic differentiation. At first they supplied food for the emerging urban community, then as the City concentrated increasingly on the pursuit of profit it gradually exported its less valuable and more polluting trades to just outside the City walls – where the benefits accrued without offending the dignity of the City itself. Leather trades, clothing, furniture, shipping and distribution were expelled in turn, and established to the east. As the City became wealthier and more important, the contrast between it and the East End grew sharper. (1)

The fact that the East End first distributed food and later clothes to the nearby City demonstrates the former area's somatic function; cooking and fashion are two important themes in the writing about this area. The deprivation and contrast between the East End and the wealthy City is so stark that Dench *et al.* use another bodily image of "backside" to describe the East End, and accordingly, poverty is another significant preoccupation.

Sylhetis have made an inestimable contribution to the fabric of British life over more than three centuries. This is most frequently recognized in their association with Brick Lane, the popular road of curry houses in East London. And too often their contribution to literature is reduced to one novel, *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali's 2003 debut about the famous street and its denizens. While I will explore Ali's text, this article seeks to broaden the debate to English-language literature from authors writing about Britain who come from across the Bengaliyat. This word "Bengaliyat" denotes national and cultural continuities between East and West, Hindu and Muslim Bengal.

As I discuss in my book *Britain through Muslim Eyes*, the first book written in English by a South Asian author was Sake Dean Mahomed's *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* (Fisher). Although Mahomed grew up in Patna, he claimed to be related to the Nawabs who governed Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa between 1740 and 1854. He is often thus categorized as a Bengali-British writer. *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* is an epistolary account of his journey through northern India, drawing on conventions of sentimental fiction and Western travel writing. Written to an imaginary English "sir," these letters describe "Mahometan" habits and customs such as circumcision, marriage, and death rites.

Although his book focuses on India, Mahomed's travels took him far from the subcontinent. From 1784 to 1807, he lived in Cork, where he married a Protestant gentlewoman, Jane Daly, converted (on paper at least) to her religion, and fathered the first few of what would turn out to be a family of at least eight children. There he had a chance meeting with another traveler, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, who was on a brief Irish visit in 1799 and was also an excellent travel writer. Whereas Mahomed cast his gaze eastwards to India for the benefit of a Western audience, Khan primarily wrote about Europe in Persian for his fellow Indians. Probably because of a withdrawal of his patronage in Ireland which created economic and social pressures, Mahomed and Jane relocated to London in 1808. In the capital they set up the first Indian restaurant in Britain, the Hindostanee Coffee House, in 1810. London's high overheads and Britons' then timid taste buds meant that it went bankrupt in 1812.

Reinventing himself again, Mahomed moved his family to Brighton and began offering Indian massages, eventually being appointed "shampooing Surgeon" to George IV and William IV. Mahomed styled for himself a multi-layered identity, in which the Hindi word "shampoo" (champo, from champi, "to massage") combines with the European, scientific connotations of "surgeon." Indeed, Dean's grandson Frederick Akbar Mahomed (1849–84) was to achieve great renown as a doctor of Western medicine who pioneered "collective investigation" of diseases through the use of patient questionnaires. He also discovered some reasons why people develop high blood pressure. It was recently reported that the most popular name for a doctor in Britain is now Khan, with Patel in second place, Smith and Jones third and fourth, Ahmed coming in sixth, and Ali ninth (Kennedy n.pag). This hints at one of the many ways in which South Asian Muslims like Dean and Akbar Mahomed contributed positively to "making Britain" (Nasta n.pag). What their lives illustrate is how settled, how integrated in British life Muslims have been for several centuries, and what great contributions they have made to the texture of this nation.

Two centuries after Mahomed, we are witnessing an efflorescence of Anglophone writing from the two Bengals about Britain. In his 1988 novel *The Shadow Lines*, Calcutta-origin Amitav Ghosh was an early writer to explore

South Asian East London in fiction. Before coming to Britain, the novel's unnamed narrator imagined Brick Lane to be composed of "small red-brick houses jostling together, cramped, but each with its own little handkerchief-garden and flowers in its window sills" (Ghosh 100). When he gets to the street in the 1970s, he finds instead that the urban landscape of the imperial center is being radically altered by migrants. Few shop signs are in English, the narrator hears "a dozen dialects of Bengali" as he passes through, and the latest Hindi and Bengali films are advertised. Fly-posters adorning the "walls of aged London brick" show how this area of London is changing (100). The narrator sees a palimpsest of posters, where "stern grey anti-racism" notices — presumably posted there by the predominantly white members of left-wing organizations — are overlaid by a colorful "riot" of Hindi film posters. The narrator can almost imagine himself in Calcutta. People hurrying down the road cheerfully hiding their fingers in their jacket sleeves to keep warm remind him of "shoppers at Gariahat on a cold winter's morning." He is also amazed to see a shop that is almost an exact replica of one in Gole Park, but grafted onto "a terrace of derelict eighteenth-century London houses" (100). The intermingling of Bollywood posters with earnest Marxist publicity materials indicates that this space is socially pliant and molding to the changing composition of its residents.

The unruly collage of flyers serves as a useful metaphor for the changing face of Spitalfields, the district of London in which Brick Lane is located. Spitalfields has a history of housing immigrants and refugees, from the Huguenots in the eighteenth century and Jewish and Irish settlers in the nineteenth century, to post-war Bengali migrants. Bangladeshi now make up almost 60 per cent of Spitalfields' population. Ghosh alludes to the layers of migrant history when the narrator's love rival, the British character Nick, comments that the local mosque "used to be a synagogue when this place was a Jewish area" (101). In a review of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, Sukhdev Sandhu shows that the Jamme Masjid began as a Huguenot church, next became a Methodist chapel, then a synagogue, and finally metamorphosed into the Bangladeshi-majority mosque (n.pag).

Jane Jacobs's research suggests that immigration to the Spitalfields area this has proved a far from liberatory experience for Bengalis. Overcrowding, home insecurity, and racial harassment have dogged Bangladeshi settlers since the 1970s. Gentrifying schemes to renovate the area's Georgian houses and large-scale development projects forced many Bengalis out of their homes or businesses in the 1990s, even though the same developers claimed to speak for their interests. The meteoric rise of nearby hipster area Shoreditch is contributing more to the uprooting of South Asians from the area in the 2010s (Peek n.pag).

In 1978, the murder of a Bengali clothing worker, Altab Ali, served to politicize the Bengali community. But the British National Party and later the English Defence League and Britain First made Brick Lane a target in their far-right campaigns of racial hatred. The Left has also seen the tensions in Spitalfields as representing an opportunity to consolidate local support. Socialist organizations moved in, claiming to act on behalf of the Bengalis in the face of racism and the incursions of big business. In Bethnal Green and Bow constituency, Respect leader George Galloway was elected after a dirty campaign against New Labour's MP Oona King in 2005 ("Oona King" n.pag). This year, Bengali politics in Tower Hamlets came under the spotlight when the mayor, Bangladesh-born Lutfur Rahman, was ousted from his post. He was found guilty of electoral fraud, a charge he contests. Rahman's Tower Hamlets First party, established in 2014 and popular amongst many Bangladeshi Britons, has also been removed from the register of political parties for alleged financial irregularities.

Ghosh, then, accurately depicts how space is fought over by combatants with different residential ideals and competing visions of Britain. *The Shadow Lines* may be seen as an early precursor to fellow Calcuttan novelists Neel Mukherjee's *A Life Apart* (2010) and Amit Chaudhuri's *Odysseus Abroad* (2014). While they don't specifically depict Brick Lane or its environs, these novels of the 2010s also demonstrate a fascination with Sylhetis in London and their material and spatial culture. In the post-9/11 political climate, there has been much interest in the way non-Muslim, white writers like John Updike (2006), Martin Amis (2008), and Ian McEwan (2005) have examined Islam and Anglo-American Muslims in their work. With the exception of Sunjeev Sahota, in his debut novel *Ours Are The Streets* (2011), less attention has been paid to the South Asian writers from other religious backgrounds who have also examined this topic. They have done so with a greater understanding both of Islam and the pernicious effects of deprivation, racism, and Islamophobia on Muslim communities.

Amit Chaudhuri's quiet masterpiece is an often humorous, modernist slant on the everyday events of one

London day in July 1985. As fellow novelist Neel Mukherjee observes in his Guardian review of *Odysseus Abroad*, “nothing happens [...] everything happens” (n.pag). The novel is focalized through the eyes of Ananda, a dilatory student of English literature. Like Chaudhuri, he is preoccupied by twentieth-century writers’ focus on “modern man – strange creature!” (63). Ananda has a “retinue of habits, like getting on to buses, secreting the bus ticket in his pocket, or going to the dentist” (63-64). He and his uncle Rangamama contemplate getting a bus through London because they like the view of London it avails from its upper deck. For convenience, they settle on taking a tube to King’s Cross. If readers don’t quite witness the minutiae of characters’ dental check-ups, they do learn of Ananda’s frustration with European literary heroes who “had no bodily functions.” Each morning, both Hercules and James Bond “didn’t bother to brush their teeth; they jumped out of bed in pursuit” of villains (128). Nor did these giants ever have to break off their derring-do to go to the lavatory. By contrast, we learn much about the physical woes of *Odysseus Abroad*’s heroes. Rangamama once lost a tooth in a reckless altercation with some skinheads in Chalk Farm. He is putting up with the gap in his smile in anticipation of a health tourism trip to India to avoid Britain’s high dentistry costs. Even the quotidian domain of the toilet isn’t off limits for this unobtrusively experimental fiction. When Ananda goes to answer nature’s call, Rangamama expresses an interest in whether his nephew is going “for big job or small” (134). With wicked humor, Chaudhuri proceeds to depict Ananda’s “small job,” as he aims his urine stream at a cigarette butt left behind in the bowl by his chain-smoking uncle.

Ananda, who, like Ghosh’s narrator is from a Hindu background, nonetheless has “covert Sylheti ancestry” (66). His parents and uncle came from Sylhet but moved to Shillong in India after Partition in 1947. They later shift to East Bengal’s capital, Kolkata, where they “gentrify” their Sylheti accents into “standard Calcutta Bangla” (232). His parents never take Ananda to visit his ancestral district, a decision about which he has no regrets. Yet in London he feels some sense of kinship with the waiters in establishments like the Gurkha Tandoori on the edge of Bloomsbury. This is despite the fact that, as he ruefully admits to himself, there was a chasm between the two communities, at least from the perspective of upper- and upper-middle-class Bengali Hindus: “in prelapsarian undivided Bengal, [...] the Bengali Hindus were called ‘Bengalis’, the Bengal Muslims just ‘Muslims’” (232). His uncle is charmed by the fact that the inaptly-named Gurkha Tandoori’s waiter is called Iqbal, like the famous Pakistani poet. And Ananda is struck by Iqbal’s accent, with its rural Sylheti inflections and newer overlay of flat cockney vowels.

Another interesting text about Bengalis in Britain is Neel Mukherjee’s *A Life Apart*. Mukherjee was born in Calcutta and moved permanently to the UK at the age of 22. His first novel, *Past Continuous*, was published in India in 2008. It came out in the UK as *A Life Apart* in 2010, where it was well received. He became better known because of his second novel, *The Lives of Others*, which won the Encore Prize and was shortlisted for 2014’s Man Booker Prize. However, given this article’s focus, it is his first novel that mostly concerns me. *A Life Apart* is in some ways a rewriting of Rabindranath Tagore’s *The Home and the World* from the perspective of the minor British character Miss Gilby. The novel’s central character Ritwik, a Hindu Indian migrant to Britain, is writing a novel about this character that we see at intervals in the text in bold type.

In the light of the appalling (but sadly not new) stories that have been broadcast all summer about Europe’s refugee crisis, *A Life Apart* seems all the more timely and important. Ritwik studies at Oxford University, about which I will write more shortly. After he graduates, Ritwik has little choice but to allow his student visa to expire and becomes an illegal immigrant so that he moves outside the “vast grid of the impeccably ordered and arranged first-world modern democratic state” (218). The novel casts light on the third world that exists within the first world, the migrant as a ghostly figure, and the chimera of the better life that supposedly exists in Europe.

A primary concern in both Mukherjee’s novels to date, and in Bengali-British writing more broadly, is education. Mukherjee explores the differences between an English- and a Bengali-medium education, and how this creates the haves and have-nots of language usage. *A Life Apart* features the hybrid proto-language Benglish, while *The Lives of Others* contains a large glossary of Bengali terms. Ritwik, an orphan from a modest background, wins a scholarship to study English literature at Oxford. His fellow students see his home country as “exotic, [...] wild [...] And all that mysticism and stuff, it’s spiritual” (34). In his turn, he struggles to eat bland English food dishes like toad in the hole, and even thinks a strongly-accented Liverpoolian classmate is speaking in German. His classmates are baffled that an Indian should study for an English degree:

He surprises them by revealing that English Literature, as an academic discipline, was first taught in India, not in England; English administrators and policy-makers thought that the study of English Literature would have an ennobling and civilizing effect on the natives. They are thrown a bit, even a little embarrassed by this. [...] 'It's a strange thought, isn't it, thousands of Indians poring over Shakespeare and Keats,' Declan says. Now that Ritwik has it pointed out to him by an outsider, it becomes unfamiliar, shifts patterns and configurations. (Mukherjee 84)

Here Ritwik alludes to the fact that in the Raj period and beyond, the British realized the importance of establishing themselves in the imaginations of their colonized peoples as being worthy of allegiance. In place of controversial religious doctrine, they used Literature writ large as a tool of persuasion. As Gauri Viswanathan shows in her pioneering study *Masks of Conquest* (1989), English Literature as a subject was closely linked to colonialism, and the study of English literary culture was instituted in Indian schools and universities before it became an established discipline in Britain. Ritwik chafes against what he calls "this business of other cultures, other countries" (154), in which the British neo-/colonizers recalibrate the world around them using their own gauges.

Unlike Amit Chaudhuri, Mukherjee doesn't look at British-Sylhetis, but he does portray other Muslims in Britain. He describes in detail a successful British-Pakistani family, the Haqs, who live near Ritwik in a house that is "a teeming, heaving slice of the subcontinent" (205). Mr Haq has made his money in import-export, but when newly-illegal Ritwik asks him for a job, he receives an ambiguous reply. At first Mr Haq tells him they usually hire "other Pakistani families who are in England," but then seems to change his mind, saying, "In this country, we need to stick to each other and have our own community" (210). Ritwik is unsure whether this is hopeful, or a way for Haq to say that the Hindu boy is not part of his Muslim Pakistani community. He leaves the house with a "strange, lonely feeling of unbelonging" (211).

Manzu Islam's short story collection *The Mapmakers of Spitalfields* (1998) and *Burrow* (2004) were probably the first Anglophone fictions about Britain to come out of Bangladesh and its diaspora. In the collection, four stories – "Going Home," "The Mapmakers of Spitalfields," "The Tower of the Orient," and "Meeting at the Crossroads" – are about Britain. That said, they often "drift [...] into another world" (59), veering away from London locations, such as King's Cross station and the Sonar Bangla café, to discuss the imaginary homeland, a remembered Bangladesh of tigers, *sadhus*, and water, water, everywhere. Characters are equally difficult to contain within particular stories. For example, both "Going Home" and "The Mapmakers of Spitalfields" contain an "I" narrator and characters named Badal and Shafique (Badal also appears in "The Fabled Beauty of the Jatra," set at a folk theatre play in Bangladesh). It is striking that all the writers discussed in this essay on Banglaphone writing are impossible to confine within a purely British location. Not one of the authors discussed here (Mahomed, Ghosh, Chaudhuri, Mukherjee, Islam, Rahman, or Monica Ali, Sunetra Gupta and Tahmima Anam from among the women writers), use an exclusively British setting. Even the most British among these texts, such as Chaudhuri's *Odysseus Abroad*, Islam's "Mapmakers," and Ali's *Brick Lane* provide flashbacks about their characters' previous homes in South Asia. These are highly transnational authors, whose characters are similarly shape-shifting wanderers.

Working-class South Asian Muslim settlers in the post-war period saw themselves as transients and were motivated by the "myth of return." They planned to save, send money home, and go back to their home countries as soon as they had made enough. However, as Pakistani scholar Muhammad Anwar pointed out in 1979, "in reality, most of them are here to stay because of economic reasons and their children's future" (ix). Especially as families began to be reunited in Britain, they became interested in building self-sufficient communities. Several of the academics who theorize the myth of return, such as Anwar and Badr Dahya (1974), discuss the Pakistani rather than the Bangladeshi diaspora. However, the model of migration is similar – it tends to predominantly come from particular locations (Mirpur in Pakistani Kashmir and Sylhet in Bangladesh) and to involve mostly working-class populations.

Several of Islam's stories and his novel *Burrow* provide subtle, shaded depictions of the myth of return. Bangladeshi critic Kaiser Haq rightly points out that this is mostly a male phenomenon. He writes that in diasporic

Bangladeshi literature, “the men dream of return, but not the women, who even as second-class citizens enjoy rights denied them in the mother country” (n.pag). Accordingly, “The Tower of the Orient,” a rare story by Islam told from a female perspective, is about a reverse illusion and subsequent disillusionment. Young wife Soraya long daydreamed about “taking off from Dhaka airport for this destination of fabled fortunes” (84), a Britain in which she can buy her own home, with husband Munir, and feel a sense of belonging. Yet the poverty of “damp, creeping rot and a riot of rats” (84) and the racism that she encounters there dash her sketchy notions of T. S. Eliot and the beauty of an English April (87).

In *Burrow*, one of the angles through which Islam illuminates why return migration becomes a myth is the younger generation’s education at schools and universities. There, the changes that they undergo, such as the protagonist Tapan Ali coming to despise the Bangladeshi grandfather he had once revered, show that it would be hard to go back. Tapan’s family has made an enormous financial sacrifice to send him to study in Britain, so understandably enough they see lucrative accountancy as a better course for him than the nebulous discipline of philosophy that he loves. At a demonstration, Tapan meets British-born Nilufar, who later becomes his lover. Her parents had been proud when she began her higher education, but were eventually disappointed to the point of almost disowning her when the hard-won BA degree fails to bring her a husband. Just as Tapan becomes estranged from his grandfather, Nilufar’s parents are alienated by “the foreignness of her ideas and her feringhee style” (45).

Zia Haider Rahman’s novel *In the Light of What We Know* (2014) has a complex, metafictional architecture. To list just a few of its subjects, it packs in dialogue, stories, diary entries, intertextual references, and anecdotes about the global financial crash, the Bangladesh Liberation War, mathematics, and the British class system. (A rare blind spot is gender, which is not discussed with anything like the same precision of focus as race and class.) In the novel, a conversation between two “philosopher-carpenters” (164), Bill and Dave, with whom the protagonist Zafar works briefly as a young man, is revealing. Bill tells Dave that their new colleague, “Paki-man” (159), is adjusting well to the demands of their high-end house refurbishment business. They quickly realize Zafar has overheard the racial slur and, without missing a beat, the two intellectual handymen begin debating the term. Discovering that Zafar is from Bangladesh rather than Pakistan, Bill apologizes, instead calling him, in a coinage that resonates with this article’s title, “Anglo-Banglo” (163). Wryly looking back on this incident from the vantage point of the early 2000s, Zafar is surprised that it took place before the Rushdie affair of 1989 onwards. From this moment on, he suggests in an argument that accords with my own research (Chambers 3; 219–20), the raw nerves touched in this exchange – relating to identity, racism, and “offence” – will increasingly take center stage in British cultural life.

In a perceptive review (2014), James Wood maintains that Rahman’s novel is all about knowledge and its limitations. However, a clue is given in its title that it is equally as much about “light” – or religion, the numinous, optics, and spiritual and intellectual enlightenment. Sylhet-born Zafar turns away from the Islam of his upbringing and is attracted to Christianity because he believed “meaning counted for more than the rewards of ritual” (184). He dislikes the lack of understanding his South Asian coreligionists have for their Arabic-language sacred text. Yet he also exhibits a Joycean, Forsterian skepticism about the church’s airy clarities and endeavor to make God in its own image:

here was a very local rendering of a religion that had come from a part of the world that the proud Englishman could only look down upon. The Christianity before me was English, white, with Sunday roasts and warm beer and translation into the English, the language. Even the Bible at its most beautiful, the King James version, was in a language that asserted and reassured its readers of their power. [...] The English Christ was [...] an English God under an English heaven. (187–88)

Ultimately, Zafar’s search for meaning at Oxford, Harvard, at church, or in the bed of his icy aristocratic English lover Emily proves equally illusory. Discernment of the light of religion may contain greater profundity than constructed knowledges, but each interpenetrates and contaminates the other, so that “Everything new is on the rim of our view, in the darkness, below the horizon, [...] nothing new is visible but in the light of what we know” (320).

The novel’s unnamed narrator, who pieces together Zafar’s story through his voice recordings and writings, is an

elite Pakistani, the son of highly successful academics, who attends Eton and Oxford as a matter of course. The narrator's father sees no contradiction in attending mosque each Friday, while regularly drinking and "lik[ing] his bacon crispy" (110). Such a relaxed view would be anathema to Zafar's family, who are from a much more precarious social class and do not have the cosmopolitanism of the frequent flyer set. For a while in his youth, Zafar lives in a squat where rats are a quotidian terror, and even his carpentry job, mentioned earlier, immediately marks him out as from a humbler background than the narrator and Emily. With his questioning mind, Zafar is put off Islam by a book his parents bought from an East End shop and gave him for Eid. Its title, *How Islam Predicted Science* (182), and its trite, uninformed certainties alienate the math-obsessed boy for whom Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem is akin to religious lore.

What might seem like a grab-bag set of texts on closer inspection yields to the reader overlapping insights relating to education, home and belonging, and religious practice and praxis. A somewhat different tonal palette emerges out of the women's writing I will now explore. I first examine Monica Ali who, in her novel *Brick Lane*, mostly evokes life in Britain, with only occasional and usually analeptic descriptions of Bangladesh. By contrast, Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain* is at once intercontinental, urban, and stateless – often all within a single sentence. The final author Tahmima Anam deploys an alternative strategy again, choosing, in *A Golden Age and The Good Muslim*, to abjure representations of Britain altogether, in favor of a concentrated focus on the Bangladeshi nation.

Let us begin this section by looking at a resonant passage from the early part of *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali's 2003 novel that like Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize:

'This is another disease that afflicts us,' said the doctor. 'I call it Going Home Syndrome. Do you know what that means?' He addressed himself to Nazneen. [...]

'[W]hen they have saved enough they will get on an aeroplane and go?'

'They don't ever really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the villages here. ... But they will never save enough to go back. ... Every year they think, just one more year. But whatever they save, it's never enough.'

'We would not need very much,' said Nazneen. Both men looked at her. She spoke to her plate. (Ali 22)

No text exemplifies more clearly the contrast between the England-returned and the myth of return migrants that I discuss elsewhere (Chambers 14–16) than *Brick Lane*. The above quotation illustrates what the medical man Dr Azad calls "Going Home Syndrome," a disease that he claims afflicts Bangladeshi migrants. This links with a strand in the novel about the migrant's sense of being out of place, which can lead to mental illness such as Nazneen's collapse due to "nervous exhaustion" (315; see Santesso 61–82).

Probably the most important means by which migrants either try to assimilate in the host country or turn away from it towards the homeland is through education. At first, Nazneen's husband Chanu imagines himself to be immune to Going Home Syndrome, and tries instead to make a life for himself in Britain. When he arrives in England, all Chanu has is the usual few pounds in his pocket, along with the significant additional item of his degree certificate. In England he undertakes classes in everything from nineteenth-century economics to cycling proficiency, and acquires further certificates. These he frames and displays on the wall of his and Nazneen's poky Tower Hamlets home, as a talisman of his hopes of promotion at work and the consequent acquisition of a comfortable life in London. Yet his dreams remain unrealized, whether because of institutional racism at his work or his own incompetence is never made clear. Chanu's aspirations then take a bitter turn towards his becoming an England-returned success story. He clings increasingly to the fantasy of returning to Dhaka in financial and social triumph. However, as sociologist Muhammad Anwar argues, this notion of return migration often proves to be a myth, especially because wives and children help men to put down roots in the new country. Nazneen and especially her young daughters Shahana and Bibi fear their father's longed-for homecoming. The rationale for going back to Dhaka is tenuously based on a saviour complex (see Abu-Lughod) – to rescue Nazneen's sister, the vulnerable ingénue Hasina whose unwittingly alarming letters to Nazneen about sexual grooming and exploitation pepper the narrative – but the three women now have roots in Britain. They decide to stay on.

Trailing clouds of defeat more than glory, the patriarch Chanu goes home on his own.

A decision in reverse, whereby the woman moves back to the subcontinent while her husband stays in Britain, is described by Sunetra Gupta. A Bengali Hindu author who writes about life in London and elsewhere in southern England, Gupta's day job is as an epidemiologist at the University of Oxford. Her most interesting work of fiction is probably *Memories of Rain* (1992). This debut novel centers on the young, dreamy protagonist Moni's furtive plans to return home to Calcutta. The choice has been made for her by her husband Anthony's passionate and drawn-out affair with a slim, green-eyed Englishwoman named Anna. Languorous, even lachrymose free indirect discourse conveys Moni's acute sense of her own beauty and intelligence and her refined disappointment in her husband's womanizing. Indeed, the narrative voice recalls that of another Bengali woman writer, American-resident Bharati Mukherjee, who in early works such as *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) expresses the similarly elitist ennui of the upper-class exile.

Gupta's Moni works as a translator for the National Health Service, interpreting the medical problems of poor Bangladeshi migrants for their health care professionals. Despite sharing a language and ethnicity with these mostly Muslim inhabitants of Britain, she feels that they have little in common. This has more to do with the British-Bengalis' modest social class and destitution than their religion. Repelled by "the pits of squalor that they called their homes" and with a Brahminical distaste for their "dense smell of spice trapped in winter wool, of old oil and fungus, poverty and filth" (170, 83), Moni exhibits significant condescension towards her co-regionalists. In the course of the plane journey back to Calcutta, she encounters a British Bengali of indeterminate religious identity who tries to engage her in conversation. Her sense of superiority is again exposed as she refuses to listen to the specificities of his potted biography:

he is going back to do his medical elective at the hospital where his father was trained, it will be an experience, he was a child of two when his parents left, she knows their story, she has heard it many times before, of how they had landed upon English soil with a mere five pounds to their name, the first difficult years, on weekends they had shared curried shad with other couples and reminisced of hilsa fish, cradling their children, they had rubbed their eyes in the damp heat of the coin-operated gas fires, and absorbed heavy texts, and now they basked in their hard-earned success, in detached suburban homes, their children amassing A-levels, she remembers a damp day... when an unmistakable East Bengal accent drifted through the spangled wire, you will not remember me, her father's distant cousin, they had urged her to spend a day with them, and the following evening [...] in the oppressive heat of their home she had met his kind wife, the smell of fried spice hung dense in the overheated hallway, the wife, her aunt, took her coat [...]. (Gupta 186)

This passage is worth quoting at length because it demonstrates how the unnamed Bengali and his family are rendered generic by her dismissive aside, "she knows their story." What could have become a novel in itself – the tale of a Bengali couple with little money overcoming the hardship and hostility of Britain through hard work and community support – is reduced to less than a sentence. Moni's aunt and uncle, Hindu migrants who presumably moved from East Bengal because of Partition, make her familiar with the narrative trajectory, so she closes her ears. Further information about Gupta's writerly concerns is made manifest at the level of the 595-word sentence, of which I have quoted only an excerpt. With their breathless, iterative comma splices and literary impressionistic intertwining of actions with memories and thoughts, Gupta's sentences engage in quasi-modernist provocation.

They also allow the novelist to convey that Moni never truly gets to know England. Each time the narrative starts to explore the country, her character's memories and tastes make it veer off into descriptions of India, more specifically Calcutta. For example, the well-worn trope of a migrant's journey on the Tube transmutes, at Gupta's hand, into reminiscences about an English teacher back in Calcutta. In the space of a single, however protracted, sentence, Moni quickly abandons London's autumnal streets for the overheated cocoon of a train. On the wall of her carriage is some verse by Keats, part of a "Poems on the Underground" promotion (146). Reading this leads the upper-class character to think, with a mixture of contempt and compassion, about a temporary lecturer who taught Keats at her Calcuttan college and whose broad Bengali accent she and the other girls had mocked. This

cognitive and spatial dissonance, which prevents the narrative from dwelling on the London Underground or Romantic poetry for long, is characteristic of much of the Banglaphone writing I have examined so far, even if it is especially exaggerated in Gupta's prose.

Another Bengali woman writer based in London, Tahmima Anam, has a different literary approach altogether. Whereas Ali uses occasional flashbacks to Bangladesh and Gupta tightly interbraids her present-day British action Calcuttan memories, Anam chooses not to represent Britain at all. Her first novel, *A Golden Age*, was published in 2007 and focused on the 1971 Liberation War which, after India's military involvement, led to Pakistan's defeat and the creation of the new nation of Bangladesh. As with *Brick Lane*, the plot is conveyed through third-person narrative interspersed with occasional letters. *A Golden Age*'s protagonist Rehana is an Urdu-speaking widow who strives to protect her teenage children while supporting the Mukti Bahini, or Bangladeshi liberation army, in its war effort.

The action of *The Good Muslim*, Anam's second novel of her planned Bengal Trilogy, mostly unfolds during the 1980s, a decade when the Islamic Right became increasingly powerful in Bangladesh. Focalization is transferred from *A Golden Age*'s Rehana to her daughter, Maya, now in her early thirties, and occasionally to her older brother, Sohail. These siblings react very differently to "the Dictator" Hussain Muhammad Ershad's military rule. Sohail joins the Tablighi Jamaat, an austere, revivalist religious movement, while Maya keeps faith with the secular, left-leaning nationalism that sustained them both during the war years, an era of political idealism she remembers with exponential nostalgia as she and her brother grow apart.

In 2013, Anam was named one of Britain's best young novelists by *Granta* magazine (Freeman). In interviews and journalism she not only focuses on Bangladeshi politics and cultural production, but also discusses "making a home in London" (Vogel n.pag), the banal details of the contents of her weekly veg box, and her earlier life as a PhD student in the US (Anam n.pag). One would not know this from her fiction, set in Bangladesh or in the case of her forthcoming novel *Shipbreaker* the Bangladeshi diaspora in Dubai (East n.pag). And this is to be welcomed, while we simultaneously welcome Anam into the fold of British literature. As with many of the writers explored here, she is a global thinker, a nationalist who is not easily confined within national boundaries.

What we might call "Banglaphone fiction" is, I have argued, currently experiencing a boom. Depictions of Bangladeshis, especially Sylhetis, in London, their cuisine, and other aspects of popular culture form an enduring fascination, among Hindu Indian as well as Muslim Bangladeshi authors. An increasing number of women writers, with heritage from Calcutta as well as Dhaka, are adding their voices to the chorus of Banglaphone fiction. Ali, Gupta, and Anam have the confidence to focus on Britain, divert away from it towards memories of the subcontinent, or ignore it altogether. What future women novelists will do with these very different models remains to be seen.

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Reading Poetry Slam: Body as Poetic Text - Andrea Gibson, "I do"

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Abstract: Poetry slams have recently received critical attention in relation with troubadour tradition, beat generation and Harlem Renaissance. A few studies have analyzed some poems of poetry slams and most of them have set apart script from performance. However we have to pay attention to the performance which is mainly paralinguistic expressions to understand a slam poem comprehensively. A performed poem is distributed not as a written text but as a movie clip that contains the performer's paralinguistic expressions as well as linguistic contents of the poem. The key questions in this respect are: 1) what kind of factors do we consider here and 2) how are multi-sensory poetic words organized and how can we analyze these works academically. To amplify on the first question, the theater semiotics of Anne Ubersfeld will be partially applied. For the second question, this paper will discuss Andrea Gibson's "I do" performances based on an analysis of details selected according to the answers of the first question.

Recently, poetry slams have received much critical attention and now are on the road to success. Poetry slams are competitive poetry performances in which participants recite their poem in the form of rap. Slams started with Mark Smith, an American poet who rapped his poem at one jazz bar of Chicago in 1984 (Kim 251). Many scholars approach slam poetry in relation with the troubadour tradition and regard it as a descendent from music poetry like Allen Ginsberg's of the beat generation or Langston Hughes's of the Harlem Renaissance, because of its form of rap, its social critical contents, and colloquial words. Music poetry indicates poetry with musical factors such as distinctive musical forms or historical contexts of a genre as well as repetitive rhythm and meter (Tockgo 1). Poetry slams are recognized as a full-fledged genre and even the *American Literature* anthology includes this genre in the contemporary poetry section.

Scholars have often noted a rise in poetry slams as an interesting phenomenon in literary genre but have rarely studied how it actually works as a literary art. Much scholarly work has assessed poetry slam as only a cultural phenomenon reflecting digital media development. Though a few studies have analyzed some poems of poetry slams, most of them have set apart script from performance. One reason belletristic approach and holistic analysis are few is that people tend to think of poetry recitation as a subsidiary method to understanding and enjoying a poem better.

Samuel R. Levin insists that oral performances force the performer to choose only one meaning among many of them that people can derive from ambiguous words or homophones

of the poem; therefore, oral performances tend to simplify the complexity of a poem and fail to convey the richness of the poem to audiences (366-369). When we consider that Joan Peskin's experiment in 1998 shows that the actual reading strongly reflects the performer's academic interpretation (235-263), Levin's idea seems to be invalid.

However Levin and Peskin's perspectives do not fit poetry slams. Both have dealt with only oral performances as a subsidiary activity that represents written poetry text. We must note here that poetry slams are multi-sensuous performances and the performance itself is the form of the poem. The author's first display and later distributions of his poem are not in the written form but in performance which contains the *mise-en-scène*. Details of a performance are carefully directed by a poet and present the poet's actual intention. Thus, poetry slam performances should be considered not as representation of a poem but as a multi-sensory poem presented by the poet's body. In this respect, each detail of performance does not simplify the meaning of poetic words and the poem but constructs the meaning, the poetic words themselves.

One should pay attention to multi-sensory characteristics of a poetry slam's poetic words not to lose totality through a belletristic approach, i.e., one should consider various factors that make a poetic word. Then, the first key question is what and how many factors we have to consider to organize the multi-sensory poetic word. A poetry slam's poetic words usually consist of paralinguistic factors and linguistic texts. According to Anne Ubersfeld's theater semiotics in *L'école du Spectateur*, there are three types of signs used by actors:

1. Intentional signs: Directed. For example, vocalization, theatrical gesture
2. Intentional signs: Actor-oriented. For example, facial expression, emotional expression, habit of expression which is repeated by actors
3. Unintentional signs: Actor-oriented. For example, gender, appearance, race, etc. (239)

In this essay, I will deal with only the intended signs because what we will approach is "poetic words," an art.

The next question is how they actually become together a poetic word and how we can analyze their works academically. The factors work in combination to form a round poetic word as they make discordance or accordance in between which generates poetic ambiguity or clarity of poetic words. Also, the factors directly expand sympathy among audiences by their intimate function. The expanded sympathy forms instant and single-prolonged social community in participants including performer and audiences; this also generates poetic ambiguity or clarity to help people form a thematic discourse.

To amplify on this issue, I select a performance of "I do" by Andrea Gibson, an award-winning slam poet, to analyze its poetic words. I compared four different video recordings of "I do" performances to distinguish and extract intentional signs of the "I do" performer. I selected two details of performance to analyze as its poetic words: first, this poem's song and second, "you." These two parts are where the signs are largely concentrated



Figure 1. Music of a song at the beginning of the poem "I do"

and both function as crucial poetic words which construct the main theme of the poem. I add some pictures which are captures of the recording in 2007.¹

“I do” is about the love and trouble of a lesbian couple and the speaker wonders if they can be together when one is dying. A Poem “I do” starts with a Song and ends with the Song. This Song is a poetic word which has five components of performance: in order of importance, melody, linguistic text, vocalization, gesture, and facial expression. Oral performance plays a central role in this song. Melody and Linguistic text form the basic identity of the song, and the rest three components make variations on poetic meaning of the song.



Figure 2. Music of a song at the ending of the poem “I do”

This song is composed of scat and short melody with the lyrics of “I do.” The melody is the same and even scat has the same notes in every performance. Singing gives an actual shape to the music of the song and makes the song accepted as an independent word. Linguistic text, in other words, the lyrics, is combined with following lines performed after the song at the beginning and adds poetic identity to the word, “song.” The Song’s lyrics are of three types: scat type 1 of “Babidibabidibaba..., Dipdipdipdip...”; scat type 2 of “Denedengdenge..., Dingdongding...”; and the melody parts. Scat type 1 is based on pronunciation of plosive with stress on the first syllable. This is functioning as onomatopoeia representing the sound of the cardiograph, which one can analogize by the following lines: “And I want to know that fifty years from now when you’re in a hospital room getting ready to die, when visiting hours are for family members only, I want to know they’ll let me in to say goodbye.” Scat type 2 is based on the nasal sound with stress on the first syllable. This is also onomatopoeia, but this time it represents the sound of “church bells” at a wedding ceremony as the speaker says, “the most we can hope for is an uncivil union in Vermont. But I want church bells. I want rosary beads. I want Jesus on his knees. I want to walk down the aisle while all the patriarchy smiles.” Melody 1’s lyrics of “I do” are best reflected in the title of this poem and therefore is a main message of this poem. “I do” is first related to the marriage oath and next to the speaker’s hope of being with her lover as her spouse, singing a song to say good-bye to her.

Thus, the song becomes a kind of theme music, i.e., the basic identity as a poetic word indicating the speaker’s hope for being family-in-law. Here, the basic meaning of the song vocalization and gesture make the variation-in-use of the poetic word. Audiences take the song at the poem’s beginning and the song at the poem’s ending as the same song because they have the same components. But the song has slightly different meanings as indicated by the poet’s vocalization and gestures.

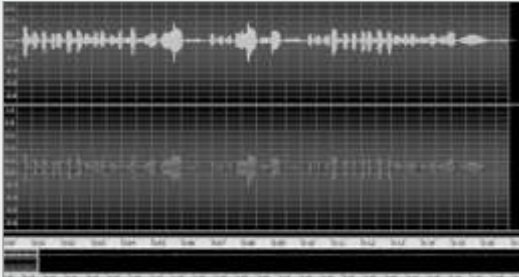


Figure 3. Waveform of the song at the beginning

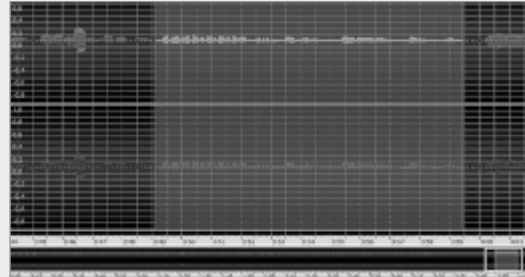


Figure 4. Waveform of the song at the ending

Figure 3 shows the waveform of the song at the poem's beginning and Figure 4 shows the waveform of the song at the poem's end. The range of Figure 3's waveform reaches a maximum of 0.4, but that of Figure 4 reaches a maximum of 0.2. The poet sings at the beginning almost twice as loudly than at the end. When singing the song at the end of the poem, the poet's voice gradually dies away. One can barely distinguish melody from caesura from the waveform of Figure 4. Considering Figure 1 and 2, the scale goes down at the end and the voice fading out has multilayered meanings:

1. Disappointment at being denied as family member and having no positive answer to her wish
2. Sorrow of letting lover go and saying good bye

In addition to the vocal change, the song in combination with gesture acquires another meaning. While singing, the poet does two kinds of gestures: one is closing her eyes and the other is changing the angle of her face and body.



Figure 5. Singing at the beginning

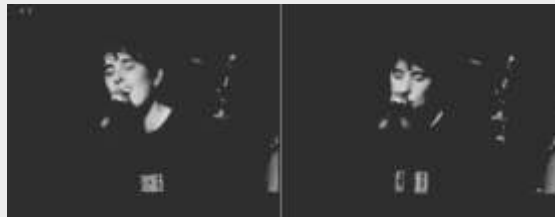


Figure 6. Singing at the ending

The poet closes her eyes when singing at both the beginning and the end. She does not look at the audience and concentrates on her inner self and emotion, indicating that the song has no audience but herself, or has a listener, her lover, who is not on the stage but in her mind, as though the audience is listening to an interior monologue. When singing at the end, the poet, her eyes closed, simultaneously changes her posture, contrasting with the opened one with her face upward into the closed one with her face downward as Figure 6 shows. The changing posture imitates the actual situation that she is by her lover's deathbed and conveys her disappointment and sorrow. Therefore, the performer "I" shows her holding on to the hope that she can do this in reality. Though the poem ends with "good bye," the gay issue is now an ongoing process.

Facial expressions accord meaning to the text, enhanced by the vocalization, gestures and emotion indicated in the songs at the beginning and the end. The comfortable smile confirms the loud and hopeful atmosphere of the beginning song, but her smiling face turns into a grave one at the end, showing her deep sorrow and disappointment.

To sum up, the meanings of all five components of the song, the song as a poetic word has meaning as follows: the song embodies marriage and the lover's death. Both are strongly related to the speaker's hope that she wants to be a spouse legally. The poet first sings hopefully but later sings gravely to show her deep sorrow for lost hope. Nevertheless, she is hopeful. This song is a song of hope and sorrow that every lesbian has in her mind. If this song

exists in only written linguistic text, what we will recognize are just the typographical lyrics which do not tell us how the speaker sings, whether it is actually sung by the speaker in real or in her mind, to whom speaker sings and with what kind of emotion she sings. The song is the most poetic word in the poem "I do."

The next important detail of performance to analyze is "you." If the song has an internal characteristic, "you" is the external characteristic because of its referential function. "You" is a poetic word referring to the "listener" of the speaker "I" and the word has two components of performance: linguistic text and gesture. Both are equally important. In the case of "you," both linguistic text and gesture remain ambiguities of each component.

"You" itself tell us only that it is a pronoun. To know the linguistic text, one should interweave examples of "you" used in "I do" to see each context. "You" first appears in the line "cause you are a girl, I am a girl!" very soon after the song at the beginning ends. At this point, "you" indicates the speaker's lover for most of the poem, but a slightly different meaning of "you" comes in the lines depicting their lives after moving to Kansas. The speaker says, "I cut your cord and you cut mine, and the chords of time played like a concerto of hope like we could feel the rope unwind, feel the noose of hate loosening, loosening from years of 'People like you aren't welcome here, people like you can't work here, people like you cannot adopt.'" In these lines, "you" indicates not only the speaker's lover but also the speaker herself. The speaker recalls a past time before they lived in Kansas when they were rejected just because they were gay. Thus, literally, the poet is using a word "you" to mean two meanings: one is the speaker's lover only and the other are both the lovers.

The literal meaning is the basic identity of "you." The gestures make the variation-in-use on the basic meaning. First, at the line "cause you are a girl, I am a girl," the poet directly points at the audience when saying "you" as Figure 7 shows.



Figure 7. Pointing at the audience, "you" (left) and "I" (right)

Here "you" literally indicates the speaker's lover, but the poet's gesture indicates the audience. The poet positions the audience as her lover. Also, the poet points at the audience when saying "you" at the line "People like you aren't welcome here, people like you can't work here, people like you cannot adopt."



Figure 8. Pointing at the audience, "People like you" lines

Here "you" indicates both the speaker and her lover, but the poet indicates the audience. The poet's gesture of pointing at the audience with "you" gives a generalized aspect to the personal statement represented by "I" and "you." This gesture expands the range of subjects for "you" in the poem to unspecified individuals and directly puts them in the position of lesbians who are lovers but held in contempt by society. As a result, each audience member is forced to take a position regarding lesbian matters or at least has to think about it. Finger pointing,

which seems to simply identify friend and foe, actually deconstructs the totality of real audiences to reconstruct an instant place for discourse about the gay marriage and patriarchic family among the audience.

Various components like gestures, vocalization, facial expression, and linguistic text dynamically interact with each other, not to simplify the meaning of a poem but rather to clarify and even generate multilayered meanings in combination as poetic words do in a written poem. Thus, to set apart script from the whole performance of a poetry slam and analyze only the script is to look at only one dimension of the poem and lose the abundance of meanings in the poem.

Research of this viewpoint is still in its early stage and some problems remain that need to be explored. First, one can easily accept poetry slams as a more dramatic genre. Because of its multi-genre characteristic, I borrowed drama theory to approach various factors of performance. It is true that the performance aspect of poetry slams havemuch in common with drama, but, as I have said at the beginning of this paper, the origin of poetry slams is in the tradition of poetry. Besides, the poetry slam's performers are not actors but the poets themselves. Additionally, based on my argument that the poet's body is the text for the poem and the poetic words are presented by the body, a poem becomes completely different if the performer is changed. It is not like in drama where the original is shared as scenes and all performance is real. A poetry slam has only several original versions performed by the poet; others can only possibly make duplications or create an entirely new poem.

Certainly, the present paper was limited in scope. I dealt with only one poem of a poet and chose only two kinds of multi-linguistic poetic words of the poem. The components of the poetic words are all intended. One can analyze unintended components like biological characteristics or habits also as a sign which affects a poem's meaning. However, the actual analysis will be huge and complex, requiring an interweaving of a large amount of knowledge of various scientific areas in poetry analysis. Further studies of different large scale assessments are needed. This paper was an attempt to provide an impetus for accepting all factors of the performance of poetry slams as poetic diction that we can analyze literarily.

Notes

1. Live performance at Girl Fest, Hawaii. Gibson published "I do" also in audio CD *When the Bough Breaks* in 2006.

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Dreamscape and the Carnavalesque: An Intertextual Analysis of *The Tempest* and *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*

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Abstract: *William Shakespeare's tragicomedy The Tempest and Terry Gilliam's surrealist film The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus are narratives that uphold the role of the magician/shaman in relation to art and contemporary culture. By exploring the intertextual connections between the texts, the similarities of such concepts as the Bakhtinian 'carnavalesque' and 'dialogism in language' across widely displaced literary narratives can be found. Most notably, the concept of the Bakhtinian 'carnavalesque,' as it exists in literature and language, is explored through the psychological 'dreamscape' as they are presented in Prospero's Island and the eponymous Parnassus' 'Imaginarium' By equating the dreamscape with the carnivalesque we are able to develop on the Bakhtinian notion of novelistic discourse and the role of the author as an arena or mise-en-scène for dialogue. The paper analyzes the role of masks in both texts as it relates to Bakhtin's concept, and attempts to trace the thematic and archetypal elements of the narrative which have been reinterpreted. Bakhtin and Kristeva's proposal of a dialogic relationship between texts is traced between the playwright Shakespeare and the filmmaker Gilliam in this paper.*

Keywords: *Carnavalesque, heteroglossia, dialogic and novelistic discourse, Jungian archetypes, narrative and narratives, and intertextuality*

The Psychological Dreamscape and the Mythical Carnival

Terry Gilliam's film, *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, makes a simple statement against a world that has become desensitized to laughter and spectacle: magic still exists. He shows us that amidst the labyrinthine alleys of a modern, demythologized London, a benevolent, albeit flawed, wizard continues to lend his "imaginarium," that is, his imagination, to a world which is too drunk, busy, or lost to technology to imagine for itself. The wizard and his troupe in question, however, happen to be modern interpretations of Shakespeare's Prospero, Miranda, Ferdinand, Caliban, and Ariel, all of whom are either mere shades of their former, dramatic selves, or archetypes who struggle to exist in a world that no longer wants to hear their stories.

It is against this background that Gilliam paints his Shakespearean troupe: a world that no longer values myths, magic and storytelling does indeed still have souls who are able to bring individuals away from the mundane and dismal preoccupations of the contemporary world and offer an alternative: a carnival of the imagination, a recreation of

Prospero's dreamscape in *The Tempest* within a foldable-stage operated by vaudevillian vagrants existing on the social periphery. By juxtaposing the dreamscape and the carnival, the film is able to condense a Bakhtinian perspective on the archetypes of dreams and mythology.

The twentieth-century preoccupation with subjectivity in literary criticism has allowed us to, if not anything else, be more conscious about our dreams. While the archetypal tradition in literary criticism has lost most of its proponents, the popularity of such figures as Bakhtin and Kristeva has allowed literary criticism to reinterpret the archetypal tradition along the aspects that are found in Jung and Kerenyi. Bakhtin is regarded today as "one of the greatest theoreticians of literature of the twentieth century," particularly "for his notion of *Carnivale*" (Lechte 7-8). Bakhtin's perspectives on literature come from a sociolinguistic background, particularly a propensity towards language that transcends linguistics: "the word for Bakhtin is translinguistic – the intersection of meaning rather than a fixed point, or a single meaning" and his treatment of genre requires that "we must resort to the translinguistic/semiotic dimension in order to interpret them" (Lechte 11).

The word to consider here is semiotic, because Bakhtin's works on language, the carnivalesque, and the literary discourse of the novel correspond to the Jungian consideration for archetypes in dreams and, by extension, in art. Mikhail Bakhtin developed the concept of the "carnavalesque" against the political backdrop of twentieth-century Russia: the carnivalesque is a term used by Bakhtin for "those forms of unofficial culture that resist official culture, political oppression, and totalitarian order through laughter, parody, and 'grotesque realism'" (as cited in Leitch 187). In historical terms, "a carnival is an occasion or season of revels, of merrymaking, feasting and entertainments . . . in times past there were carnivals which were symbolic of the disruption and subversion of authority; a turning upside down of the hierarchical scale;" this historical carnival is coined by Bakhtin on a linguistic and literary level to "describe the penetration or incorporation of carnival into everyday life, and its shaping effect on language and literature" (as cited in Cuddon 113). The carnival was therefore a cultural phenomenon, which Bakhtin reintroduced to literary criticism as an example of linguistic dispersion. As the carnivalesque exists outside of the social and political hierarchy, it is able to criticize it and break it down due to multiple voices speaking at the same time, which Bakhtin terms "the dialogism of language" (as cited in Leitch 187).

This is synonymous with the concept of the carnivalesque. What Bakhtin calls the "polyphony" or "multiple-voices" apparent in language, is an extension of the carnivalesque. As Lechte points out, "polyphony is multiple, not singular; it includes what would be excluded by a representation of it" (10). In other words, due to the inherently critical nature of carnivalization, there exists a dialogical relationship that conveys a multitude of meaning. This diversity of meaning is possible because there are distinct and individual verbal modals that are speaking at the carnival. For Bakhtin, the literary genre of the novel is analogous to the historical carnival; therefore the novel, an arena for dialogical language, is itself carnivalesque: "the style of a novel is to be found in the combination of its styles; the language of a novel is the system of its 'languages.'" (as cited in Leitch 192). This sort of "dialogism" between multiple voices within a single literary form or genre is what Julia Kristeva calls "intertextuality," a term that denotes "the interdependence of any one literary text with all those that have gone before it" (as cited in Cuddon 424). And it is this intertextual, polyphonic dialogue between Shakespeare and Terry Gilliam that we see in the film.

Kristeva's dialogical consideration for literature carries Bakhtin's concept of polyphonic language further by insisting that any text is an "absorption and transformation of another" and challenges "traditional notions of literary influence" as "one kind of discourse overlaid with meanings from another kind of discourse" (Cuddon 424). In other words, Gilliam is able to craft a narrative such as *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* and imbue it with multiple forms of meaning because of the dialogue he shares with Shakespeare on the timeless and historical tradition of art – much like Bakhtin's carnivalesque – which is possible due to the relationship in meaning between Gilliam's text and Shakespeare's text.

However, Gilliam carries such notions of the carnivalesque and intertextual meaning further than both Bakhtin and Kristeva. He displays it through his presentation of characters. It is as though Gilliam posits that intertextuality is possible due to the existence of archetypes in literature, a notion that echoes Jung's psychoanalytical theories of the "collective unconsciousness" and "psychological archetypes" ("Archetypes").

Jung's definition of archetypes comes from an analysis of recurring psychological images in dreams. He posits that "in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche" – that is, in Bakhtinian terms, the monologic voice – "there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is present in all individuals" (43). The collective unconsciousness, additionally, is the threshold within which archetypes exist, and therefore they are recurrent in dreams. It is through these archetypes that Gilliam's "Imaginarium" connects to Shakespeare's island. The dialogical nature of the collective unconsciousness is due to the fact that these archetypes are not developed individually, but part of a psychological inheritance, or as "archaic remnants" – mental forms whose presence cannot be explained by anything in the individual's own life and which seem to be aboriginal, innate, and inherited shapes of the human mind" (Jung, "Man" 57).

In Bakhtinian terms, the collective unconsciousness of a dreamscape would be carnivalesque, where there is a struggle between the ordered consciousness and the seemingly disordered unconsciousness; this multiplicity of inherited archetypes within that dreamscape governs a polyphonic struggle. According to Robert Stam, who uses Bakhtinian principles for film analysis, this is done on both the linguistic and the psychological level:

Bakhtin audaciously recasts the Unconscious/Conscious distinction as one [that is] not between two orders of psychic reality but rather between two modalities of verbal consciousness. Official consciousness refers to that which social and ideological structures allow one to express openly, while unofficial consciousness expresses that which deviates from socially accepted norms ... a kind of mental carnival. (4)

Such a psychological distinction is apparent in both Gilliam and Shakespeare's texts, where the "imaginarium" of Parnassus acts as the psychological carnival and the "dreamscape" of Prospero on the island exude various mythological archetypes. We see that an intertextual connection is made possible because of archetypes that Jung characterizes as psychological, which Bakhtin characterizes as literary, and which Gilliam and Shakespeare appropriate as mythological.

This association is most apparent in the literary works themselves: in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, we witness the sort of Renaissance-Carnival that Bakhtin speaks of in his works, only unlike Bakhtin, Shakespeare's carnivalesque occurs amidst the imaginative arena of a dreamscape; a sentiment that is reflected nearly 500 years later by Terry Gilliam. The intertextual connection between Shakespeare and Gilliam is an unlikely one: Shakespeare writes from an age when classical mythology is merely intelligent fodder for an audience, whereas Gilliam shoots his scenes against a cinematic audience more versed in psychological thrillers and a glorified rendition of Freud and Jung's psychoanalyses. But what we see in Gilliam's film is the story of Prospero, Miranda, and Ariel, indeed of the entire cast of *The Tempest*, in a world where their magic is no longer relevant. It is a breakdown of Shakespeare in modern London.

In *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* we see how the eponymous "Imaginarium" is a magical passage, through a mirror, into the imagination itself. The mirror comprises the entire traveling-stage and acts as a carnivalesque – indeed one of the very first scenes of the film begins at a roadside fair—a carnival—where Parnassus' troupe is initially stationed. The Imaginarium is equivalent to Prospero's Island, which is under his magical grip and is, as he mentions in the epilogue, "the stuff dreams are made on" (Shakespeare, trans. Epilogue). The dreamscape of Prospero and the Imaginarium of Parnassus offer a carnivalesque where the polyphony of voices represented by different characters and participants are shown to interact, struggle, and ultimately engage in dialogue. As both are quite literally the dream-space of the magicians, we witness in both texts a propensity to represent something as communal and multifaceted as the carnival within a very personal and subjective space: within the mind of a single person. It is as though both Shakespeare and Gilliam reflect the Bakhtinian principle of a novelistic language that eventually shapes not only the festivals and rituals of our culture, but also the psychological processes through which we dream up those rituals.

The mythological, literary, and psychological aspects of these three perspectives are all intersecting in the play and the film with two commonalities: it is not linguistic voices, but rather linguistic and mythical archetypes that are present in all three dimensions and are able to address the nature of narratives through such archetypes.

They are able to reflect Bakhtin through polyphonic dreaming; in other words, through dream-dialogue, at least as it is represented by the narratives.

The Magician Father and the Maiden Daughter

Characters in Gilliam's film have intertextual cognates to Shakespeare's troupe, but the most notable one is that of Parnassus and Prospero, both of whom are aged wizards who have fallen from grace but continue to use their magic as a way to supply the world with myth-making. They are also both extremely caring fathers who are not above manipulating the wisdom of their magic to secure a future for their soon-to-be-sixteen-year-old daughters, a point which becomes the central driving force of the narrative. To this end, Prospero and Parnassus are both exceedingly protective of their daughters, as evident in Prospero's opening lines, when he assures his daughter Miranda that the "suffering" she witnesses of a sinking boat from a tempest he has created is all for her sake: "No more amazement: tell your piteous heart there's no harm done. . . I have done nothing but in care of thee, Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter" (Shakespeare, trans. 1.2.). Parnassus, on the other hand, shares his personal time with Valentina, his daughter, by playfully boxing with her; his over-protectiveness is represented by an ankle-bracelet he forces her to wear so that he would hear her if she is ever to run away (Gilliam).

Miranda and Valentina are both intertextual cognates of the magician's daughter, and they share certain characteristics in the beginning of Gilliam's film. Miranda's opening monologue lamenting the loss of those in the shipwreck is echoed by Valentina's concern over the man they encounter hanging by his neck over London bridge on a stormy-night who is fittingly the "prince charming" figure who acts a cognate to Ferdinand. When Parnassus is relating the story about his past and how the father and daughter pair had come to where they are today, Valentina, like Miranda, displays a youthful impatience towards her father's preaching: "I need to explain something before it's too late, one winter morning –" to which Valentina sighs "Is this going to take long?" (Gilliam). On the other hand, both characters are extremely fond of listening to their fathers' stories once they start; Miranda complains to Prospero how he has "often begun to tell me what I am, but stopp'd and left me to a bootless inquisition" (Shakespeare, trans. 1.2.). The same complaint is echoed by Valentina when her father's story about their past is interrupted and she screams "Why do you always do this? Why do you always stop in the middle of your story?" to which Parnassus merely responds "another time" (Gilliam).

The strongest characterization of Shakespeare's Miranda is in supplying the play with a female voice, but it is also a youthful voice and is perhaps the only one which has grown wary of the ostentations of Prospero's Island, as seen in her impatience towards her father's preaching. However, Miranda retains her youthful wonder towards the ordinary and the real, rather than the theatrical; she empathetically cries to have "suffered with those I saw suffer" in the opening storm; it is youthful curiosity that defines her as she continues to mistake Prince Ferdinand as "a sprite" and near the end of the play, to the shipwrecked citizens of Naples as "O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, that has such people in't!" (Shakespeare, trans. 5.1.). While Valentina is not prone to such hyperbole, she names the Ferdinand-cognate "Tony" without knowing what else to call him, and secretly keeps an "Ideal Home" catalogue with pictures of beautiful mahogany furniture and a handsome man, something that her childhood friend Anton jokes about: "do you really think you'd be happy in a place like that?" as though finding wonder in the mundane world and letting go of the magical life of the Imaginarium is ridiculous (Gilliam).

Additionally, both characters are shown to be vocal about their burgeoning sexuality. Miranda, in a rare indication of character growth, declares to Ferdinand her demand of marriage, with a note of sexual innuendo: "The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning . . . I am your wife, if you will marry me. If not, I'll die your maid . . . whether you will or no" (Shakespeare, trans. 3.1.77-86). We see that despite her almost frantic forcefulness, Miranda has matured beyond her role as a passive girl who relies on her father's ideas to guide her, and while she becomes subservient to Ferdinand, it is one of those rare moments where she talks openly about what she wants. Valentina, upon escaping into the Imaginarium with Tony, says that "I think I may love you Tony, we should lie here more often. Get married. Make babies." The scene corresponds with Valentina declaring her sexual liberty and consummating her relationship with Tony: "there doesn't have to always be a choice, those are my father's rules. Now we're free" (Gilliam). It is a rare moment where we see that both Miranda and Valentina have learned to express their desires and give voice to their needs in a carnival that is dominated by male figures.

The neatly-placed equivalents for Valentina and Miranda stop there. As Desmet and Sawyer report: “According to Frye’s ‘Argument of Comedy,’ while the blocks to young desire are overcome, the transgressors are also reintegrated into society, usually through marriage ... Shakespeare’s comic heroines accommodate themselves to a society in which the husband’s role replicates that of the father [and the girl] subordinates herself to the male authority of her husband” (184-187). This is true of Miranda, whose entire narrative is designed around her choice between her father Prospero and the lover her father chooses for her in marriage, Ferdinand. Shakespeare’s portrayal of Miranda concludes with the blessings she receives at the grand spectacle of her wedding ceremony, and the audience celebrates her passage from Prospero’s Island into a society that is less magical. Despite her uniqueness Miranda’s narrative ends with marriage, in a story reflective of a conservative view of female sexuality and identity.

In contrast to this, we have Valentina who retains her youthful rebelliousness and matures through the patriarchal forces that oppress her; to her father who infantilizes her constantly, she at first helplessly protests when he says: “Why does everybody want to live forever? Immortality is a bloody curse” to which she responds: “So is pretending to be a 12-year-old child! Look at me! Nobody’s fooled! I want this ridiculous thing off my ankle” (Gilliam). Whereas Miranda’s story ends in marriage, Valentina’s story tells us the implications of her fate beyond marriage.

In Shakespeare’s play, Miranda survives an attempted rape by a drunken Caliban, but her only objection to the entire episode is that “’Tis a villain sir, I do not love to look on” and it is Prospero who deals with Caliban by verbally putting him down (Shakespeare, trans. 2.1). Valentina, on the other hand, is attacked by a similarly drunken spectator; in one of her very first lines, Valentina tells the repulsive man to “get off the stage.” Valentina survives the attack, and the drunken man becomes one of the first characters in the film to lose his soul to the Devil in the Imaginarium; subsequently however, Valentina’s father reprimands her for breaking their cardinal rule to “never go into the mirror” – the gateway into Parnassus’ mind. Valentina objects “but he was chasing me” but still gets scolded; later on, when Anton, the boy-performer in the show, has to enter through the same mirror, Parnassus commends his heroism, a fact that Valentina objects to Anton: “You go through the mirror and he’s all over you. I do it once and he serves me my head on a plate” (Gilliam).

The inherent subjugation of the female voice throughout the story is not only highlighted by Gilliam, but made into the central narrative: she longs to escape for a better world after her 16th birthday, which she playfully says is “the age of consent.” However, linked to this birth date is her father’s terrible wager against the Devil itself: Mr. Nick, who acts as one half of the pragmatic, materialistic clan as represented by Miranda’s “false uncle” Antonio, and to a larger extent to the King of Naples himself. The wager between Parnassus and the Devil is one that had granted Parnassus his immortality in lieu of his daughter’s soul on her sixteenth birthday.

Gilliam exposes the inherent chauvinism in Prospero’s story by showing that the Wizard exploits the soul of the unsuspecting female child in order to gain immortality; an act of patriarchal greed that he now regrets. Prospero’s exploitation of the female gender is apparent when he uses Miranda’s marriage to Ferdinand as a means to regain his former status as the Duke of Milan. But under Gilliam’s retelling, Miranda/Valentina’s story does not end with her union with the patriarchal world of Ferdinand/Tony/Antonio/The Devil, but continues the story.

Midway through the film as Valentina learns of her fate, we see that the central conflict, despite being told through the eyes of Parnassus, is not between the two patriarchs, but between Valentina and the entire patriarchal system. Her father frantically mutters that “all is not lost, if I win you are mine again!” but by now all sympathies towards her father are lost as she says “listen to yourself – I don’t know who you are anymore. All my life you’ve filled my head with dreams! Your dreams!” (Gilliam). The last line, of the father being the life-long supplier of “dreams” to his younger daughter, echoes Prospero’s role as a magician who deals with “stuff dreams are made on” (Shakespeare, trans. Epilogue). A line for which Prospero has been exulted for centuries as a poetic narrator is immediately subverted by the presence of a voice that was silenced in the original text.

Conclusion

By placing the Dreamscape as the *mise-en-scène* of the Carnavalesque, the stories of *The Tempest* and *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* are able to reflect Bakhtinian concepts of the carnival that is associated with the

role of the author. By building on the archetypes presented by Shakespeare, Gilliam is able to retell the story of Prospero and Miranda by completing those aspects of the story that Shakespeare himself could not address. The ending to the narrative is again similar: the daughter completes her psychological individuation and is able to integrate herself into society, but while for Prospero the story ended with Miranda's integration to a patriarchal culture without due recognition of that culture, for Parnassus and Valentina those aspects of the patriarchal culture are directly addressed. Under Gilliam, the daughter is able to attain a deeper maturation where she is now a mother and Prospero the magician returns to his dreamscape; Miranda's marriage gives no advantage to Prospero beyond the contentment of a father seeing his child finding happiness. Gilliam shows that by relying on the Bakhtinian philosophy of the carnivalesque, the narrative of Shakespeare's nearly 500 year old play remains not only emotionally and imaginatively fulfilling, but also very much present to us today due to the archetypes that continue their timeless dialogue.

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The Writer in Exile: Anita Brookner's Cultural Identity

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Abstract: *This paper seeks to explore aspects of Anita Brookner's autobiography and personality which have been recreated in the female protagonists of many of her well-known early novels. Born into a family of European Jews displaced by the Second World War, Brookner projects the collective memory and the life experience -- the angst -- of the émigré and the refugee. Exile is a legacy of history, a painful inheritance of the Jewish "diaspora." In Brookner's fiction, exile is a psychological state of being not restricted by notions of national identity politics. Brookner recreates the difficult patterns of personal survival and provides a unique perspective on cultural dislocation. An acclaimed art historian and academic, the psychological truth of Anita Brookner's lived experience, of compromise and interrogation of the cultural rift between the European and the British sensibilities, endows her fiction with the attributes of the Künstlerroman. The argument of my paper will be based on ideas borrowed from Edward Said's famous essay "Reflection on Exile" (2000). I shall examine Anita Brookner's cultural identity within the tropes of critical discourse inextricably linked to the "community of refugees": loss, nostalgia, memory (the twin faculties of remembering and forgetting), and trauma.*

Born into a family of Polish Jews in Herne Hill, London, England in 1928, Anita Brookner celebrated her eighty-seventh birthday on 16 July 2015. In this paper I shall explore aspects of Brookner's autobiography, personality, and family history which have been artfully distilled into the portrayal of protagonists in a number of well-known early novels, written in the decade between 1980 and 1990. My focus is the study of an individual's psychology and behavior within a specified cultural location, a location which creates pain, anxiety, and social dysfunction manifested in acute feelings of "otherness," of "homelessness," with its concomitant expression of a sense of loss of a fixed cultural identity. Brookner's "exile" is not restricted to a sense of deracination from a singular political national identity, or confined within the framework of an oppositional ideological stance. It does not arise from physical separation from a clearly demarcated territory on the globe, or any country held within rigidly policed boundaries.

Anita Brookner's cultural identity is not easy to pinpoint and define without recourse to her own words in recorded interviews. Brookner was very frank and open with Sasha Guppy in the well-known interview in 1987, published in *The Paris Review* ("The Art of Fiction" 98). In this interview, she clarifies autobiographical correspondences between herself and the sensitive, young, unmarried, highly educated female protagonists in her first four novels. A disturbing sense of

cultural dislocation, of “foreignness” and “not-belonging” in English society ripples through Brookner’s life, as it does through the lives of Dr. Ruth Weiss in *A Start in Life* (1981), Kitty Maule in *Providences* (1982), Frances Hinton in *Look at Me* (1983), and Edith Hope in the Booker Prize-winning *Hotel du Lac* (1984). The female hero in each of these novels is clearly Brookner’s alter ego. Brookner, who studied art history in Paris and has achieved distinction as an academic with a brilliant career at the Courtauld Institute in London, with acclaimed books on the lives of the painters Watteau, Greuze, and Jacques-Louis David, is more attuned to the intellectual and cultural sensibility of European Romanticism of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The author finds the twentieth century especially inimical and confrontational.

In the lives of Ruth, Kitty, Frances, and Edith, Brookner traces a pattern of survival, a trajectory of struggle in an insidiously damaging existential situation. Somewhat similar to a character teetering on the edge of an abyss in a Sartre novel, each woman betrays signs of neurotic anxiety, symptoms often carefully masked by ritual performance of socially accepted normative behavior. Intelligent and acutely self-conscious, these women are endowed with perspicacious self-knowledge. Ironically, however, complete or partial ignorance of other people’s motives and selfish manipulations – in effect, their lack of knowledge of the codes of the English “game” of social intrigue – keeps them in perpetual emotional exile. When Sasha Guppy points out that “the foreignness of your heroines is emphasized by the contrast between them and the very English, Protestant men they are attracted to,” Brookner quickly retorts, “I think the contrast is between damaged people and those who are undamaged.” Guppy also mentions that in *Providence*, Brookner reveals that she writes to tell the truth, to expose life’s falsehoods; Brookner calls this trait her “Cassandra Complex.” In *Hotel du Lac*, Brookner exposes the falsehood of another myth in the story of “The Tortoise and the Hare.” She asserts that in real life the hare wins every time, never the slow, patient tortoise. She says, “It is my contention that Aesop was writing for the tortoise market. Anyway, hares have no time to read — they are too busy winning the game.”

Brookner’s feelings of dislocation occupy a mental landscape rather than a geographical space. This exilic space is more subtle and fluid than fixed spatial terrain; it is as infinitely complex and malleable as the human psyche itself. Like many major novelists of the twentieth century, for example, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf – to name a few from the tradition of the modern British novel who were deeply influenced by Sigmund Freud’s theories – Brookner too channels her own life experience, and the facts of her family and lineage, into the structure and meaning of her fictional works. She weaves personal content and the broader context of cultural confrontation with objectivity and control achieved through distance and hindsight. As a member of a family of European Jews displaced by the Second World War, Brookner projects the collective memory and the angst of the émigré and the refugee. Exile is thus also a legacy of a complicated history, a painful inheritance of Hitler’s Holocaust and the subsequent forced “diaspora.”

The history of the post-war world is one of migration and dispersion – or, in the jargon of recent cultural theory, of “mobility and hybridity.” It has been pointed out that it is difficult to define people as “located” or “displaced,” since today the term “diaspora” – originally applied to the scattering of the Jewish people driven from the Holy Land since the eighth century BC and setting up “home” in many other places – is applied to many “diasporas,” such as the Bangladeshi or Indian diaspora, and the Chinese or Irish diaspora. In *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, the British academic Avtar Brah has argued that

instead of making a distinction between those who have moved and those who have stayed put (‘diasporians’ and ‘natives’) we should recognize that the existence of diasporic populations in a society means that everyone inhabits ‘diasporic space’ and has to face the cultural issues that involves. (qtd. in Brian Longhurst 131)

Writers and poets try to explain the reality of human suffering and account for the pain of separation and exile. However, recent theoretical debate surrounding the dialectics of exile has stripped the human drama of its tragic edge. Therefore, it is important to look at Edward Said’s revelatory essay “Reflection on Exile” to understand the state of mind of the displaced people of the earth, whom he collectively calls “a community of refugees” in an earlier essay published in the periodical *The New Nation*. I shall quote the famous opening passage of “Reflections of Exile,” lines suffused with pathos and poignancy, with painful and empathetic knowledge of the plight of the refugee:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in the exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. But if true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture? We have become accustomed to thinking of the modern period itself as spiritually orphaned and alienated, the age of anxiety and estrangement. Nietzsche taught us to feel uncomfortable with tradition, and Freud to regard domestic intimacy as the polite face painted on patricide and incestuous rage. Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees. (173)

Said's long essay is a lyrical cry from the heart, a cry for sympathy and understanding. References to poets in exile paint a picture of the refugee's life as a harrowing shadow-play among the margins of memories stored in the mind, and knowledge of actual sight, scent, and touch of tangible objects lost forever. In this context, Said quotes lines from a poem by the Palestinian poet, Mahmud Darwish, a poet who sings of a life in the exodus: "But I am the exile./ Seal me with your eye./ Take me wherever you are –/Take me whatever you are./ Restore to me the colour of face/ And the warmth of body/ The light of heart and eye/ The salt of bread and rhythm,/Take me as a relic from the mansion of sorrow./ Take me as a verse from my tragedy" (178).

In her novel *Latecomers* (1988), Anita Brookner gives palpable form to the haunting tragedy and trauma of post-war exodus. She tells us of her own family situation in the interview with Sasha Guppy: "We all lived in my grandmother's house with aunts and uncles and cousins all around, and I thought everybody lived like that. They were a transplanted and fragile people, an unhappy brood, and I felt that I had to protect them." The plot of *Latecomers* revolves around the lives of two Jewish refugees, Fibich and Hartman, who have been close friends since their chance placement in the same boarding-school in England in the months preceding the outbreak of the Second World War. Small, specifically haunting incidents in the lives of the characters make us recall the full horror of the events in Nazi Germany. A recurring memory left intact in Fibich's adult consciousness is of his mother fainting in his father's arms as the train pulls away from the station in Berlin, carrying their little boy to safety and away from their lives forever.

Fibich suffers from severe post-traumatic disorder. His inability to escape from painful memories of the past results in a life-long eating disorder: he is never able to assuage his hunger because he is never able to eat a full meal. Indigestion is a physical symptom of a deep sense of insecurity compounded by an inexplicable sense of guilt at having abandoned his parents to their doom. Marriage and prolonged psychoanalysis provide no relief. Indeed, Brookner makes the fragmented, spiritually alienated Fibich into a modern Romantic hero, one who has no religious faith but finds strength in a belief in free will and the possibility of personal ethical choice. He is portrayed as the solitary Byronic wanderer, and allusion and figurative imagery combine to make us aware of correspondences between the desolate Fibich and Byron's melancholy pilgrim in the epic poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Fibich recites several lines from the epic to his infant son Toto night after night in a ritual bonding between two generations of displaced people. As Fibich's voice rises and falls with the rhythm of the sublime verse, the infant is mesmerized by the comforting melodic strain. At the end of the novel, in the grey twilight of his life, Fibich writes a memoir, a history of his journey in the form of a long letter to the adult Toto, now settled in America. He concludes,

Your grandfather's name was Manfred. Your grandmother was Rosa. She was very beautiful. You will read about them in the notebook. ... don't worry about us. We are still here, and will be here as long as you want us. Life has taught me that death is only a small interruption. This I know to be an unalterable truth. Do you remember that poem I used to read you ... in an attempt to get you to sleep? Do you remember 'battle's magnificently stern array'? I was never able to capture that spirit myself. Some battles, however, are fought in the mind, and sometimes won there. (*Latecomers* 237-8)

In contrast to Fibich, his friend Hartman suffers less mental trauma. With a more positive outlook and a sensual enjoyment of all that life in England has to offer, Hartman has a healthy appetite for food. His philosophy is essentially *carpe diem* – seize the day. Life is to be lived in the present, every experience must be savored, for it is only total immersion in the moment which keeps the darkness of the past at bay. Brookner makes him exclaim, “Look! We have come through!” in a quietly exultant tone, intermittently throughout the narrative. This rallying cry of the indomitable spirit, of the survivor is, of course, the title of D. H. Lawrence’s cycle of confessional poems published in 1917 – a record of his spiritual crisis and psychic dissolution. Joyce Carol Oates tells us in her book, *The Hostile Sun: The Poetry of D. H. Lawrence*, “Lawrence endured and suffered, worked his way through himself (sometimes only barely) and came through. [In the eight-part poem “New Heaven and Earth” in this volume], Lawrence shares the apocalyptic madness of the [First world] war, imagining himself as part of the era’s murderessness....”

It is necessary to look at some parts of Lawrence’s poem to understand the strategic narrative significance of Brookner’s allusion. Through Lawrence’s words, Brookner helps us comprehend the vicious barbarity of war. In Section IV, Lawrence’s graphic imagery makes us experience the ghastly gas-chamber executions carried out in the Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War.

War came and every hand raised to murder, . . .
I . . . see them fall, the mutilated, horror-struck youths,
a multitude, one on another, and then, in clusters together
smashed, all oozing with blood, and burned in heaps
going up in a foetid smoke to get rid of them
the murdered bodies of youths and men in heaps
till it is almost enough, till I am reduced perhaps;
thousands and thousands of gaping, hideous foul dead,
that are youths and men and me being burned in oil,
and consumed in corrupt thick smoke that rolls
and taints and blackens the sky,
till at last it is dark, dark as night, or death, or hell
and I am dead, and trodden to nought
in the smoke-sodden tomb.

(*Look! We Have Come Through!* 128)

Later, gradually, through stages of reconciliation and healing, Lawrence experiences a miraculous resurrection; he is the phoenix risen from smoldering ash. “New Heaven and Earth” ends with celebration of the ultimate mystery of human personality. A poet, novelist, and a prophetic mystic in the way he finds restoration in the symbiotic bond between man and the natural world, Lawrence offers salvation to others who have been damaged and have drifted far from native coastlines.

Lawrence long ago famously stated to a friend that, “it is the hidden emotional pattern that makes poetry, not the obvious form” (qtd. by Seamus Perry). Anita Brookner, too, probes the hidden depths of the human personality, and discovers the poetic pattern of individual psychic struggle. She identifies with the pain of the solitary voyager and traces the arc of a lonely quest. She carries the memory of family faces as she grows older. In her thirties, she chose to remain single and childless in order to take care of her aging parents. She began writing novels when she was in her fifties, and has frankly admitted to Sasha Guppy that she writes novels to ward off loneliness. Writing is immensely therapeutic, and we can find in a novel like *Look at Me* distinctive attributes of a *künstlerroman*.

Brookner’s face is elegant in repose, with large limpid eyes reflecting grace under pressure. A timeline of her present Facebook portraits bring to mind the following lines by Tomas Tranströmer, the Swedish Nobel laureate: “We always feel younger than we are. I carry within myself my earlier faces as a tree contains its rings. The sum of them is ‘me.’ The mirror sees only my latest face, while I know all my previous ones” (249).

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Uses of (Media) Technology in Constructing Diasporic Home in the Shorter Fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri

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Abstract: Use of technology is an indispensable feature of modernity. But communities imagined along modern lines use technology in multifarious ways, be it print or digital technology. Benedict Anderson in his path-breaking study of how nation socio-culturally comes into being stresses the decisive role print technology (in the form of newspaper and realist novel) plays in constructing the community of nations. In a globalized world, however, the role of print technology in imagining larger collectivities as well as home is being fast replaced by information and media technology. Nowhere are such uses of the later technologies perhaps as prominent as in diasporas. Diasporic communities, though largely defined by the parameter of deterritorialization, attempt to appropriate and use technology (especially media technology) with a view to “producing locality,” to borrow from Arjun Appadurai. That is to say, diasporas resort to technology to cope with the often traumatic sense of dislocation and minimize the overwhelming sense of insecurity in an alien cultural environment. In the present article, I intend to look closely at the uses of technology in general and media technology in particular by Indian/South Asian diaspora in some of the short stories of Jhumpa Lahiri. The more precise critical agenda here is to examine how Indian/South Asian diaspora utilizes (media) technology to construct “home” or a sense of “homeness” in the selected stories.

It would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, to find a work of fiction by Jhumpa Lahiri in which her characters do not use all kinds of modern technology, from television to cell phone. Take, for example, the story called “Sexy” from *Interpreter of Maladies*, Lahiri’s first, Pulitzer-winning book of short fiction, published in 1999. The story opens with a conversation between two women colleagues, Laxmi and Miranda, who work, significantly, for “a public radio station” based in Boston (83). A “public radio station,” of course, is a public site airing a medley of educational and socio-cultural programs, using information and media technology. Now to get back to the opening conversation, it is itself a spin-off of a telephone conversation between Laxmi and her anonymous cousin located in Montreal. The reader learns: “Laxmi had been on the phone for at least an hour, trying to calm her cousin down” (83). The reason for such a prolonged, personal conversation on telephone and that also from a public space is that after almost a decade of marriage Laxmi’s “cousin’s husband ha[s] fallen in love with another woman,” while flying from Delhi to Montreal (83). With the narrative shifting to focus on the personal life of Miranda, the reader comes to know that Dev, also an Indian like Laxmi and Miranda’s present fiancé, can’t spend “the whole

night” at Miranda’s place, “because his wife call[s] every day at six in the morning, from India, where it [i]s four in the afternoon” (84). What is apparent from these two simple details is that technology, especially communications and information technology in the form of telephone, for example, penetrates deep into the private and professional life of Lahiri’s diasporic characters and that there seems to be some ambivalence at work in the way these characters engage with technology, sometimes in control of it and at other times, under its control.

In the present essay, rather than examine the whole range of diasporic uses of digital technologies in some of the short fictions of Lahiri, I focus on one particular end to which her diasporic characters use these technologies, namely, taming an alien cultural environment in the process of constructing a “home” away from home. I also point out at the very outset that an important coordinate of diaspora – that of generation – needs always to be kept in mind in any investigation of the uses of information and media technology by diaspora. In several of Lahiri’s short stories the diaspora represented tends to configure itself in terms of generation. More often than not, Lahiri’s first-generation South Asian characters now based abroad use electronic technologies to come to terms with what appears to them an uncomprehending and at times threatening socio-cultural milieu, while her second-generation characters born and brought up abroad seem to be largely indifferent to the very idea of India or Pakistan or Bangladesh as “home,” a tendency most vividly portrayed in Lahiri’s second book of short fiction titled *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008).

By now the use of technology by diaspora has come to assume the status of an extensively investigated research agenda in a number of disciplines, ranging from cultural to media studies. There appear to be basically two positions on how diaspora uses communications and information technology. One stance is that a diasporic community needs first to tame technology in general, to be able to feel at home in the host country. This position sees technology as part of the new hostile environment in which immigrants end up and has come to be defined as “domestication theory” (Silverstone and Hirsch). The other stance sees diasporic appropriations of technology in general and information and media technology in particular as providing the migrants at least some hold on an otherwise alien cultural environment, if not exactly facilitating the process of adaptation for them in the host land. One of the key proponents of the second position is the Indian-American cultural anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai. In his powerful essay titled “The Production of Locality,” Appadurai identifies and analyzes some of “the special problems that beset the production of locality in a world that has become deterritorialized ... diasporic, and transnational” (188). As “an aspect of social life,” “locality,” like home, is “variably realized” in what Appadurai calls “neighbourhood” (179). In the case of diaspora, the work of producing locality to a large extent entails constructing home or homeness in the spatiotemporal reality of the land it has adopted. For Appadurai, however, the most compelling point about the diasporic production of locality or home is “the role” played by “mass media, especially in its electronic forms” (194). In other words, what fascinates Appadurai about the work of imagination of diaspora, including the work of constructing home, is that it cannot but be heavily electronically mediated.

Of the two kinds of use of communication and information technology just outlined, Lahiri’s first-generation diasporic characters – both men and women – resort to the second sort: they appropriate electronic technologies with a view to managing the usually painful, though self-chosen, experience of displacement and playing down the devastating feeling of uncertainty in an unfamiliar cultural setting. The title of one of Lahiri’s early stories, “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine,” to begin with, is both a little deceptive and highly suggestive. It is deceptive in the sense that it foregrounds a fact about the character in the title that can hardly be accorded central importance in his life. On the other hand, its suggestiveness lies in its capacity to rouse the curiosity of the reader about the unstated things that happened when Mr. Pirzada came to dine. Now to move on to the story itself, Mr. Pirzada, a Bengali Muslim from Dhaka, is not a member of the Indian/South Asian diaspora in the United States in the true sense of the term. He is in America for a year, because “he [has] been awarded a grant from the government of Pakistan to study the foliage of New England” (24). Another important point about Mr. Pirzada is that he did not choose to become a temporary member of the Indian/South Asian diasporic community in Boston. It is rather an Indian family, “[i]n search of compatriots,” who “discovered Mr. Pirzada, and phoned him, and invited him to [their] home” (24). Mr. Pirzada’s advantage in accepting the friendship and hospitality of the narrator’s family, however, is two-fold. Not only does it allow him to speak “the same language” and enjoy “the

same jokes” and foods with the parents of Lilia, the ten-year-old narrator; it also provides him with the much needed technological means that allows him to keep himself updated on the developments in the war-torn East Pakistan in 1971 (25). In short, Mr. Pirzada often visits the Indian family as much to relish the Bengali/Indian dinner they treat him to as to watch the evening news on television in their “bright, carpeted living room” (24, 32).

With the postal service in disarray in East Pakistan, the national news at six-thirty on television is the only way Mr. Pirzada can connect with the place of his birth while in America. It is through this electronic media that Mr. Pirzada comes to know about the devastations the Pakistani army are daily causing to his soon-to-be liberated country. It is interesting to note here that Mr. Pirzada and his host do not appear to pay much attention when “the television [is] tuned to the local news” but when the national news starts the former watches it with “an immovable expression on his face” while the latter gets busy raising the volume and adjusting the antennas, clear indications of the amount of attention both pay to the news of home *only physically* left behind (28, 31). It is thus the availability of one of the most advanced information and media technologies of the 1970s in the household of his Indian friends that makes Mr. Pirzada visit them so often. The living room with the television set provides Mr. Pirzada with that cherished space where he along with his host can go about constructing a home away from home. Like his “silver watch without a band” which is “set to the local time in Dacca,” Mr. Pirzada belongs to a different spatiotemporal zone – one that obtains in East Pakistan, soon to emerge as independent Bangladesh (30).

The urgency with which Mr. Pirzada strives to stay in touch with his homeland, however, does not derive from any real or supposed threat posed by America to his cultural identity. He knows that he will have to go back home as soon as the term of his grant is over and that once he is back home, his former self would joyfully shake off whatever elements of American culture it has picked up in a year. But such is not the case of his Indian friends who have consciously chosen the US as their home. As members of the Indian/South Asian diasporic community based in Boston, they will not, to borrow from Stuart Hall and Vijay Mishra, return home (355, 2). Yet America is not what they mean by home. Home is over there – continents away. The narrator meticulously lists the things her parents miss in their adopted homeland:

The supermarket did not carry mustard oil, doctors did not make house calls, neighbors never dropped by without an invitation, and of these things, every so often, my parents complained. (24)

On the face of it, these are small disappointments. But the sharpness and frequency with which their absence is felt really originates from a deep-seated anxiety – an anxiety that has to do with the parents’ former Indian identity now threatened by its close proximity with the American way of life. The threat as well as the resulting worry multiplies when it comes to the upbringing of their daughter in an alien cultural environment. Lahiri dramatizes this unnerving diasporic tension by means of focusing on the way the narrator’s father reacts to what Lilia is taught at school. The father wonders what his daughter really learns at school and whether she studies history or geography there (26). He would be much pleased, one can safely assume, if the American schools taught their students Indian geography and history – subjects which obviously they do not. In such alienating and identity-destroying circumstances, the narrator’s parents (especially the father) adopt what one might call a conservative strategy of “cultural survival,” to go back to Appadurai: instead of coming forward to embrace American culture, they rather prefer to escape into a home constructed as a replica of the home left behind. Here too electronic technology plays a vital role (194).

As days go by, the flow of news from Dhaka shrinks, so much so that often “only a death toll [is] announced” on the news (34). This scarcity of news from home seems to rouse an inordinate passion in Mr. Pirzada and the narrator’s parents for creating in the latter’s household an ethos reminiscent of the one they associate with home over there. The work of imagining home is mediated here, among other things, by electronic technology:

After the television was shut off ... they joked, and told stories, and dipped biscuits in their tea ... Eventually I was sent upstairs to do my homework, but through the carpet I heard them as they drank more tea, and listened to cassettes of Kishore Kumar (34)

The case of Mrs. Sen in the story titled “Mrs. Sen’s” is rather more pathetic. Married to a university mathematics

professor, she finds life in America as confined as is a cage to an untamed bird. Although less nostalgic than her husband about India, Lilia's mother in the earlier story sees and appreciates at least some benefits of living in the US: she is both happy and proud for her daughter who in her judgment is "assured a safe life, an easy life, a fine education, every opportunity" (26). Childless, Mrs. Sen, however, does not have any such consolation. One just needs to pronounce the word "India" in her presence and she is (transported) there. Almost at the very outset of the story, she gives a memorable expression to her acute sense of displacement in a short, simple sentence: "Everything is there" (113). Even the silence of her neighborhood is so oppressive that she "cannot sometimes sleep in so much silence" (115).

Two things are overtly mentioned in the story that somewhat enliven Mrs. Sen's otherwise barren and unbearable existence in America. One is "the arrival of a letter from her family" (121) in India and the other is "fish from the seaside" (123). But there's a third, technology-dependent source of satisfying nostalgia for Mrs. Sen. There's a cassette player in the house on which she can play cassettes of *raga* music and "of people talking in her language," the latter being actually an audio recording of a "farewell" she was given by her family "the day [she] left India" (128). While getting a letter from India or fish from the seaside is irregular and uncertain, the cassette player is always at Mrs. Sen's disposal and she can play the cassettes whenever she feels homesick.

Some early readers of Lahiri's short fiction, especially *Interpreter of Maladies*, have argued that one of the means most often utilized by Lahiri's first-generation diasporic characters to mitigate their sense of exile in their adopted homeland is to continue cooking and eating their foods in the Indian way. In delineating "how Jhumpa Lahiri makes an effective use of food metaphor in *Interpreter of Maladies*," one such reader notes:

For immigrants and non-residents food certainly serves as an important part of their identity. When away from home the food from one's land brings as much pleasure as mother's voice on overseas calls. Food provides a link[;] it induces [...] a sense of belonging in an otherwise alien world. Food serves as a key to binding. (Choubey)

Although very true, the analogy of "food from one's land" providing as much pleasure as "mother's voice on overseas calls" suggests the other means that Lahiri's diasporic characters commonly resort to in their desperate attempt to construct home and a sense of belonging in their newly adopted home is information and media technology. Appropriating these technologies, they create a sheltered niche in their households where, to borrow from Salman Rushdie, their "imaginary homelands" can be kept from being invaded by the ones in which they have chosen to strike root (10).

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Colonial Separation and Identity in Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

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Abstract: Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* depicts how Aboriginal identity in Canada is destroyed by institutionalized racism, sexual abuse, separation from family and community, and by the forced abolition of Aboriginal culture and spirituality. The story is about two brothers, Gabriel and Jeremiah Okimasis, and their forced displacement from their family into the residential school where they are exposed to the colonial indoctrination and the crudeness of Catholicism. This paper will particularly focus on the character of Gabriel Okimasis and his experience in the residential school and ultimately how his Cree identity is shattered due to the colonial and Christian indoctrination. This study will also shed light on the issues of colonial separation and on the (re)creation of Cree identity, which is illustrated by Highway through Gabriel's death.

Gabriel Okimasis' troubles and abuses in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* result from his experiences at the Birch Lake Indian Residential School. The residential school is described by Deena Rymhs as "a place where an alien language is spoken, where [the Aboriginals'] superiors dress in strange vestments, and where both [Gabriel and Jeremiah] are victims of sexual acts difficult to name" (102). Within the walls of the school, while trying to syncretize his school experience with his Aboriginal tradition, Gabriel is abused through the forceful teaching of the Western ideas about his people and also through the sexual exploitation by the church people. The racism that many Aboriginal students experience at residential schools through a strong institutionalized format makes them feel abashed about their Aboriginal origin and subsequently due to the indoctrinated notion that they are savages as they are connected to the devil, they start to develop a kind of detestation about themselves and their race (Miller 205).

At residential schools, children get disconnected from their own culture due to the brutal racial teachings that demean the children taught to them by missionaries. According to Rymhs's application of Erving Goffman, the sociologist's work, the displacement of the Aboriginal people from their own homes to the residential schools is "a systematic 'mortification,' a stripping of the subject's former means of self-identification" (qtd. in Rymhs 103). This displacement is because children at residential schools face dual separation: firstly, they are separated from their homes which is a physical separation, and secondly, they are separated from the traditions, languages and cultures of their communities which is a psychological separation. This dual separation causes the loss of the children's identities. Being exposed to racist abuse and violence on their identity, the Aboriginal children run into "prolonged battle with alcohol ... [with] severe personal and family problems, until

[they] came to grips with the perverse teachings to which [they] had been exposed in residential school” (Miller 205). The forceful colonial teaching got intensified in the twentieth-century as there was a “growing emphasis . . . on the use of residential schools for orphans, children of broken or troubled homes, and youngsters whose behaviour could not be handled in day schools” (313). However, in residential schools the children had “no adult members of their immediate family to take interest in their treatment, or to whom [they] could complain about what they considered inadequate, neglectful, or abusive supervision” (314). Furthermore, there was no community or culture that could counter the racism and abuse that took place at the residential schools.

The sexual exploitation of Gabriel at the residential school, which is a “symbolic rape of Indigenous cultures by evangelical Christianity” (McKegney 159), is clearly a violent dispossession of his innocence by the Principal of the Church, Father Lafleur. This abuse is psychologically critical for him because it is “difficult for [him] to tell [his] famil[y] . . . [about the incident as in] many cases [the Aboriginal children] had been raised by Christianized parents to regard missionaries as holy people who were there to assist them” (Miller 336-37). It would be a point to note here how Highway takes the issue of Christianization in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Highway shows how Christianization plays a role in building a gap/wall between the parents and the sons and between the brothers as at one point Jeremiah tells Gabriel that “[e]ven if we told them [their parents], they would side with Father Lafleur” (Highway 92). The aftermath of a situation like sexual abuse is noted by J. R. Miller thus: “Children who were victimized usually had no means of defending themselves or getting help from others. The child-victims often had nowhere to take the anger and hurt they felt, and all too often victims responded by taking these emotions out on themselves” (337). This point of self-harm is also noted by Neal McLeod in his essay, “Spatial and Spiritual Exile.” He argues that “[t]he [education] process [at the residential schools] amounted to cultural genocide. Once put away, in both a spiritual and a spatial sense, many children never come ‘home.’ Instead, they spent their lives ensnared in alcoholism and other destructive behaviours” (58).

Highway’s focus on Cree spirituality in the novel throws light on Gabriel’s identity. To Gabriel, this identity (reality) is based on his sexual and cultural abuses at the residential school. Gabriel becomes addicted to drugs and dangerous sexual behaviors and as a result suffers from serious health hazards. It could be argued that his addiction to drugs and dangerous sexual activities are the result of his failed attempt to reconstruct a dignifying image of himself following his experience of sexual abuse at the residential school and in his own terms to find himself in a situation where he can assume and think of himself as the controller of his behaviors. The idea that Gabriel might be trying to control his own body by transforming the sexual abuses through his dangerous sexual activities corroborates Henderson’s insight on sexual practices on individual behavior: “Sexual practices with an overtly performative dimension that risk the repetition of scenes of sexual abuse through, for example, relations of dominance and submission, set in motion the power of ritualized repetition to effect differentiations and to transform earlier scenes of violence” (189). Being an active participant in sexual encounters, Gabriel is now with a sexual identity which signifies his celebration of his body as alive as he says to Jeremiah at one point that “[a]t least my body is still alive” (Highway 207). His liveliness is also noticed by Sylvie Vranckx who in “The Ambivalence of Cultural Syncreticity in Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Van Camp’s *The Lesser Blessed*” notes that “[Gabriel] takes advantage of his new lifestyle to emancipate himself from his fundamentalist Catholic upbringing, to understand the colonial process, and to learn about Native spiritualities” (294). So, Gabriel searches the meaning of certain complexities that deter the Aboriginal people from understating the meaning of their own identities.

In a sense, Gabriel’s sexual behavior is a kind of paradox as it is self-inflicted but at the same time it is what keeps him feeling alive. In the sexual encounters, usually he is the seducer and his awareness of being the seducer makes “Gabriel Okimasis to know the mouth-watering Father Vincent Connolly in a way that had him yodelling ‘weeks’chilooowew!’ by nine that evening” (Highway 185). His upper hand in the sexual encounters, although dangerous, gives him a kind of space to handle his sexual abuse and the trauma he has experienced at the residential school, and also makes him the controller of his sexuality. Henderson in “‘Something not Unlike Enjoyment’: Gothicism, Catholicism, and Sexuality in Tomson Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen*” reads Gabriel’s violent sexual behavior as a counter of the trauma he has suffered in school: “[W]hile Gabriel’s adult sexuality is indeed framed in terms of repetition, this repetition is more creative than compulsive. It is much less about repression that it is about the fetish as a vehicle for sexual activity that attempts to counter victimization and loss

of memory” (191). But his dangerous sexual encounters result in his contraction of HIV and he dies eventually without being recuperated from the abused experience. Yet, one question we have to ask given Gabriel’s irremediable experience is whether Highway uses Gabriel to advance a notion that sexually abused residential school students lack the capacity to be healed, redeemed and reunited with their communities.

Gabriel’s incapability to reunite his identity and his culture is questionable as it could be argued that through his death Gabriel really attains Cree spirituality. Although it could be argued that like Jeremiah, Gabriel is not successful in transcending his trauma to be reconnected to the Aboriginal culture and community, Gabriel’s curiosity for Aboriginal community and culture is noticeable all through the novel. He is found speaking in Cree language while staging Catholic plays. His strong position for Cree spiritual beliefs subverts Catholicism, and his eagerness to learn the Aboriginal cultural history is an indication of his desire for a strong tie to his community and culture. However, it could be argued that he finds it difficult to communicate with his parents, but again there is no word for ballet dancer or AIDS in Cree. So, Gabriel’s death could be indicative of a notion that there could be some abuses literally almost impossible to get over, but what about Gabriel’s attained spirituality at the end of the novel? Does his spirituality not reveal that an understanding of the colonial forces and the shocking impacts could help construe Cree culture more successfully? And has Jeremiah received nothing from Gabriel’s death, at least in relation to the future teaching about the sufferings of the Aboriginal people?

The character of Gabriel can be associated with Weetigo, which is usually a fearful spirit in Cree culture. The way Gabriel’s character represents Weetigo is a bit complex, because in the novel he is not found hurting others in the community as Weetigo often does. Instead, Highway shows how Gabriel receives Weetigo as a damaging force to himself. Nevertheless, Gabriel does not stop his sexual activity even after his HIV diagnosis and at this point it could be argued that he is hurting other people in the community and he is doing that consciously as he knows about the disease. Yet, his act could be explained as an act of his addiction since he has been with such addiction for so long as a way to escape from the mental trauma of his residential school experience. Although we can further ask whether this seemingly intentional act of infecting others with HIV poses an active violence or not from Gabriel, the point of avoiding trauma however does confuse the argument and to some extent dismisses it as a potentially active violence. Gabriel’s resemblance to Weetigo results from his traumatic experience with the colonial forces like the residential school and also from the sexual abuse he is exposed to at the school. So, Gabriel’s identity is necessarily grounded on the traumatic Aboriginal identity inflicted upon him by colonialism on dual levels: individual and societal. It is predictable that a lot of people who are forced to go to the residential schools have been abused and are unable to overcome the abasement they have suffered all through their lives. Highway’s Gabriel is a personification of the negativities of the legacy of residential schools on Aboriginal peoples, their identities and their communities.

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Weetigo is associated with Catholicism at least from a symbolic perspective. Cynthia Sugars in her article “Weetigos and Weasels: Tomson Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and Canadian Postcolonialism” argues that “an encounter with the Weetigo functions as a metaphor for self-knowledge” (78). Yet, by extending Sugars’ “metaphor for self-knowledge,” Highway might have projected the Weetigo with its connections to the priests. Sexual abuses in the novel signify the violent abuse of Gabriel and Jeremiah, inflicted by the colonial system of the Catholic Church. So, in the novel, Weetigo as a sign of colonial institution embodies a threat to Aboriginal communities, by exploiting the volatile situation that it has engineered in the communities to its own colonial advantages. In the novel, the first missionaries appear in Eemanipitipitat at a time of famine and it is at that time an individual is seen to become a Weetigo and is threatening the community. Gabriel’s unhealthy sexual behaviors which ultimately cause his death could be a manifestation of Weetigo illness. His uncontrollable desire for sex matches with the Weetigo’s unquenchable and damaging hunger for flesh (Sugars 79). According to Rock Cree mythology, the Weetigo feeds on its own body; in like manner, Gabriel is also found representing the same inclination of self-damage through his dangerous sexual desires.

The association between the Catholic Church and the Weetigo is evident throughout the novel. When Gabriel consumes “the raw meat dangling from [the priest’s] fingers ... [a]nd savoured the dripping blood as it hit his tongue” (Highway 181), he bursts into laughter at a pun “so ludicrous, the sham so extreme” (181). This might be an example of Gabriel’s resistance to Catholic shows in church in front of the priest as the “dripping blood” and

“raw meat” could be symbols of cannibalism and could be connected to the cannibalism related to the Weetigo. Highway here is scathing enough to regard religion as cruel/brutal and thus further establishes more strongly the connection between the Catholic Church and the Weetigo. Through Gabriel’s thoughts on war that “[e]very war in the history of the world has had religion at its root” (183) and on “those guys who beat their wives while the host is still melting on their tongues” (183), Highway shows the hypocrisy of Catholicism. It seems that Gabriel is totally informed about the violent nature of the Catholic religion as he regards the cross as “an instrument of torture” (184) and challenges “Christianity [that] asks people to eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood ... eating human flesh, that’s cannibalism” (184). Through this connection between the Weetigo and the Catholic Church and Gabriel’s self-inflicted sexual behavior, Highway shows how the Christian religion affects Cree identity, culture, and community and how difficult it is to disrupt such effects.

The sexual abuse Gabriel suffers at the hands of the priest is cannibalistic in nature as the priest is “the Weetigo feasting on human flesh” (Highway 79). Gabriel could also be identified with another feature of Weetigo, that is, the sexual identity, which is apparently connected to his experiences at the residential school. At the residential school, Gabriel understands the relationship between pleasure and pain which might have shaped his sexual experiences as Highway comments thus: “‘Bleed!’ a little voice inside of Gabriel had cried. ‘Bleed! Bleed!’ He wasn’t going to cry. No sir! If anything, he was going to fall down on his knees before this man and tell him he had come face to face with God, so pleasurable were the blows” (Highway 85). About this connection, Henderson argues that “Gabriel’s intention to express pleasure may be a planned ruse, a means of resisting a punishment that seeks to weaken him. However, at the same time there is the suggestion that he has learned this complex posture of agential masochism through an identification with Jesus” (185-86). Gabriel is always prone to play the role of Jesus in the novel. Nevertheless, his role play as a Catholic figure in showing sorrow and pain is problematic as he often uses Cree language and song like “*Kimoosoom chimasoo*” (Highway 85) to register his resistance against Catholicism. Henderson notes that it is such resistance from Gabriel that results in his sentences and enjoyments eventually merging “the distinction between Gabriel’s spirit of revolt and his enjoyment of a pleasure that is predicated on the very prohibitions he rebels against” (186).

Gabriel connects sexuality with Jesus/the cross and Catholicism just after his sexual encounter with Father Lafleur when the “naked Jesus Christ ... rub[s] his body against the child’s lips, over and over and over again” (Highway 78). Moreover, this sexual encounter could indicate a connection between the cross and the Weetigo as Highway says:

And the body of the caribou hunter’s son was eaten, tongues writhing serpent-like around his own, breath mingling with his, his orifices punctured and repunctured, as with nails. And through it all, somewhere in the furthest reaches of his senses, the silver cross oozed in and out, in and out, the naked body pressing on his lips, positioning itself for entry. Until, upon the buds that lined his tongue, warm honey flowed like river water over granite. (168-9)

Here, the image of the cross and Christ’s “body pressing on his lips” signify the damaging characteristics of such sexual encounters. Gabriel’s sexual abuse positions him as a sacrificial victim of colonialism and residential schooling as Rubelise da Cunha argues thus: “Although living [Gabriel’s] homosexuality also represents a choice to overcome the trauma of sexual abuse, his masochistic experiences, which lead him into prostitution and self-destruction, point to the negative consequences of the violence undergone at residential school” (108). It is true that Gabriel’s dangerous sexual encounters result in HIV infection and eventually he dies, yet, his death could signify that the ones who are exposed to sexual abuse at residential schools get traumatized and it is not easy to overcome those traumatic experiences. But, Gabriel enters into the spiritual territory with the help of the Fur Queen – the spiritual guide of Gabriel and Jeremiah, although he is physically dead. His death “challenges the idea of defeat, since dying contradictorily brings promises of survival” (Cunha 101). It is important to note here that although Gabriel is connected to Weetigo, and Jesus/Catholicism, he is finally, especially after his death, identified with his Aboriginal ancestral spirituality. He is not in the promised Catholic heaven but rather in the Cree spiritual community where he reunites himself with his Cree community and culture. Through the long struggles related to identity, sexuality, self-inflictive behaviors of Gabriel, Highway shows how a real sustainable identity could be created, and what is important in Gabriel is his celebration of his body and life even through dangerous sexuality and dancing.

The Aboriginal community's refusal of Gabriel has its root in the community's conceptualization of sexuality and gender based on a Western perspective. The Western ideology of gender and sexuality is traced out as a problem by Wendy Person who in the essay, "How Queer Native Narratives Interrogate Colonialist Discourses," argues that "[t]he imposition of a foreign system of understating sex/gender and sexuality has threatened the most intimate levels of First Nations lives" (179). About this connection, Sam McKegney in "From Trickster Poetics to Transgressive Politics: Substantiating Survivance in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*" argues that "[b]y initially failing to break out of the ideological system imposed on them by the forces of evangelical Christianity, the brothers are not yet able to unlock the empowering capacity of traditional Cree thought" (166). How the Aboriginal communities act on Western ideas and consequently harm their own people and communities can be found in the treatment of Gabriel by the Aboriginal communities in the *Wasaychigan Hill Pow Wow*. There, Gabriel is not only dismissed by his community as homosexual, but also his brother Jeremiah feels "embarrassed to be caught in cahoots with a pervert, a man who fucked other men ... [o]n an Indian reserve, a Catholic reserve" (Highway 250). The community's and Jeremiah's reactions to Gabriel could be the result of the erosion of the Aboriginal spirituality due to the exposition to the Western belief systems which is done through the institutionalized oppression of the Catholic Church.

Gabriel is dismissed by the Aboriginal community due to not complying with the proper gender roles (culturally constructed through the Western ideas) of masculinity and femininity. He is disliked perhaps due to his feminine characteristics which could be seen in his ballet dancing and sexual encounters. And Highway shows how misogyny when imposed by the systematic oppression of colonialism could destroy the Aboriginal communities as Highway traces terror in the eyes of the men in the novel: "The fact that the flesh of the mother had formed their flesh, female blood ran thick inside their veins ... Terror that the emotion of a woman, the spirit of a woman, lived inside them" (Highway 251). The problem is that these Aboriginal men are offered the conceptualization of "femininity without reference to either Cree or Ojibway traditional teachings" (McKegney 169), and Highway indicates that this kind of conceptualization takes place due to the adherence to the Western perspective of sexuality and gender, and so the problem (which might raise the identity problem of the Aboriginal) lies within the home, and within the community as well. So, in that sense, Gabriel's death also signifies the failure of community. Healing does not necessarily lie on individual effort; it also needs support from the community one belongs to, whereas in Gabriel's case the Aboriginal community fails to provide the help necessary for his recovery from the abuse he experiences at the residential school. However, Gabriel's death could be a guidance for Jeremiah to reflect upon the impacts of colonization on his community and on his community's failures to heal the abuse of its children. He realizes that it is difficult to unlearn the colonially imposed misogyny in the Aboriginal peoples' efforts to (re)create their identities without accepting the significance of the feminine in Cree spirituality and Cree culture.

Gabriel as "the sacrificial victim" (Cunha 107) of colonialism must die in order to show Jeremiah and other Aboriginals a way out from the impacts of colonialism on their lives, in order for them to live freely with the renewal/recovery of their Cree cultures and traditions as Cunha notes, "Gabriel's sacrificial death ... [like] Jesus' crucifixion [shows how] to save humans from their sins" (112). Highway depicts Gabriel's illness as not only an individual illness but also the community's illness, and in order for the community to recreate and reclaim their Cree culture which in turn will help them to own their identities, they should know how to heal their illness and counter their colonial legacies. Highway's story is ultimately optimistic and that is why the *Fur Queen* – the Weesageechak – helps Gabriel to enter into the spiritual realm, casting off the Weetigo where the possibility of the (re)creation of a Cree tradition is envisioned. However, this possibility is not without complexity as Diana Brydon observes thus: "[it is] an invitation to complicity, an ironic acknowledgement of doubleness. The priest and his God have been outwitted. Cree perspectives survive, but in *reconstituted* and *ambiguous* forms" (emphasis added, 21). However, as Cunha puts it, "[this] ironic message of doubleness ... shows that Cree knowledge can survive in Canadian culture [although that could be] through *adaptation*" (emphasis added, 112). And I think that the issues of reconstitution and ambiguity that Brydon is concerned with and adaptation that Cunha mentions could be understood if we look into the reasons for Gabriel's entrance and acceptance into the Cree spirituality after his death. He is not refused in the Cree's spiritual world because his ancestors might have not recognized the issues of gender and sexuality according to the Western understanding, and here it might also

be argued that the spiritual realm has accepted his perceived femininity which is refused by the Aboriginal community while he is alive.

Gabriel's death is not only a loss but also a lesson for the Aboriginal people. His death is symbolic of how the failure of communal ideals to responsibly heal its damaged children could lead to tragic consequences of loss. Gabriel's death however becomes a lesson for the community to meditate upon the problems facing it as a result of its past and present colonial subjugation. Gabriel's death, like a messianic symbol, is powerful. Highway's epigraph from Squamish is insightful on this point: "For the dead are not powerless," and surely Gabriel's death has something to teach Aboriginal people regarding how to counter the forces of colonization that continue to subdue them. At the same time, his death teaches them how to recognize the impacts of the forces within the community. As Cunha notes, "[a]lthough he dies, the trickster Fur Queen works as a magic weapon that makes his death not an end, but a sacrificial rite to defeat the evils of colonialism" (110). The optimism by the end of the story is also noted by Brydon who argues that "the novel must be read as a complex engagement with personal and social history, an engagement that locates the personal experience within a specific colonial context, and that seeks to carry the force of that personal anguish back into the public sphere to find appropriate forms of redress and progress" (23). So, Gabriel's death signifies a renaissance for his people to re-engage their identity as Aboriginal peoples. Jeremiah realizes this need thus: "'There's a man dying in here!' ... We're Indians! We have a right to conduct our own religious ceremonies, just like everyone else!" (305), which is a sign of his renewed understanding of Cree identity and ritual.

Gabriel's death in part is the result of the sexual abuse he has experienced at the residential school and also due to his separation from and refusal by the community he belongs to. He turns the abuses onto himself and fails to recover his Aboriginal identity due to the traumatic experience he has been exposed to at the residential school. His self-damaging sexual behaviors lead him into the abyss of his traumatic past, away from his people's therapeutic spiritual heritage. Yet, what he fails to find in life, he finds in his death. Even though his community rejects him, the community's spirit finds and heals him in death. However, Highway, through Gabriel's death, shows the different layers of complexities that exist within Aboriginal communities and he advocates for a community rather than individual effort to engage the ailing trauma that besets members of Aboriginal communities and to get the Aboriginal identity recreated, reinvented and reconstituted.

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The Theme of Duality and Epiphanic Moments in the Works of Emily Brontë

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Abstract: "Navigating through Dublin in 1904, Dickens would have lost his way, but trying to read Ulysses, he would have thought he had lost his mind," (3) says Stephen Kern while distinguishing between Victorian writers and the modernists. He further adds, "Modernism is about a new way of interpreting the world more than the substance of that world" (3). Little wonder that while looking at the realist novels of H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy, and Arnold Bennett, Virginia Woolf ponders over the purpose of their characters. She admits that their novels are well-made, and yet she accuses them of "making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring" (Common Reader 210). Rather than branding something as tragic or comic, Woolf's focus is on an artist's capability of making life appear as it truly is, as she proposes with Emily Brontë's characters that are filled with "such a gust of life that they transcend reality" (227). Using Woolf's argument as the basis, I argue that in both her novel and poems Emily Brontë depicts that spirit of transcendence that aligns her with modernist writers. The nature of Emily's power lies in her ability to thematize the metaphor of duality. In both her poetic works and novel she explores the dualistic aspects of life as fundamental. For her it was not a matter of choice, and she embraced both as can be seen through the struggles of her characters who continually strive to find a gap between love and the self. The sense of duality that is introduced in the Gondal poems is explored in a much more complex manner in Wuthering Heights, and Brontë "saw these dualities as cosmic" (Chitham 203). This paper examines some of the motifs of Emily Brontë's art that I would claim make her a precursor to the Modernists.

For as men have found themselves putting less and less trust in the truths and absolutes of the past, they have more and more come to stress the trivia of existence. They have sought meaning in what they could see, all around them, in the apparently inconsequential objects and events of everyday life.

(Morris Beja, *Epiphany in the Modern Novel* 17)

Emily Brontë has been mostly identified as a writer following the Romantic and Gothic traditions. It is only since the late nineteenth eighties that critics like Lyn Pykett and U.C. Knoepfelmacher have often alluded to the modernist aspects in Brontë's writing, even though the first person to note the quality of transcending reality in her writing is Virginia Woolf who also criticized her contemporary writers like John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett for "making the trivial and the

transitory appear the true and the enduring” (*Common Reader* 210). A good story, of course, is supposed to be a well-made story leaving a lasting impression on a reader, but when dealing with literature, the early twentieth-century modernists had something very specific in mind. Stephen Kern observes the difference between Victorian writers and the modernists succinctly: “Navigating through Dublin in 1904, Dickens would have lost his way, but trying to read *Ulysses*, he would have thought he had lost his mind” (3). While explaining her rationales on the philosophy of her peers, Woolf refers to James Joyce, who is “concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain” (*Common* 214). Once again this is an allusion to Joyce’s moments of epiphany. Rather than branding something as tragic or comic, Woolf focuses on an artist’s capability of making life appear as it truly is, by which she does not imply that life should be sketched literally, engaging in trivial details of everyday life. What she means is that a particular moment of reality should be able to capture the significance of an entire lifetime.

For Woolf, Emily Brontë’s characters are filled with “such a gust of life that they transcend reality” (*Common* 227). Heathcliff may not behave like any regular farm-boy in real life, says Woolf, but his existence is more vivid than any such other character in literature (*Common* 226). In *Women and Writing* Woolf furthermore suggests a kind of “power” behind the creation of *Wuthering Heights*, “underlying the apparitions of human nature and lifting them up into the presence of greatness” (131). In this paper I argue that in both her novel and poems Emily Brontë depicts that spirit of transcendence that aligns her with modernist writers. The nature of Brontë’s power lies in her ability to thematize the metaphor of duality.

Edward Chitham observes that Brontë poses “contradictory thoughts or feelings in adjacent poems” (202), notably seen in her treatment of life after death. Many of Brontë’s poems dwell on varying human emotions and conditions, and on the transient and ever-shifting human mind and life. In the Gondal collection, the poem “At such a time, in such a spot,” A.G.A., or Augusta Geraldine Almeda cries out in anguish for the inconsistency of love:

O could it thus forever be
That I might so adore
I’d ask for all eternity,
To make a paradise for me,
My love – and nothing more! (137. 42–46)

She laments not because her lover has betrayed her, but because she knows that the love she feels for Alfred Sidonia is only a fleeting passion. She has had lovers before Sidonia and when the time comes, he will be gone just as Lord Elbë or others before him went. This poem, however, shows Augusta’s deep understanding of the transitory emotions of life, her wishful longing for a static stage, but more important, her acceptance of life as it is.

This spirit is once again echoed in “There shines the moon,” when Augusta comes back to visit the grave of her first love, Lord Elbë:

How wildly time has altered me!
Am I the being who long ago
Sat watching by that water side
The light of light expiring slow
From his fair cheek and brow of pride? (9. 16–20)

More than mourning her lover, in these lines Augusta regrets the time lost and the changes incurred in her life. Just as Elbë had predicted, she has moved with glorious prospects of a new life. Though her story is not fully revealed in the fragmentary pieces of the Gondal saga, it is clear that through time and experience she transforms from a young inexperienced woman into a seasoned politician and pitiless lover. However, at heart, she is also a poet and philosopher, much more than the mere licentious and thoughtless monarch she is often accused of being. Critics like Chitham and Pykett have noted that this sense of duality introduced in the Gondal poems is explored in a much more complex manner in *Wuthering Heights*, and Brontë “saw these dualities as cosmic” (*Life* 203). This dualistic aspect of life was not a matter of choice, as is evident in her work where she makes a conscious effort to embrace both.

The famous back-kitchen is one of those rare momentous occasions when Emily Brontë interposes her idea of dualism in life with the complex web of possibilities. Catherine Earnshaw, the heroine of *Wuthering Heights*, tells Nelly that she has accepted Edgar Linton's marriage proposal, but feels that it is not the correct decision: "In whichever place the soul lives – in my soul, and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong" (62). She further asserts, "I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven" (63). Yet while she admits that she and Heathcliff are made out of the same material and Edgar completely different, she still chooses to marry the latter because he is rich and handsome, and because it would shame her to marry Heathcliff in his degraded situation. On the one hand, she claims that she will not be happy even in heaven being separated from Heathcliff and *Wuthering Heights*, and on the other, she makes the conscious choice to leave them both behind to be the mistress of Thrushcross Grange. It throws light on the two minds of Catherine – a mind that loves unflinchingly, and another that surrenders to the demands and expectations of society, and succumbs to the allures of a comfortable life.

Moreover, since there is no direct way of doing what she does, she chooses to be diplomatic, and sure enough, Nelly accuses Catherine of duplicity for not "show[ing] her rough side in their [Lintons'] company" (52), and displaying a sweet and sunny aspect. Clearly, Nelly refuses to acknowledge that the sweetness in Catherine is also an essential part of her nature. When she gets her way, she feels content and is willing to make others happy, as it happens when Edgar allows her to be friends with Heathcliff after his return:

Mr. Linton had not only abjured his peevishness (though his spirits seemed still subdued by Catherine's exuberance of vivacity), but he ventured no objection to her taking Isabella with her to *Wuthering Heights* in the afternoon; and she rewarded him with such a summer of sweetness and affections in return, as made the house a paradise for several days; both master and servants profiting from the perpetual sunshine. (79)

She is an elemental being who wishes to see the world happy with her own happiness and unhappy when she is disturbed.

In some ways Catherine's struggles to become a lady are similar to Jane Eyre's efforts to move from a peripheral space to a central one. The significant difference is that Jane is never really bought into the frivolous and fashionable world that Rochester associates with while the young Catherine is smitten with it. Hence she cannot retain her gypsy ways, run wild on the moors, or mention her preference for Heathcliff in "civilized" company. In her ardent wish for advancing herself in social circles, Catherine becomes devious and what Nelly terms as deceitful. When Nelly warns her of the impending separation between her and Heathcliff if she chooses Edgar, she retorts vehemently: "Who is to separate us, pray? They'll meet the fate of Milo! ... I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded!" (64). When she tells Nelly of her resolution, she is absolutely certain of her own power over the two men and the course of her life. But slowly it dawns on her that the price of becoming Mrs. Linton is to give up her identity of Catherine Earnshaw, the girl who claimed to love Heathcliff more than herself. In her social craving to become Mrs. Edgar Linton she deserts her other self; but again during her illness when she tells her husband to bury her by the moors, for once she chooses her rightful place – the peripheral space beyond polite society and its imperatives.

The ambiguous attitudes and dual aspects are reflected through the different perspectives of Edgar and Heathcliff, and Lockwood and Nelly too, one viewpoint not necessarily negating the other. For Emily these dualities actually capture the essential nature of the world. So, while Edgar can dream of a peaceful reunion with his Catherine when he dies, Heathcliff can still claim that his Cathy's spirit roamed on earth to be mated with him. After her death neither of the two men can stand the sight of the other because they continue to blame one another for the loss of the woman they both loved. Their lives are wasted in totally different ways: while one becomes a hermit, resigning from public service, the other becomes a ghoulish, vengeful soul committing each of his days to plotting to make his enemies suffer. The essential dissimilarity between two such worlds is expressed by young Cathy when she tells Nelly how differently she and young Linton Heathcliff feel about spending a happy day:

He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about the bloom, and the larks singing high up over head, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. . . . Mine was rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright, white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throistles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring their hearts out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool, dusky dells; but close by, great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy. He wanted all to lie in an ecstasy of peace; I wanted all to sparkle, and dance in a glorious jubilee.

I said his heaven would only be half alive, and he said mine would be drunk; I said I should fall asleep in his, and he said he could not breathe in mine. (189-90)

A cautious reader would invariably remember the differences Nelly pointed out between young Catherine and Heathcliff, and the Linton children. While the children of *Wuthering Heights* roam in thunder and storm upon the heath, the children of Thrushcross Grange play with poodles in an opulently decorated parlor. Consequently, while young Cathy and Linton argue over the best option (to which there is no wrong answer), the question we have on hand is whether such differences can coexist, and if such attractions can be sustained.

The idea of such a gap or space is indeed disturbing and enforces the multi-faceted aspects of life in *Wuthering Heights*, and the most interesting of these gaps is the one lying between the narration and the actual story. Maggie Berg observes that in *Wuthering Heights* the most important location is “neither inside nor outside, but that highly-charged and ambiguous space in between” (24). With Brontë’s narrative technique it almost seems as if she tests her readers’ intelligence and understanding of what they see and read. As Woolf notes after her reading of *Wuthering Heights*, “words are not bricks, and reading is not seeing” (*The Second Common Reader* 235). Just as many of the important events happen in marginal spaces, there are also occurrences that might be reported in different ways. Catherine’s use of the Bible as her diary and the writings in between the tomes are suggestive of her moving into a space denying her entry at the forefront. Berg sees her writing in the margins of revered revealed texts as “Catherine’s repression by patriarchal society,” while also representing her rebellion against that establishment (24).

In *Modernism and the Ordinary*, Liesl Olson perceives how modernist trends made deliberate attempts to move away from Victorian realism and naturalism to attain an “aesthetic of self-conscious interiority” (3). These extraordinary moments concentrate not so much on the difficulties one faces at a social or external level, but an awareness of the self, or as an understanding of the workings of individual minds and an ability of understanding beyond the surface. Strictly speaking, however, epiphany is not a conception invented by the modernists. In his *Prelude* William Wordsworth refers to “spots of time,” which he explains as a process of the elevation of the ordinary through the use of imaginative powers when past experiences affect the person in question in the present. The focus is not so much on the actual event, but the influence it has on the mind of the poet. Another Romantic poet who was much concerned with spots of time is Shelley. It is from Shelley’s comments in “A Defence of Poetry” on the transitoriness of poetic inspiration that Joyce drew his image of the “fading coal” to refer to the state of mind during the “mysterious instant” of *claritas*— that is, the moment of epiphany (*Portrait* 231). The Modernist idea of epiphany, or moment of being, of course, is somewhat different from the Romantic notion of spots of time, as Virginia Woolf attempts to explain in *The Second Common Reader*: “the rapid passage of events and actions; the slow opening up of single and solemn moments of concentrated emotion” – two levels which are recorded, respectively, by “smooth narrative” and passages in which “time stands still” (139).

Not surprisingly, Olson sees these moments as revealing “an awareness of the self, a coming into being of the individual, and an opening up of interior states of knowing” (3). For the modernists, such moments of revelation may occur anywhere; unlike the Romantics it does not necessarily involve nature and solitude. Joyce uses epiphany to capture a phase when a character realizes that one particular moment of life is more real than the rest of all that has been. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, for example, Stephen Dedalus sees this young

woman standing midstream gazing out to sea. She holds her skirts high displaying her legs and he experiences a strange sense of intense joy and feels that his life is forever changed. Later on he identifies this moment as a calling to be an artist. The chapter ends beautifully only to reopen in the next with “his third cup of watery tea,” a “box of pawn tickets,” and “the lid of the box, speckled with lousemarks” (188). Most often epiphanic moments in the Joycean world drown in the triviality of everyday activities, and do not really alter the course of everyday events. And as Robert Langbaum observes, “epiphanies are sometimes negative – insights into the abyss” (339). It is indeed a point of argument if epiphanies actually help in making life easier, or they make one question the various gaps one encounters between idealization and reality.

In *Wuthering Heights*, an epiphanic conviction erupts from the mouth of Catherine Earnshaw as she tries to explain to Nelly the nature of her feelings for Heathcliff:

I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be, an existence of yours beyond you. ... If all else perished and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem part of it. (64)

In that one moment of baring her soul, the selfish, whimsical, and arrogant Miss Earnshaw shows an understanding of love and human capacity that elevates her to a level above the ordinary. Moreover, such a proclamation comes from a sixteen-year-old girl growing up in a Yorkshire farmhouse, whose education to a certain degree is sketchy in the traditional sense. As far as the novel portrays, she is hardly seen reading, and actually has a disdain for books, and therefore, we may assume that her understanding comes from her assimilation of life around her and a lasting attachment to Heathcliff. And yet she does show a self that is capable of feeling deeply and looking beyond polite conversation, domestic activities, child-care, and romance. However, in spite of such a deep understanding, she fails to sustain it in the real world. A deeper understanding of the mechanics of the universe does not alter anything significantly in Brontë’s world. Catherine herself distinguishes between the two loves of her life, the romantic love she feels for Edgar and the elemental love she has for Heathcliff. For her both of these loves are real and impossible to choose between. Unfortunately for her, she is faced with that choice, and thereafter steps into the limbo she tells Nelly about.

The modernist epiphany mostly operates at a present moment when the person is overcome with a sudden jolt of realization. For both Joyce and Woolf it is often grotesque and bizarre, taking place in the middle of nowhere and affecting no one else but a particular mind. It is as Ashton Nichols states:

The open-ended nature of the concept derives from the fact that a central aspect of epiphany occurs in the reader. ... There is no need to demand any absolute truth or falsify from experience. Our judgment is suspended while we receive a description of a mental event. The literary epiphany becomes one way of deriving meaning from experience in the modern world. (32)

Reclaiming Morris Beja, Nichols’ idea reinforces the fact that there is no ultimate truth in the modern world. The trend is to look at things from various perspectives, and decipher their meanings and hidden implications. That brings us back to the multitudinous interpretations of the same event offered by different characters in Brontë’s novel.

According to Thomas Linehan, modern life is characterized by “an overwhelming and disconcerting sense of the transient, fleeting, ephemeral, contingent, and fragmentary” (11). The task of the modern being is to navigate through that ever-changing world and try to make sense of it all. In Brontë’s poetry and novel Woolf observes a disturbing universe that is “half thwarted but of super conviction, to say something through the mouths of her characters which is not merely ‘I love’ or ‘I hate,’ but ‘we, the whole human race’ and ‘you, the eternal powers ...’” (*Common* 225).

John Cooper thinks that because there is little exercise of precise verbal expression of such emotions in *Wuthering Heights*, they find outlets through “exaggeration, hysteria, and the combustible energies we see pent-up in the preverbal world of the infant or in the internalized antagonism, frustration, and self-loathing in the thwarted or the limitless rages of the oppressed” (134). Such expressions are rare in Victorian novels, but in

modernist writings manifestations of this type are not unusual at all. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* demonstrates behavior that can only be termed as eccentric. The strange death of Fresleven over some chickens, or dying Kurtz crawling out into the bushes at the dead of night can hardly be explained in rational terms. Kurtz himself is an epitome of all these complexities that Cooper refers to. The difference between Brontë's novel and Conrad's is that whereas the latter stands as a pioneer of modernist complexities and ambiguities, the former is looked upon as an anomaly among Victorian writers, a "sphinx," as Clement Shorter long ago called her (144), whose secrets have never been fully understood.

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Allen Ginsberg's Blake Vision

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Abstract: Allen Ginsberg famously had an auditory hallucination after reading William Blake's "Ah Sunflower," "Little Girl Lost," and "Sick Rose." He was at Columbia University when he had this "Blake Vision" in the 1940s. Around this time, he befriended William S. Burroughs, Neal Cassady, and Jack Kerouac and started a poetic circuit called "New Vision." Members of this group eventually contributed to the emergence of the Beat movement. The purpose of this paper is to identify the mutual influence of these writers who eventually forged a community and looked for new poetic language and expression. While Ginsberg's interaction with the San Francisco based poets was real, his attachment with Blake remained imaginary. The paper purports to show how Ginsberg appropriated the Romantic Blake as well as negotiated with an intellectual community in his pursuit of "true art." In other words, the paper revisits the theme of language, literature and community keeping Blake and Ginsberg at its focus.

On a hot summer day in 1948, the 22-year-old Allen Ginsberg experienced an "auditory hallucination." He was in his apartment in Harlem, where, by his own admission, he masturbated with Blake's book *Songs* open to the page of "Ah Sunflower." Soon afterwards, he heard Blake reading the poem to him in a "deep ancestral voice" (Ball 15). He looked out of his window, and found everything was *light*. He felt the existence of the creator outside his window and realized how his creator loved him as a son. Ginsberg noticed everywhere an "evidence of a living hand, even in the arrangement of bricks, and he was aware that each brick had been placed there by someone, that people had built the entire vast city, placing each stone and each cornice and window frame" (Miles 100). In the next few minutes, Ginsberg heard Blake reading two more poems to him: "The Sick Rose" and "The Little Girl Lost." Then on the following day when he went to Columbia bookstore, he noticed "marks of woe" in every face that he glanced upon just like Blake did in his "London" (Miles 103).

Ginsberg has talked about this "Blake Vision" in many of his interviews, classroom lectures, and almost all his biographies mention this momentous incident. Inspired by this "Blake Vision," Ginsberg wrote nine poems: "Vision 1948," "East Harlem 1948," "A Very Dove," "Do We Understand Each Other," "The Voice of Rock," "A Western Ballad," "On Reading William Blake's Sick Rose," and two untitled ones (Portugues 28). In "Vision 1948," he envisions a Faustian pact with Blake. He urges the "dread spirit" (l.1) to "dance, dance, spirit, spirit, dance" (l.14). Almost in a Shelleyan undertone, Ginsberg writes: "Hear thou my plea, at last reply/ To my impotent pen" (ll.3-4).

Instead of a lyre set to tune by the West Wind, though, we have the “spiritual scream” of the saxophone, as Ginsberg “shudder(s) with intelligence” (l.23) and “Wake(s) in the deep light” (l.24). It is quite evident from this poem that Ginsberg is dealing with a spent condition (as is suggested by the “impotent pen” image), and wants to jumpstart his career by making a pact with an earlier poem. This, for me, is an instance where literature, language and community merge. Ginsberg hinges on the past to tackle that crisis that he was going through as a young man with a schizophrenic mother, a patriarch father, heavy pressure of studies at a topmost law school – Columbia – a track record of substance abuse, and a sexual orientation not accepted by his Jewish community.

The “Blake Vision” gave him a *carpe diem* moment as he claims, “Now that I have seen this heaven on earth, I will never forget it. I will never stop considering it the center of my life, which is now changed into a new world. ... from now on, I’m chosen, blessed, sacred poet, this is my sunflower, my new mind” (Miles 103). The enthusiasm in the passage is remarkable. Ginsberg is convinced that he is blessed, and has attained the Blakean sunflower to move his life towards a new direction. Let me try to contextualize Ginsberg’s enthusiasm. Ginsberg was studying Labor Law at Columbia University, and he was expelled in his final year – officially for an anti-Semitic comment but most likely for his homosexuality. Ginsberg’s father Lois Ginsberg was a school teacher who did not approve of his son’s homosexuality either. He failed to receive sympathy from his mother Naomi who was being treated for her paranoid schizophrenia. Ginsberg became sexually attracted to Neal Cassady who came to visit Columbia to meet a mutual friend from Denver Hal Chase. Ginsberg, hoping to win the favor of Neal Cassady, who features prominently in Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, went all the way to Denver, and found out that Neal Cassady already had a girlfriend. Broke, both mentally and financially, he took up a job as a ship’s crew and went to Africa. After a series of events, he returned to the US and was readmitted to Columbia upon the recommendation of his mentor Lionel Trilling. He was also shaken up by the arrest of a friend Lucien Carr for the murder of a friend over a drunken row: two of his best friends Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs were arrested as material witnesses. Incidentally, these are the poetic figures who added momentum to the Beat Movement.

Campbell in *This is the Beat Generation* mentions that it was actually Lucien Carr who introduced Ginsberg to the French poet Rimbaud. Carr was the exponent of a new vision, an idea that bridges Emersonian transcendentalism with Parisian Bohemianism. The main ideas behind Carr’s poetics were: 1) naked self-expression is the seed of creativity; 2) the artist’s consciousness is expanded by derangement of the senses; 3) art eludes conventional morality (Campbell 26).

Ginsberg at that time was writing a paper on French impressionist painter Paul Cezanne. He was particularly interested in what he calls Cezanne’s “eyeball kicking” – the way colors shift in the pulling of a venetian blind. He later used the technique in his *Howl* (Miles 97). Ginsberg by all accounts was a very sensitive young man who was very responsive to his surroundings. His Blake experience therefore made him think that he was destined to become a poet-prophet. He started reading Plato, Saint John, Plotinus and claimed that he was seeing “divine significance” in everything that he was reading. His doctor Allen Cott warned him to stop taking marijuana, his father thought Ginsberg had been afflicted with the same “fatal flaw” of schizophrenia that was taunting his mother, and his mentor Lionel Trilling that he had “finally gone over the edge” (Miles 309).

Soon after his Blake experience, he called up Trilling who simply hung up the phone. In “The Lion for Real,” Ginsberg writes:

‘It’s happened’ I panted ‘There’s a Lion in my living room’
‘I’m afraid any discussion would have no value’ he hung up.” (ll.7-8)

It is interesting that Ginsberg alludes to the Blake vision as a lion. A tiger would have been an apt choice given Blake had a poem on that particular member of the cat family. Most likely, Lion is a pun on Lionel Trilling’s name, which, I think, goes to show that Ginsberg was looking for a master to deal with his spiritual and artistic crisis.

For the next 15 years, Ginsberg tried to recapture the Blake vision and get inspiration from it. However, in 1963, a mature Ginsberg reflected on his Blake-experience and considered it a complete waste of time. He observed:

I spent fifteen years trying to recreate the Blake experience in my head, and so wasted my time. It’s just like somebody taking acid and wanting to have a God trip and straining to see

God, and instead, naturally seeing all sorts of diabolical machines coming up around him, seeing hells instead of heavens. So I did finally conclude that the bum trip on acid as well as the bum trip on normal consciousness came from attempting to grasp, desiring a preconceived end, a preconceived universe, rather than entering a universe not conceivable, not even born, not describable. (Ball 16)

This sounds like a retraction from his previous claim of being a “chosen” poet-prophet. In fact, while lecturing in a poetry class at Kent State University in 1971, Ginsberg told his students that his Blake experience was prophetic only in the sense that it was a vehicle for his childhood daydreams:

And the voice I heard, the voice of Blake, the ancient saturnal voice, is the voice I have now. I was imagining my own body consciousness, I think - that’s what it means to me nowadays. In other words I was imagining my own potential awareness from a limited more virginal shy tender blossom of feeling. I was imagining the total power and feeling and universe possible to me. So in that sense it was prophetic, you know just like childhood daydreams are prophetic of what you grow up to be. (Ball 21-22)

The mature Ginsberg thus admits that he was pursuing a “preconceived” “daydream.” As Eric Mottram in “Anarchic Power” posits, “Ginsberg created himself as a laboratory of experience for the expanded consciousness out of an experience of poetry, religion, and drugs” (qtd. in Hyde 261). Ginsberg’s attitude towards his Blake-vision changed after his visit to India where he came across many Buddhist and Hindu mystics. Ginsberg had already tried drugs to recapture his Blake vision, and also developed suicidal tendencies in the process. In India, he shared his concerns with many spiritual leaders, including Dudjom at Kalimpong who famously advised him, “Watch the wheels within wheels, but don’t get attached to anything you see . . . If you see anything horrible, don’t cling to it. If you see anything beautiful, don’t cling to it” (Miles 309). Eventually, Ginsberg realized that he was clinging to the memory of Blake and trying to reproduce it in art. His gurus made him realize that life needed to be lived in human form. Suddenly, Blake’s “human form divine” meant “living in human form.” Ginsberg also met his Tibetan guru Chogyam Trungpa who led him to believe in the naturalness of expression. While still in India, Ginsberg heard the news of the death of William Carlos Williams who had had a definite influence on his writings. He decided to return to the US, and adopted Williams’ basic principle of “writing a poem by not writing a poem.” Upon his return, Ginsberg got involved in the anti-war demonstrations. He became conscious of his social role and spoke his conscience for the multitude. This served as an occasion to reinvent Blake, rather than cling to the memory of his Blake-vision.

The deceptive simplicity of Blake’s organized innocence attracted Ginsberg’s generation. The subtitle of Blake’s *Songs*, for example, aimed at “showing the contrary states of human souls.” But underneath such a design, Blake did the opposite. He exposed the vulnerability of western dualism. As Keith Sagar puts it, “Western culture has a tendency to make absolute judgements between the contraries. . . . If we praise spirit, it has to be at the expense of body” (Web). Blake revolted against such a design and exposed the spiritual impotency and hypocrisy of the Christian churches. In his prophetic writings, especially in *Jerusalem* (1804-20) and *Milton* (1804), Blake came up with his own mythic figures to counter Christianity. The Universal Man, who is the unified psyche of Albion, consists of the Four Zoas: Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, and Urthona. In Blakean mythology, the balance of the Zoas is upset when Urizen (the intellectual principle) attempts, and succeeds, in usurping Urthona (the wisdom principle). As a consequence, the Zoas begin to fight amongst themselves and each tries to overrule the others and act on its own.

In the 60s, America’s rationalization of war can be interpreted in Blakean terms: Urthona (wisdom) is usurped by Urizen (reason). The use of the atom bomb, the napalm bomb, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the suffering multitude on a global scale made Blake more relevant than ever. Ginsberg’s generation in general cried out for peace and harmony. As a citizen of a country that dominated the whole world, Ginsberg’s generation felt responsible for the terror unleashed by their state. Thus, New York became Blake’s London with soldiers’ sighs and blood streams running down the palace walls. New York became the home of Moloch, the ultimate irrational cruelty. Ginsberg’s generation turned to Blake for both mystical and radical purpose. Mottram’s summary of the concern for the new poetics in the sixties that defined Ginsberg is pertinent here: “Poetry opposes the Unreal

and its manipulatory centers of power: but in the fight ‘how can the soul endure?’ – ‘what happens to real bodily feelings and the response becomes seeming unreal. Total disorganization’” (qtd. in Hyde 265). By reinventing Blake, Ginsberg became the maestro of chaos.

Ginsberg made Blake metamorphose. He was convinced that he needed to sing Blake the way the poet intended. He maintained that each syllable in a Blake poem was intentional, and therefore had to be pronounced intentionally, as it was meant by Blake. So he changed the stress order twisting the iambic pattern, and read the poems to sound like, “UnSEEN they POUR BLESSing” or “AH SUN FLOWer.” Such changes, Ginsberg told his interviewer Ed Dorn, got him out of “the hang-up of iambic stress into vowel length consciousness, which is deliberate speaking voice awareness. ... it grows out of being conscious or aware of the meaning, intention, or the significance of each syllable on the page – and recognizing that each syllable has a place” (Allen 35).

On February 18, 1969 Ginsberg gave the first public reading of Blake’s *Songs*. He treated each song individually. “The Garden of Love” was arranged as an improvised country song, “The Blossom” as a minuet and so forth. “In setting Blake’s *Songs* to music, I found a lot of mantric sounds in the poems,” Ginsberg later explained to his students. For him, the assonance in Blake’s poetry corresponded with the inhale and exhale of life-breath, which was a key feature of mantric utterances. When one opens one’s mouth to utter *Om*, for instance, one opens the gate of heaven and sends a signal to the brain and then closes the mouth to close the gate of hell. With this idea in mind, Ginsberg applied the vowel and that voice to poetry. His rendering of Blake’s “A Dream” thus ended with repeated choruses of Hum Hum Hum Home/Home home home hum. He thus added the sacred syllable to complete his Blake.

Ginsberg was looking for a universe-rhythm, a culture language that could express the utopian vision of a peaceful world. Singing Blake in a universal tune Ginsberg liberated him from the spatial and temporal bondage. (This is not at all out of place given the fact that Blake too believed that “All religions are One”). By the same token, in Ginsberg, Blake took an American accent, finding himself in the grand tradition of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman among others. Clearly, Ginsberg had taken his artistic liberty to play on with his Blake. What started as a vision became transformed into a voice. So if the initial Blake experience was like the child on the cloud in Blake’s introduction to *Innocence*, the second Blake was the cherub sitting on the piper’s shoulder in the Blakean illustration of *Experience*. It soon turned out that Ginsberg was in a contest with his own Blake. It became, to borrow the title of one of his better known poems, a “Contest of Bards”: “Young poet had dreamed old poet’s scene & its hidden secret, and Eternal Rune cut in stone at the hearth-front hidden under porphyry bard-throne. Young bard tries to seduce old Boner with his energy & insight, & makes him crawl down on the floor to read the secret riddle rhyme” (296).

While talking to Steve Silberman, Ginsberg described the poem as “a traditional contest of bards, the old bard, and the young poet who’s come to displace him and push him off the cliff.” It seems in “Contest of Bards” Ginsberg has finally become ready to push the Old Blake from the cliff, but embrace him in his consciousness. He has finally learned to go beyond his “Blake Vision” and found a language to access a community to form a literature of their own.

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To Look Back Is to Suffer: The Lost 'Masculinity' of Esthappen in *The God of Small Things* and the Loss of a Conforming Childhood Memory of the Contemporary Young Men in Bangladesh

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Abstract: This paper is an attempt at understanding the formation of "masculinity" apropos conflicting childhood memory with reference, first, to Esthappen in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and, second, to the young men in Bangladesh. The paper is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the "unusual" present as well as the split/shared memory of Esthappen to explore how he gradually develops a marginalized self and eventually stops claiming "masculinity." The formation and evolution of a person's childhood memories go through a culturally pre-determined gendering process. It is not rare that a person, like Estha, fails to survive the gendering of memory and is, thus, led to cling to an always-traumatic childhood to look back upon. The second section, referencing differing versions of "masculinity" and Jan Assmann's idea of "Cultural Memory," concentrates on the young men in Bangladesh who, like Estha, have experienced stunted development of subjectivity. Acknowledging the fact that these young men live in a different spatio-temporal and socio-cultural scenario, the section shows, based on a number of interview-based case studies, how culturally pre-determined gendering works on the development of male subjectivity. The third section places Roy's Estha and the young men in Bangladesh, the fiction and the fact, face to face to show how unconventional dealing with childhood memory may lead a male individual to resist or fail in conforming to the mainstream ideas of masculinity.

Introduction

Is it really possible to discover what remains hidden behind a silence?

At least two different answers to this question can be found in Arundhati Roy's debut novel, *The God of Small Things*. The first answer is a "yes." You have countless paths towards the past of any silence; and the second answer is the opposite, a "no." It is impossible to cross the endless ocean of memories. The novel starts with Rahel's return to Ayemenem after twenty-three years of her separation from her twin-brother Estha who has gradually turned into a silent person. Roy manages to come up with a good number of random ways to reveal the past of Estha's life that precedes his wordless present. But at the same time it appears that to look back into the past of a silent person sometimes turns into a failure. Can any revisit to the world of memories be considered complete if it excludes (or cannot include) the dreams and the nightmares? Esthappen once asks his mother, "If you're happy in dream, Ammu, does that count?" (Roy 218). Estha has always felt that from a person's memory

dreams cannot be removed completely; and sometimes it happens that the memory itself fails to differentiate between a dream and a reality.

This paper intends to show how the way Estha constructs his memory deviates from any “normal” gendering process, leading him towards an “unusual” present. He seems to deny the normative definition of masculinity that demands a man to maintain “the social norm for the behavior of men” (Connell 70). Or he actually fails to survive the culturally predetermined gendering process, and thus is left with an always-traumatic childhood to look back upon.

Then the paper attempts at analyzing the development of masculinity (or masculinities) of contemporary young men in Bangladesh who, like Roy’s Estha, have gone through the essentialist and normative gendering process and have failed in conforming to “our culture’s blueprint of manhood” (Brannon, cited in Connell 70). This section includes several references to Jan Assmann’s essay, “Communicative and Cultural Memory” to clarify how these “de-masculinized” young men have to experience a differently normal present as they have failed/denied to deal with their childhood culturally and collectively. Acknowledging the fact that these young men live in a different spatio-temporal and socio-cultural scenario from that of Estha’s, this paper presents a number of interview-based case studies as some examples of the “process of emasculation”¹ of their memories and their “refusal or inability to perform hegemonic masculine identity practices” (Malaby 84).

De/gendering Human Memory

As the now-well-known distinction between sex and gender shows, unlike sex, gender refers to a culturally subjugated formation of a human self. And it has already been an established idea that “a human self is a diachronic identity built of the stuff of time” (Luckmann, cited in Assmann 109). So, when a child grows up, it absorbs both the culture and the time it lives in.

Now, if we narrow this discussion to the growth of a male child within a given time in a particular culture, it would be easier to internalize the focus points of this study. The emphasis is upon the culturally determined gendering process that every male child must go through and some examples of deviations from this process. In his essay, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” Jan Assmann contends that there is a dynamic relation between memory and identity. He also argues that human memory works on three different levels: individual, social and cultural. Of these three, cultural memory works as “a kind of institution” (Assmann 110).

Since gendering always includes an internalization of the cultural memory, as a boy lives on, he has to face the family, society, the norms and customs as well as history, tradition, myth, and religious beliefs. So a male child enters a web, even before he is born, of certain pre-ordained ideas, traditions and norms that he must conform to. The Freudian idea of id, ego, and superego suggests that the development of one’s self (ego) is a kind of maintaining balance between the individual (id) and institutional (superego). But not necessarily everyone will eventually be able to maintain the balance between this individual self and institutional education. Hence, there cannot be traced any single way of constructing memory. A conflict between individual memory and cultural (also collective) memory is always possible as they work like two opposite forces while storing images, sounds, smells, events, dreams, and thoughts in a person’s mind.

Suppose a boy is born Bangladeshi and belongs to the Hindu (or Muslim) religion. The construction of his memory must include the internalization of some Hindu (or Islamic) myths, legends, rituals, and beliefs as well as national beliefs, ideas, and images. But at the same time, as he is born with an individual unconscious, his memory will also try to store up his desire, dreams, nightmares, and individual thoughts. So, two different forces will work face to face. It is not necessary that the culturalization and socialization of a subject (here a male individual) will always be successful. Sometimes it may happen that the construction of individual memory with its own colors, smells and sounds overpowers the development of a socio-cultural memory. A quote from RW Connell’s 1987 book *Gender & Power* can help us to clarify the argument. She writes about gender formation: “Some cases will deviate because of the abnormal functioning of an agency of socialization ... the products of these deviations are homosexuals, transsexuals, intersexes and others whose gender identity fails to correspond in their usual way to their sex” (192). So, the deviations must be there to resist the power of the culturally determined gendering process of memory.

The Loss of a Conforming Childhood Memory

“Our efforts to maintain a manly front cover everything we do. What we wear. How we talk. How we walk. What we eat. Every mannerism, every movement contains a coded gender language,” says Kimmel (148). For a man, the world has been narrowed down to a particular set of gender-based-activities. If you are born a man, you must not do or practice anything “feminine,” cannot show your emotions and feelings. You cannot sit with your legs crossed; you must avoid every sort of effeminate behavior. Even your childhood or boyhood memories must be very masculine. A man must have a vast recollection of playing outdoor games, fighting, running, cycling, etc. Otherwise his memory is more or less effeminate, and he is nothing but a “sissy.”

So, when the cultural reality is like this, what happens to the men who have been constructing a non-conforming memory; who have not followed or been able to maintain the socio-cultural gendering process of their memories. There occurs an unavoidable silence. The silence of Esthappen in Roy’s novel, in a way, indicates his possible loss of conventional masculinity and masculine memory. A number of young men of today’s Bangladesh are also practicing (rather being forced to practice) an almost bottomless silence as they cannot reveal their non-heterosexual identity and “womanish” childhood/boyhood memories in a world of strictly “compulsory heterosexuality².”

Esthappen’s Childhood and the Shared Memory

Rahel never wrote to him (Estha). There are things you can’t do – like writing letters to a part of yourself. To your feet or hair. Or heart.” (GOST 164)

Unlike the usual dizygotic twins, Rahel and Estha seem to share a single memory. In the novel, there are a good number of instances that show how they stay inseparably unified in spite of being physically taken away from each other after Sophie Mol’s death. And this shared memory always includes dreams and nightmares, pleasure and pain, love and hatred. Estha, as he shares his psyche with his sister, evolves into a “man womanly.”³ As he grows up, the conflict between a conventional, cultural way of storing the real events into his memory and his individual way of constructing memory (both from reality and dreams) gradually deepens. All the influences of the efforts made by the adults around Estha, including Ammu’s way of rearing and protecting the twins, eventually fail to build up a conforming masculine memory though his feminine other (Rahel) has been taken away; though he is separated from his mother and made to stay with his father. They think a boy needs a father to grow up as a “real man.” But in this very struggle between individual and cultural memory, eventually, the individuality wins and brings an unfathomable silence into Estha’s life and alienates him from the mainstream. As he is “re-returned” from his father twenty-three years later, we do not find the expected masculine self in Estha; rather his silence refers to his rejection or inability to take part in the culturally determined gender performance. All these years, actually, he has never been separated from his feminine other. The spatial distance between the twins has only succeeded in creating a silent young man with a divided psyche: both manly and womanly. Still Rahel lives in him. He still shares his dreams with his other self. “Now, these years later, Rahel has a memory of waking up one night giggling at Estha’s funny dream” (2).

Recollection, Silence and the Lost “Manhood”

At one point, Ammu expresses her fear that Estha, her son, would eventually develop into a “male chauvinist” like her brother Chacko. As a mother, she appears to be over-concerned about the twins’ education. The shadow she throws upon Estha and his sister remains all through their life. Instead of a father, as in most of the families, here the mother plays the agent of the superego. She, present or absent, alive or dead, practices an overwhelming control over Estha’s entire life. It is also possible that Estha never dares/wants to disappoint his mother. That is why he never tries/wants to be a “chauvinist”; he actually never follows the footsteps of his father or uncle; rather he grows up like a “non-masculine” man. His obsessive cleanliness, his passivity, silence – nothing actually goes with his sexual identity. Very distinctively, he stays away from almost all practices of the “male chauvinist.”

Estha’s rejection or inability to become a male stereotype very evidently appears through his activities in school. He starts studying at a boys’ school in Calcutta after his return to his father. One of the major observations of the teachers about his schooldays is that he “does not participate in Group Activities” (11). It suggests, in a way, that he does not participate in the “masculine” or “would-be-masculine” activities of the boys in the school. He

deviates from the hetero-normative way of growing up, unlike most of the male students of his age; and gathers different feelings, different images, different sounds, and hues to be stored in his memory. For him, to look back upon the days in school will be completely different.

And he eventually refuses to attend any college after finishing the school with “mediocre” results. Surprisingly, much to the initial embarrassment of his father and stepmother, Estha begins to do the “housework” which is traditionally considered very unusual for a man. This “womanly” aspect of a young man, who at one stage was expected to turn into a “male chauvinist,” includes doing “the sweeping, swabbing and all the laundry.” Maybe this very emergence of the hidden feminine self of Estha finally leads him to the quietness that “reached out of his head and enfolded him in its swampy arms” (11).

In his book *The God of Small Things: A Saga of Lost Dreams*, K.V. Surendran, while discussing the character of Estha, points out that “The Orangedrink Lemondrink Man episode was something more than what Estha could bear ... the episode continued to hover over his mind from which he never had an escape” (48). At the movies, because of excitement, he starts singing loudly and his very strict mother tells him to go out and sing. As he appears in the lonely lobby of the cinema, the man who sells drinks there makes Estha hold his penis until his hands get “wet and hot and sticky.” It is quite probable that this anecdote remains in his memory as a threat to his masculinity, and eventually makes him question his existence as a heterosexually social man.

De/gendering of the “Split Generation”

The 1990s of Bangladesh reared a special generation (according to western terminology, they can be referred as Generation Y or Millennials⁴) who can also be termed as “the split generation” – “split” because their memories contain two different times. The first half of their life belonged to a local culture with hardly any global intervention, without much dependence on technology. They were growing up listening to the local radio, watching only the national television and enjoying the movies made in Dhaka. But the second half of their lives has gone through a huge cultural change and a technological revolution. They gradually turned into a technology-obsessed generation. So, in their very memory, there has always been a battle between these two opposites. At the same time, the gendering process of this generation, because of this in-between condition, has never been like that of the others. The culture a generation belongs to, the things they receive in the forms of entertainment and education play a very significant role in shaping the memory and the gender-traits of the generation. This part of the paper will concentrate on the males of this generation and the cultural influences on them as they evolve into adults with a “split” memory.

Connell’s idea of “gender multiculturalism” (234) refers to an inclusive de-gendering process. She suggests that to place the non-hegemonic gender identities, it is not always necessary to delete the hegemonic ones. Sometimes, it is possible that in a person’s mind, there coexist two different ideas regarding masculinity. A man of this young generation may assess his gender identity from both a local point of view and a global one because he has experienced both.

To clarify these ideas, in the next section, I will bring some real-life case-studies based on the interviews of some contemporary Bangladeshi young men who represent a “silent” part of the millennial generation: the homosexuals and bisexuals. Due to privacy reasons, the case studies will be presented anonymously.

Non-conforming Case Studies

- a. This young man, now aged 25, grew up in a small town. He fell in love at a very tender age with a girl studying in the same school. But, within a very short time, he discovered he is actually attracted to boys. So, all of his crushes, from that time on, were men of different ages. Unfortunately, he is still single and the relations he tried to establish with his crushes have never been successful. Now he is going through a terrible mental agitation. But, in one sense, he seems to be very confident as he thinks he is still quite masculine. He has a very strong mental power and can repress his desire whenever it is necessary. When he recalls his boyhood, passed in the 1990s, he becomes more or less confused. The past was very silent in the sense that, in those days, he never talked to any single person about his sexual preference.
- b. This man says he has always been bisexual. Even in the early years of his life, he was aware of this fact. He considers himself as a very good-looking guy, and he thinks this actually has been helping him a lot to find

- “friends” (sex partners). But he is still not sure about one thing – to whom he feels more physical attraction, male or female. Since his culture and religion will never permit him to get married to a man, he is now trying to stay away from same-sex relations. He still remembers his first sexual encounter with a boy of his school. “It was a boys’ school far from my home,” he says. And he thinks the experience still disturbs him. It has even become a kind of threat to his masculine identity.
- c. This young man was molested several times in the 1990s as he was a very innocent-looking “cute” boy. His first experience was very bitter as it was forced sex at a very tender age. He used to attend a music school once a week. And quite unexpectedly, his music teacher abused him more than once. He has been carrying that traumatic experience within him all these years. Now he is a well-established person, and is in a relationship with a wealthy man. He does not believe in the hetero-normative definition of masculinity. He says human memory is very inclusive and it can carry anything: both “normal” and “queer.”
 - d. This one is actually a diary-entry (translated from Bangla), dated 17 April 2002, of a young man instead of an interview based case study. He wrote it at the age of 14: “It is a very calm night of Baishakh. Everyone has fallen asleep. A very sweet breeze enters my room through the window. A moonlit night it is. I’m feeling like singing; feeling like thinking about someone. I seem to be able to think of only one person. Maybe he is the only friend who really loves me. But beside him, I love another person, a girl. It eventually hurts me if I think of her. She is not what a girl should be like. She seems to be quite unnaturally strict and rough. I’ll never have any opportunity to express what I feel for her. Maybe it’s natural that you won’t get what you want. Normally, in this world, nobody cares for nobody. But I am an exception. My best friend is another. He is that single person for whom I live on.”

Two Silences: Fiction and the Fact

The case studies of the previous section, like the case of Estha, talks about silence created partly because of the conflict between the cultural reality and individual feelings, partly because of their split memory consisting of two opposite forces, male-female or local-global⁵. In the novel, Estha withdraws himself from the outside world because his ego cannot maintain the balance between the id and the superego. Estha has to go through a very harsh reality which he cannot accept. To live without the feminine part of his psyche (Rahel) is quite impossible for him. Still he is forced to continue a compulsory “masculine” life which he, after a long struggle, rejects to live. Thus, his silence has turned into a protest against the hegemonic concept of masculinity.

And all these men mentioned above are passing their days very silently as they cannot reveal their real sexual preference in public. Like Estha, they are also bound to separate themselves from the hetero-normative world. The people of the outside world do not allow a man to be sexually attracted to another man. They “are a kind of gender police constantly threatening to unmask (these non-hegemonic men) as feminine, as sissies” (Kimmel 148). These case studies also present diverse opinions regarding the culturally determined gender roles. The first and the third man share an almost similar kind of attitude towards their own gender-identity. Both of them refuse to accept the hegemonic definition of masculinity. The second case along with the last exhibits a partially hegemonic point of view regarding gender performance. But still all of them are connected to Estha because they, more or less, deviate from socially pre-determined gender formation; because, in every case, the individual memory overpowers the socio-cultural.

Conclusion

Constant or forced silence is, in most cases, harmful. It has an unbelievable power to unsettle the pleasure of living a life. For Estha if he were not made to leave his sister and mother, his life could have been different. It is never possible to understand what a silent person really wants to have. His dreams and desires never come to light. The events, images, thoughts, sounds he has gathered all through his life remain untold, neglected.

For the young men mentioned in this study, silence has created some unexpected complications. A good number of men of this generation are living in a constant threat of breaking the silence. The fear of being termed a “sissy,” “faggot,” and “abnormal” haunt them at every moment. For them to love has become a very secret activity of life.

The question was “Is it really possible to discover what is hidden behind a silence?” The answer should be a bit strategic. Even if it is never possible to find out what makes a person remain silent throughout life, we should at least try to break this kind of unbearably destructive silence. It is time the voiceless had a voice.

Notes

1. Emasculation normally means the process of removing the external male sex organs. The meaning can be extended to the way of making a man feel less than a man or to make a man think differently of his masculinity.
2. Adrienne Rich popularized the term “compulsory heterosexuality” in her essay, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.” She argues that society forces every person to be or remain heterosexual.
3. In her 1929 essay, “A Room of One’s Own,” Virginia Woolf suggests that it is necessary for a person to have both masculine and feminine feelings. “It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple. One must be a woman manly and man womanly.”
4. William Strauss and Neil Howe, in their book *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*, coined the term “millennials” for the generation born between the early 1980s to early 2000s. But this paper will use, to adapt with the Bangladeshi context, 1985 as the beginning birth year and 1995 as the last birth year for the “millennials.”
5. People of this particular generation are living in a temporal diaspora that makes them fluctuate between two different ways of experiencing the world. The rapid globalization has been playing a dominating role in this case.

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From Text to Technology: Evolution of Literature Teaching

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Abstract: *The absence of technology in classrooms reduces the opportunity of visual learning which is deemed to be crucial for the students in a rapidly growing globalized world. Visual media can be a very effective means of getting and retaining attention of the students. Literature, in its textual form, is necessary since the words are the sources of interpretation and critical analysis but if the students only go through textual materials it often becomes a tedious effort and as a result they lose both attention and interest. This paper aims to show how technology (screen adaptation) can make learning easier, entertaining, and effective for learners. Therefore, creating a bridge between texts and visual media is something that is, literally, a demand of the present time. It is also a good idea strategically since adaptations of different texts offer diverse contexts and backgrounds. To showcase the aforementioned effects of technology two widely taught texts of Shakespeare, The Tempest and Macbeth are chosen as the primary texts for this paper. The texts and the adaptations will show how a comparative analysis of texts and their adaptations is more effective in developing a sound understanding and critical analysis of the texts. Moreover, the use of adaptation will trigger a creative response in the learners' minds and lessen their heavy reliance on class lectures and other secondary sources. This paper will accommodate the concept of "tiered text," which refers to a series of interconnected materials, through which different transitions or even shift in the basic structure of the narrative can be seen.*

Keywords: *text, technology, adaptations, comparative analysis, creative learner.*

I

"Plays are not meant to be read, they are meant to be performed" – probably every student in their Introduction to Drama course has heard the above dialogue from their course teachers. However, it is an undeniable fact that plays do contain aesthetic values which makes them fit for reading as well. As students of an Introduction to Drama course start their classes, it becomes imperative for them to visualize the scenes of the play. But students who are just starting to study literature, particularly plays, may find it difficult to visualize. This paper aims to provide visual aids to students which are not only going to make the process of visualizing easy but at the same time make learning entertaining and effective. This paper goes back to the basics of plays or dramas. As mentioned before, plays are meant to be performed, not read. It would also not be completely wrong to say that technology has taken the

performing of plays one step further with cinematic adaptations. According to Monaco, “films are a lot more like books, now (and books are about to become more cinematic)” (14).

It will be more than a cliché to say that Shakespeare is one of the most brilliant and greatest playwrights of world literature. Moreover, themes and concerns of Shakespearean plays are still very relevant irrespective of age and culture. However, the archaic language and unfamiliar customs make reading and decoding Shakespeare quite difficult for the students who are just beginning to study literature. This is where cinematic adaptations come into play. Adaptations can make study of Shakespeare or any other classic text easy and entertaining because, firstly, as films need to fit into a time frame, adaptations only present the key elements of a play. This statement may give rise to two questions, Firstly, when performed, plays rarely take longer time than films, so why do adaptations? An answer to this question could be that films are sometimes shorter than a stage performance and also due to technological advancements films can portray the “reality” of the text in a more accurate form than the most elaborately designed stage. Therefore, films will instigate vivid imagination. Secondly, the word key can be problematic as the interpretation of the word key is relative and varies from person to person. To lessen this dilemma Wagner provides us with three different taxonomies of adaptations, depending on the perception or view from which the film is narrated. These three categories are:

transpositions – a novel directly given on screen; commentary – where an original work is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect; and analogy – that shifts the action of the fiction forward in time or otherwise changes its essential context; analogy goes further than shifting a scene or playing with the end, and must transplant the whole scenario so that little of the original is identifiable. (Whelehan 8)

As mentioned in the abstract, the primary texts for this paper are *Macbeth* and its screen adaptation *Maqbool* (dir. Vishal Bhardwaj) and *The Tempest* and its screen adaptation *Forbidden Planet*. The screen adaptation of *The Tempest* is a commentary and *Maqbool* is an analogy of *Macbeth*. Texts from two different languages, cultures, and genres are chosen to showcase that Shakespeare is relevant in every age and culture. Therefore, this gives our learners a purpose to study Shakespeare because students sometimes may feel a lack of motivation as they do not identify with the contexts of Shakespearean plays and language of Shakespearean plays remain a problem area too. Moreover, different categories of adaptations will also make learners aware of different taxonomies of adaptations and their respective characteristics, and the effects different adaptations create. The question as to why this paper is using a Hindi commercial film as a primary text may be raised. It is because Bangladesh is facing “threats” of cultural imperialism from India or more accurately, Hindi. The reasons for selecting this particular film are two. Firstly, even though we are talking about cultural and linguistic imperialism, it cannot be denied that Indian culture has more similarity to Bangladeshi culture than British culture. So, this film will lessen the effects of “culture shock.” Secondly, as *Maqbool* is an analogy for *Macbeth* it will make the students bound to think critically as there is almost no similarity with the original text itself. In this context, Whelehan’s comment is of much importance “it is fascinating to study the effects that the period in which a text is adapted has upon the representation of that text” (14).

II

It might be argued that issues like Prospero’s ambition, Caliban as “white man’s burden” and analyzing Miranda’s character from a feminist perspective could be much simpler to explain to students if adaptations of *The Tempest*, such as *Forbidden Planet*, are used as classroom material. There are at least half a dozen studies which indicate that *Forbidden Planet* can be a modernized version of *The Tempest* in the context of the twentieth century. William Shakespeare’s version was considered as his last masterpiece and the film was just a starter to show that a scientific adaptation of the legendary Shakespeare’s play is possible. *Forbidden Planet* is one of the famous films that has been produced after World War II and the protocol it shows through its storyline does not only resemble the negativity of science, curiosity, and ambition but also foregrounds WWII. The film was a great hit from the date it was released. It touched millions of war victims’ hearts. Furthermore, it was a time when Great Britain lost its two hundred-year regime over the Indian sub-continent. *Forbidden Planet* gained much interest among directors in making films which depict colonization and the power of the ruling class. So, to study Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, a student of literature, theater or even cultural studies might feel more interested if *Forbidden Planet*

is used in the classroom as a visual aid along with the text. Not only *Forbidden Planet* but also *Prospero's Book* (dir. Peter Greenway), *The Tempest* (dir. Derek Jarman) can create a positive learning scenario in any classroom.

As mentioned earlier, Geoffrey Wagner proposed three possible routes of adaptation and while describing commentary adaptation, he says that it happens when an original is taken and it would have a purpose on the screen with a minimum of apparent inference. Wilcox has portrayed the characters purposefully in such a manner that it maintains a thematic coherence with *The Tempest*. Therefore, he showed planet Altair IV as Prospero's island, Doctor Morbius as Prospero, his daughter Altira as Miranda, Commander Adams equivalent to Ferdinand, his mechanical servant Robby as Ariel, post-Freudian monster of Id as Caliban and the cook can be recognized as the character of Stephano. There are great numbers of elements in the film that are taken directly from the play but some of them are significantly transformed by Wilcox. For example, supernatural power has been eliminated by science and knowledge. Also, Caliban's character has been transformed into Morbius' Id which, actually, is created by Morbius himself. It has been said that any technology, when sufficiently advanced, is indistinguishable from magic and it is the place where Wilcox actually altered Shakespeare's *The Tempest* into a commentary as *Forbidden Planet*. It is, however, important to know that the technological invention is irrelevant for the purpose of the film, which is to entertain and side by side teach a lesson about human nature to control elements but it fails to control the Id in him. The fact that the monster is a part of Doctor Morbius can be compared with what Prospero says about Caliban in *The Tempest* "this thing of Darkness I/Acknowledge Mine" (V.i.202). It has destroyed the traditional image of a magician to reveal a darker side of Doctor Morbius' character. Morbius and his monster of Id are a representation of what could have happened if Caliban's conspiracy had succeeded and Prospero's magical power had been destroyed.

Another important character from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is missing in *Forbidden Planet*, and that is Gonzalo. But Gonzalo describes a utopian world which can actually be the planet Altair IV. So *Forbidden Planet* becomes a commentary of *The Tempest*, an alternative *Tempest*, made pregnant with longings, desires, and fears of the time it was produced. Therefore, reading *The Tempest* from a theoretical perspective or as a postcolonial text might not be easy for students but taking its different adaptations can excite the classroom a bit. More or less, the historical context might also be important because it may give students the idea of the alterations in the film. Here the issue is not only "cultural shock" for the students but also the screen adaptations and the range of different meanings might give the students some ideas to interpret as well. They might also make more connections with *Forbidden Planet* than *The Tempest* because of its connection with technology and science itself. For them a story of a king, a princess, a "deformed" slave and revenge have a fictional idea only but to connect with it the acculturated instinct of *Forbidden Planet* might get closer to reality: a reality of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* becoming a possibility in the real world.

As mentioned earlier, *Forbidden Planet*'s successors succeeded later on with a similar pattern of starting and ending. For example, *Interstellar* and *Oblivion* were two box office hits of Hollywood and luckily, students of age groups liked them. So, to make Shakespeare easy to understand and capture the scenario using its wide range of film adaptations within the classroom environment will be far more fascinating than reading an archaic language for our students.

III

Turning now to *Maqbool*, an analogy of *Macbeth*, we notice a lot of similarities between them. In spite of that, not only because *Maqbool* has been truly indigenized (or Indianized with some classic Bollywood elements as songs and dance sequences) but also because *Maqbool* actually changes one of the most important themes of *Macbeth*, unchecked ambition for power or lust for power into an unchecked ambition to attain love, which, essentially, makes *Maqbool* a love story. However, the two stories that are literally set in different ages and cultures portray an almost similar feudalistic setting. *Maqbool* in a Bangladeshi classroom will be effective for a few reasons: firstly, our learners' knowledge of Indian culture and its close similarity with Bangladeshi culture will reduce the effects of "culture shock." Secondly, the concept of regicide might be easier to understand by students as *Maqbool* gives the idea of a more domestic setting and Jahangir Khan could not be more unlike Duncan. Finally, by using the ideas of "tiered texts," various extension activities can be done in the classroom not only to give the students a better understanding of *Macbeth* itself but also to ignite the creative-critical thinking of the students. For example,

Nimmi's (Lady Macbeth) character can be analyzed not only as an instigator of Maqbool's crime but also as a victim of patriarchal society.

Through extension activity concepts like stereotyping can also be made clear which will not be possible only with the text of *Macbeth*. One example of this can be provided through the depiction of the Mumbai underworld of *Maqbool*. The people operating the underworld are predominantly Muslims. Thus, Bhardwaj is not only catering to the demands of the audience but stereotyping the Muslim community as "mafia." And Jahangir Khan is "God to the minority" (*Maqbool*) thus drawing an analogy between Duncan and Jahangir Khan which will later help students understand the concept of regicide.

Maqbool's ending, however, shows its infidelity to its original source *Macbeth*. The ending of *Maqbool* reinstates the fact that the film is basically a love story as the insane Nimmi (Lady Macbeth) realizes her end has come and she fails to understand the workings of fate and repeatedly asks Maqbool "our love was sacred, wasn't it?" (*Maqbool*) as "What can't be transferred by incident might be translated in to image" (Monaco 54). Proving Monaco correct, Maqbool does not need to say "Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon stage, and then is heard no more; it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" (*Macbeth* 203-204). His facial expressions are enough to let the audience know of his heartache at the loss of his beloved, Nimmi. Bhardwaj also puts a "typical" Bollywood twist at the end. Maqbool and Nimmi's child is adopted by Jahangir Khan's daughter and son-in-law, thus keeping Maqbool's legacy alive. So, the ending will raise a lot more questions and will help the students activate and use their creative-critical mind. This, in turn, will ensure a better understanding of the text.

IV

According to Mondal,

Moving pictures in the silent era and moving pictures with recorded sounds after 1927 could be used to tell stories, describe events, imitate human actions, explore problems and urge reforms. It is not therefore surprising that such uses of the liveliest art of the twentieth century would provoke speculative comparisons with that other major human system for telling, describing, imitating, exposing and urging-verbal language. (4)

This explains the interrelation of fiction and films, and also why classic texts are getting adapted. As adaptations have already become the "trend," this paper argues that using the adaptations in the classroom will not only make learning easier, entertaining and effective but will also help our students become independent learners and trigger their creative critical thinking.

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Violence and New Media Ethics: An Insight

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Abstract: *Who could have imagined the speed and depth of new media until Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was overthrown by an upsurge resulted from an acute civil resistance or until the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi? No doubt, the Arab Spring was germinated in a virtual world and further escalated into the “real.” In this scenario, it can be said that the ego (of the civil society and of the youth bearing new spree of freedom) opposes the conscious recall of repressed unpleasant experiences that ultimately culminates in a new era (or a different era, if not new). The upsurge, in this sense, is an epitome of “constructive violence.” But then again, the series attack on Buddhist monasteries and Shrines in Ramu, Bangladesh in reaction against a Facebook image of desecrating the Quran gives us a different glimpse regarding the versatility or charisma of new media. Hence, drawing two examples that cover both the constructive and destructive milieu of new media, the paper is designed to address the concept of new media ethics and the idea of violence the new media bring forth. Keeping “violence” under a broader aspect the paper illustrates what kinds of ethical issues may arise from the consumption of new media and technology. It sheds a light on the popular argument that technology is ethically neutral or ambivalent. Finally, the paper takes into account the behavioral aspects of individuals and community when they are blessed (or cursed?) with overt CMC (Computer Mediated Communication).*

Re-locating Violence in the Age of Information

“Technology changes everything, crime and violence included”

– Savona

In “real” the term violence is more associated with the idea of a destructive force that intends to harm physically and psychologically. On a more extended level violence is instigated through oppression, denial, repression, and assault. When physical violence is concerned it is more likely to erupt from the elemental vulnerability of the human body. Direct physical violence – aimed at harming, injuring, or killing other people – indubitably stands at the center of the whole issue of violence. This form of violence is always exercised in a manifest manner and is mostly intentional (Heitmeyer, Hagan). On the other hand, psychological violence is more subtle in its course of action. Psychological violence is based on words, gestures, pictures, symbols, or deprivation of the necessities of life, so as to force others into subjugation through intimidation, fear, or specific “rewards.” Psychological violence certainly includes some forms of psychological cruelty and particular kinds of torture (Heitmeyer, Hagan 23). The web is more prone to

exercise psychological violence where the victims are more easily accessible. The violence is more disembodied and online oriented. With the advancement of internet access a community of “netizens” has been formed worldwide. Therefore, the technologies, basically the new media have started a new trend in case of social interaction. Crimes have taken a new form to intrude into our social life. When we say technology is a curse we mean to say that the organized criminals maximize their strength and minimize their chance of getting caught through exploiting the boon of technology. The techno-peddlers (yes! they are traders of information) use new technologies to communicate; to organize themselves better, to widen the spectrum of their businesses, to update their *modus operandi* and techniques, and to avoid law enforcement risk (Savona 8). The level of individual and communal violence is on the rise due to the availability of the almost easily accessible network. On an individual level it includes mainly harassment, cyber-bullying and blackmailing. And this is mostly done through using information (personal to be specific): utilizing information, tampering with information, exploiting information and what not. Hence, violence in cyberspace somehow revolves around the accessibility of information.

We may have come across the “great” Charles Augustus Magnussen, an information-tycoon from the third season of the stunningly re-invented Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes. Magnussen is a figure who considers information as assets and later exploits these assets to blackmail renowned people. This is a form of abuse and violation of human secrecy and it obviously resides implicitly. The more we become techno-savvy, the more we are repressing our basic instincts (mostly negative) and thus rechanneling our dormant instincts into sole utilization or exploitation of resources that are basically informational. In this era of technological advancement, the idea of violence is no more limited to an extreme form of aggression that includes assault, rape or murder. The term assumes a disguised way of conducting action: a “behind the veil” feature that allows people to go for a disembodied adherence with it. Violence can now be more associated with the global information networks related mostly to social media and hubs of cyber interaction. And the premises on which violence lingers have become mostly political.

The exposure of the top secret intelligence gathering operation run by U.S National Security Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation has redefined the concept of trespassing international border. PRISM – as they named it – has been the most outwitting surveillance program since 2007 by the U.S. Defense Authority until it was exposed by the former CIA official Edward Snowden. The existence and details of PRISM were leaked by the now fugitive whistle-blower, Edward Snowden, who worked for Booz Allen Hamilton. They are one of a number of private security contractors providing outsourced services to the U.S. government begun under the Clinton administration and growing markedly following 9/11 (Stoddart 1). PRISM might sound like the comic book S.H.I.E.L.D that used to gather information from the major hubs of social networking media. If anyone has any kind of affiliation with the major networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google, Yahoo, Skype, his/her information is vulnerable to PRISM. PRISM deals with the particulars of individual interaction that include chatting, photo sharing, logging into mail, skype-talking, etc. Similarly, the U.S government was keeping an eye over the exchange of information that took place among their target group (it may be a particular country or an organization). The U.S State Department legalizes the attempt by raising a question of national security and a stiff attempt to foil further threat in a post 9/11 era. The plan backfires after its exposure. The countries that were considered to be the former allies of U.S are now questioning their ties with the U.S State Department. One of the logical effects of the PRISM exposure is that it created tensions among the different countries and a cyber-alert has been unofficially instigated in most of the countries. The current international politics echo the tension of cold war and can now be termed as “cyber cold war.”

New-media Mediated Crime: How is Technology Related?

Technology acquires the power to change our lifestyles and thinking pattern. Crime, in this case, also has its pervasive nature that let it sprout through the cyberspace. Criminal behavior is largely modified with the advancement of ICT. They can now organize themselves and communication has become more instant for them. Their *modus operandi* is now more disembodied and disguised. If we consider a few cases that happened in recent months we can develop a pattern through which a group of organized criminals are operating. No doubt, Facebook is an awesome medium to “share” things but it is also being used to share “violence” too. Let us have a look at this news collected from Ain O Salish Kendra (Legal Aid and Human Rights Organization, Bangladesh):

On 2 November 2013, a group of miscreants brutally attacked, vandalised, torched and looted houses, business establishments and temples of the Hindus in Purbopara, Goshpara, and other Hindu areas adjacent to the Girls School Road of Banagram village located in Santhia Upazila of Pabna district. The attacks seem pre-planned. This locality is known as Hindu majority areas. The attack was carried out following a rumour that Rajib Saha, a class-X student and son of a local Hindu businessman Bablu Saha, had posted derogatory comments against the Prophet (SM) on the social networking site Facebook. The said rumor has spread around the locality. In retaliation a large number of local people led by the miscreants gathered and staged violent demonstrations against the Hindu community at around 12.30 pm. They started to vandalise homes, properties, and business establishments of the Hindu community.

Re-constructing Marx's opinion, we can say that religion is not the opium of the masses anymore; rather religion is the new pawn in the cyber world to drive the masses towards a "target." Post 9/11 has marked a new epoch in the formation of what Žižek calls subjective violence. According to Žižek, violence takes three forms: subjective (this includes crime, terror), objective (racism, discrimination, hate-speech, etc.) and systematic (the suppression resulting from political and economic institutions) (Žižek 2008). Religious violence tends to sprout from its institutionalized knowledge which later spread out in a subjective form. New media here give a leverage to cover every nook and corner of the cyber criminals' target spot and the casualties it invites are alarming. It is something like influencing "real" through "virtual."

One of the most notable factors that give criminals a benefit in cyberspace is the question of embodiment or overcoming spatial hurdle. The criminals do not have to show their presence in the victimized area. They rather spark up a flame of interest (or controversy?) for the masses and sit cozily behind their computers to watch the uninterrupted flow of massacre they have pre-planned. For example, lots of Facebook pages are pro-active in disseminating hate speech: be it for religion or against religion. One such page is *Basherkella* which overtly propagates religious extremism and out and out denigrates state machineries through its posts. The amount of people who "liked" the page is shockingly high. Although there are lots of fake profiles liking the page but the fact remains: fake profiles are also managed by "real" people. The pages provide vigorous speeches and post photo-shopped images of defaming a particular religion (in this case Islam) and ignite a flame of protest among the masses who do not even care or have less knowledge about investigating things for proof. These are the bewildered masses that are being driven by the masterminds of cyber-crime. New media mediated crimes are accelerating for many reasons: availability, less expensive, negotiating spatial hurdles, speedy way to confront peers, guarantying anonymity, handy usage, and under regulated for a developing country like ours (Savona 2004).

Technology, hence, provides a pull to the newer ways of harassment for public. Ranging from hacking and cyber stalking to sexual bullying through Facebook, the crimes have got new dimensions. The sexual offenders, the so called religious and the secular propagandists are proactive in cyberspace. Apart from all the cyber-mediated crimes the paper focuses more on these two aspects so as to explicate the idea of violence (both on an individual level and communal level) that intertwines the boundary of "real" and "virtual." In case of sexual offenders it is more likely that they are the stalkers whose only job is to look for erotic computer communication, from mild flirtations to seeking and sharing information about sexual services to frank discussions of specific deviant sexual behavior (Jaishankar). In Bangladesh, things get messier with internet pornography, disseminating malicious information, internet prostitution network and the widespread syndicate acting via Facebook, Viber, Whatsapp to carry out human trafficking. Amid this wilderness of internet, the call for the practice of and lessons for cyber-ethics or New Media Ethics is beyond question.

Ethical Neutrality: How Far Does Technology Go?

Many critics argue that technology is ethically neutral and only acts upon the users' own manual intention. But a more convincing stance has been put forward by the French theorist Jacques Ellul, who thinks that technology is more or less deterministic (Jeronimo, Garcia, Mitcham 99). Ellul insists that "technique carries with it its own effects quite apart from how it is used ... No matter how it is used, it has of itself a number of positive and

negative consequences. This is not just a matter of intention” (Ellul 35). He adds that “technical development is neither good nor bad nor neutral” (37). We become conditioned by our technological systems or environments. On a certain level we build machines and afterwards machines build us. The same goes for technology. It determines its own use and it is erroneous to assume that technical tools depend more on their workmen. For example, the “poke” option is included in Facebook in order to give a virtual nudge to someone. In this case, the “poke” is an option only for the “nudge.” Hence, the inclusion of “poke” option is not neutral at all. Technology has its own deterministic biasness. Another communication theorist Neil Postman argues that in case of technical, physical, symbolic and accessibility factors, technology is out and out deterministic. He argues that:

- i) Because of the symbolic forms in which there are coded information, technology is intellectually and emotionally biased;
- ii) Because of technical and economic stature the media have social biasness
- iii) Because of the accessibility and speed factor, technology is politically biased.

Thus, technology is a metaphor which classifies the world for us. It sequences us, frames us, enlarges us, and augments us.

New Media: Ethics Otherwise?

Traditional journalism, while clinging over their age old regulations and norms, remains unquestionable in their fixed ethical stance until a new form emerges to make us think otherwise. New Media ethics deals with distinct, quite out of the box ethical issues which call for a new insight in the case of chaotic cyberspace. Digital media include Facebooking, blogging, Twittering, digital photo journalism, citizen journalism, etc. The aspects of traditional journalism are changing irrevocably. Technology has bestowed us a way of expressing ourselves which was almost impossible in the age of television and radio: the one way communication of “feeding only” information. New media appears as an option of mouthpiece for its users. Professional journalists along with the newbie share the same ground of social media to express their opinion. This raises the first ethical question: who is a journalist? The “democratization” of media – widespread technology that allows its users to take part in every action – permits the masses to engage in information sharing and publish news of many kinds. This blurs the line of journalists and what it needs to be a journalist. The definition of journalism can be investigated from a two vantage points: skeptical and empirical. A skeptical way of defining journalism deals more with the idea of “what does it matter who is a journalist or who is not?” For the skeptics, the question itself is unimportant. For example, one might say that anyone can be a journalist, and it is not worth arguing over who gets to call themselves a journalist. But for the empirical part, rigorous and systematic approach to the question is needed. The traditional history of journalism involves gathering information, writing and editing reports, publishing news and sharing opinions. It can be called a non-fictitious way of writing. When these criteria are involved, any one cannot be tagged as journalist or having the knowledge of journalism. It feeds the crisis of journalistic recognition in this age of New Media.

The question of ethics resides in many layers of New Media. Being itself a controversial ground where contents run before proof, New Media raises accountability for issues like anonymity, rumors, impartiality and content sharing. Anonymity online is not only accepted but also celebrated in case of sharing. With the anonymity available online, one of the crucial props of virtue ethics’ effectiveness at any age — shame or risk of shame to a sense of pride in “self” — is gone (German and Drushel). Anonymity online allows more freedom of expression than traditional newsroom journalism. Traditional newsroom journalists have their own accountability for their write-up whereas online journalism puts more emphasis on the content rather than the owner. Online technologies facilitate this disconnection between the individual and the incident. Hence, the ethical questions arise: When is anonymity ethically permissible? Is it okay/not okay to maintain different sets of ethical standards in two different spaces? What should be the guidelines in that case?

The speed and depth of New Media have contributed in nurturing rumors. Newsroom journalism is facing a pressure because the online postings and sharing information make their printed version a bit clichéd. This makes them re-think whether to wait for the proper witness and proof. They seem to rely on the information superhighway of New Media and allocate their news accordingly. The rumors become burning when it comes to

the issue of national interest or religious crisis. As stated earlier, the New Media is a vulnerable ground for manipulations. As too many cooks are involved, the broth of news content seems to be endangered. Cyber criminals use New Media as a tool for propagating their own ideology. There are less ways of tracking down the content owner and rectifying his/her actions. As there is less accountability, there is more justification from the other side.

Digital journalism enhances partisan journalism. Earlier, print media seemed to be unbiased and rely more on representing rather than taking a stance. In case of online journalism, one group enjoys commenting upon issues and events, with or without verifications and another group uses New Media as a mouthpiece for their own political parties or movements. Not that these opinion journalism and partisan journalism did not reside in the history of traditional journalism, but it becomes more debate worthy when a question of exposure comes; whereas impartial journalism lacks vigorousness, partisan journalism tends to be more conflicting and audience grabbing. The recent leakage through Wikileaks proves that mainstream journalism cannot reach every nook and corner whereas the digital world has an excellent ability to breach privacy sphere. Now the questions: which one is better for a healthy democracy – an impartial journalism or a partial one? Is breaching privacy ethically acceptable? Who will take responsibility for the rumors and their aftermath?

The Sexualization of New Media: Deterioration of Ethics

New Media prefers exhibitionism. Ranging from “selfies” to “check-ins,” the social media strive for recognition from others. It involves objectification of body and the exposure of materialistic attitude which is next to racism and sexism.

With the advent of new media technologies such as the internet and cellular phones, children and adolescents are no longer merely consumers of this sexual ideology, but also creators of digital content that performs this ideology. Such content can range from the relatively tame ‘girls making out’ images found on sites such as collegehumor.com to sexually explicit photographs transmitted through cellular phones within a circle of friends that draws the attention of law enforcement (German and Drushel).

Teenagers are the most vulnerable here. They delve themselves into pornography through “sexting.” “Sexting” is a term which includes sharing of nude or semi-nude photos of one’s own in the social media. Obviously we are yet to find out any logically laid down legal and ethical standards of combating such issues. A generation that is psychologically obsessed in exhibition will only bring forth a distorted boundary line of what is right and what is wrong.

Conclusion

New Media is never a naive, sanctimonious ground to be acted upon. It is true that it surpasses human limitations and carries us forward to a new dimension of interactions and sharing which brings forth the world in one global line. On the other hand, it is dark, dystopian and always craves for attention. It never depends on the users’ hand as it is more self-regulatory and self-enhancing. We are being titillated and seduced by the ecstasy of hyper-reality: the space or arena where the distinction between real and imagined, surface and depth, or reality and illusion is no longer valid. Hence, representation is replaced by simulation creating a new mind-machine dualism.

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A Rhetoric of Decency: An Essay on Identification and Recursivity in George Orwell's Writings on Spain

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Abstract: *Theorists of writing have called for it “to be placed within the different practices that actualize the mental process” (Clark & Ivanić’93). In my presentation I will look at the writings of George Orwell to articulate a textual understanding of writing as placed within different practices that actualize the mental process. I will especially present an analysis of the term decency as occupying a central place in Orwell’s writings about Spain, shuttling between a concept descriptive naming the Spanish character enabling identification for his English audience in *Homage to Catalonia* to a critical-normative on which the writer argues for a form of socialism in “Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War.” To make this argument I will look at Orwell’s two published writings on Spain in the context of literacy theory and writing studies scholarship, and situate his overall composition process in terms of the contextual information provided in the letters he wrote in connection to the two works. Subsequently, I will extrapolate my analysis of Orwell’s works to present the theory of literacy as “exquisite circumspection” (Ong) as a necessary corollary to the notion of “recursive thinking process” in writing in terms of a predisposition to continuously inquire and imaginatively translate ideas through the act of writing down based on context and newly emergent goals.*

Orwell’s continued cultural relevance is almost self-evident in the regularity with which the term Orwellian gets thrown about in the journalistic-punditry. But despite mass-media’s discursive running-into-the-ground of the term, Orwell’s work continues to be culturally relevant and one of its “salience” to the field of humanistic scholarship, I believe, can be found in the consistency of the author’s engagement with both totalitarianism and democratic socialism. Specifically, I contend, those of us in the humanities can productively extend our engagement with the author beyond the one or two essays we teach in our classes or the cursory discussions we have about *1984* or *Animal Farm* by thinking about how Orwell could say “every line of serious work that [he had] written since 1936 [was] written against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism” and not contradict himself (original emphasis, “Why I Write” 440).

In this paper, I read Orwell as a rhetorician and his writings on his experiences in Spain (*Homage to Catalonia* and “Looking Back on the Spanish War”)¹ as rhetoric. My argument understands decency – a term that reiterates itself continuously in Orwell’s oeuvre – as a site of identification and invention,

¹ I am taking both these texts from *Orwell in Spain*, an edited-compilation of his writings and letters relating to his time spent in Spain.

positing Orwell's representation of Spaniard as a form of what Kenneth Burke calls the "invitation to rhetoric" for his English readership. Within his account, Orwell's rhetoric of decency, I contend, has a double-meaning functionality. Decency, on the one hand, functions as a descriptive, representing the common Spaniards who people his narrative as characterized by "above all, their straightforwardness and generosity" (*Homage to Catalonia* 38). On the other hand, it signifies as a critical-normative or an ought, a rhetorical commonplace informed by his experiences and out of which every "serious work [he] had written since 1936... [is] directly against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism." Taken together the notion collapses the distinction between the is-ought, rhetorically presenting the decent life not as a utopian socialist-fiction, but an extension of lived human characteristics and how people actually are.

Decency as descriptive or Orwell's "invitation to rhetoric"

In *Rhetoric of Motives* Burke outlines the principle of identification as the most important distinction of contemporary rhetoric. Comparing his theory to the classical tradition of Aristotle and Quintilian, he spells out his oft-repeated rhetorical formula: "you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his" (original emphasis, 55). It is a formulation that not only prioritizes identification as a requirement for any act of persuasion, but the common ground as an a priori of communication. All writers, after all, must speak or write the same language as his/her reader and communicate "tonality, order, image, attitude, idea" so that whatever is exchanged through language is nuanced enough to represent the world of experience.

Burke also understood that words mean differently to different users and in different contexts, and so makes it clear in his deliberations that pure identification ("absolute communication") is an impossible ideal "partly embodied in material conditions and partly frustrated by these same conditions" (22). It is this gesture of ideal and absolute communication that makes language, in his opinion, as "the characteristic invitation to rhetoric" which puts "identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins" (25).

So what does this positioning of the "invitation to rhetoric" as putting "identification and division ambiguously together" do for providing a way to read decency in Orwell's writings about Spain? I contend Orwell's articulation of decency enables him to build off this sense of "identification and division" to develop a coherent critical-normative argument for democratic socialism based on a description of the Spanish people. To explain this point in detail let me start my analysis with decency as a descriptive and as common ground, or specifically Burke's point that "a terministic choice justified by the fact that identifications in the order of love are also characteristic of rhetorical expression" (Burke 20). At the beginning of *Homage*, when narrating his first impressions of the revolutionary city of Barcelona, Orwell writes: "[It] was queer and moving. There was much in it that I did not understand, and in some ways I did not even like it, but I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for" (*Homage to Catalonia* 33). I believe these sentiments exhibit Orwell's primary intention in writing his account of the Spanish Civil War. Orwell suspected that his audience – like him, English, literate, bourgeois – probably did not understand or "even like" a lot about the socialist and anarchist fighters. Therefore his project in writing *Homage* as a way to build support for the anarchist cause had to negotiate this aspect of difference by articulating an encomium his readers could hook onto. To this end decency, as a descriptive term in *Homage*, functions to bridge a potentially disabling division and facilitate common ground between his Spanish subjects and his English readership.

This point can be specifically understood by looking at Orwell's use of the term at one moment towards the end of his account in *Homage*. In the last chapter of the book, in typically lucid and affective language, Orwell ruminates on the things he learned from his experiences in Spain. Despite the horrible events he witnesses², Orwell concludes a basic ethicality about people. "Curiously enough," he writes, "the whole experience has left me with not less but more belief in the decency of human beings . . . [but] beware my partisanship, my mistakes of fact and the distortion inevitably caused by my having seen only one corner of events" (*Homage to Catalonia* 168).

² Orwell narrative records the purges, the imprisonment and execution of friends and the personal tribulations he undergoes – nearly dying when he gets shot through the neck, having to sleep on the streets to avoid a police-force hunting down anyone affiliated with the POUM – stating that his Spanish experience "left him with memories that are mostly evil" (*Homage to Catalonia* 167).

I contend the notion works³ in his Spanish writings in a narrower rhetorical frame, specifically as a common characteristic, as “a mediatory ground that makes . . . communication possible” between Orwell’s representation of his Spaniard subjects and his English readership (Burke 25). *Homage* repeatedly paints the Spaniards as possessing “an essential decency,” gregarious in their straightforwardness and generosity (*Homage to Catalonia* 38). “A Spaniard’s generosity,” he writes in the first chapter, “in the ordinary sense of the word, is at times almost embarrassing . . . And beyond this there is generosity in a deeper sense, a real largeness of spirit, which I have met with again and again in the most unpromising of circumstances.”

Orwell encounters Spaniards of both characteristics – though mostly in the form of men – during his time in Catalonia. The first takes the form of the common soldiers who show him everyday acts of kindness. These are the types he describes meeting during his stay at the hospital after getting shot. These are the two soldiers, “kids of about eighteen,” who show their sympathies by giving Orwell “all the tobacco out of their pockets,” and then leaving before he can return it. “How typically Spanish!” explains Orwell about their openhandedness. “I discovered afterwards that you could not buy tobacco anywhere in town and what they had given me was a week’s ration” (*Homage to Catalonia* 134).

Generosity “in a deeper sense, a real largeness of spirit” is illustrated through his representation of an officer in Barcelona towards the end of his time in Spain. Orwell, in hiding from the police and preparing to leave the country, ignores these dangers and decides to look for a letter from the Ministry of War – from the office of the Chief of Police – to help his friend and superior officer, Jorge Kopp, who had been arrested for his connection to the POUM⁴. His search for this letter leads Orwell to meet a secretary of a colonel, “a little slip of an officer in smart uniform, with large and squinting eyes” (*Homage to Catalonia* 159).

The officer interviews him about the particulars of the letter when he first meets Orwell and in the process finds out the writer had served in the outlawed militia. This disclosure makes Orwell begin fearing for his own safety and by the time the two of them arrive at the Chief of Police’s office, where the little officer might request the letter, he is terrified about getting “arrested, just to add another Trotskyist to the bag” (*Homage to Catalonia* 160). But his fears prove unfounded and making no further mention of the banned faction the colonel’s secretary comes out of the station with the letter, promises to deliver it to the proper authorities, and hesitating “a moment, then step[s] across and [shakes] hands with [Orwell]” (*Homage to Catalonia* 161). It is a gesture which deeply touches the writer. He elucidates, “standing outside the Chief of Police’s office, in front of that filthy gang of tale-bearers and ‘agent’ provocateurs, any of whom might know [he] was ‘wanted’ by the police,” it takes courage and character to shake hands with Orwell. “It was like publically shaking hands with a German during the Great War,” he explains to his English audience, “it was good of him to shake hands.”

Two distinct iterations of the “essential decency” are articulated through these representations. The first is a small act of altruism, the second a basic display of courage. In the first case the two soldiers present a material gift despite the fact that tobacco is scarce and valuable – soldiers smoked it to keep warm in the trenches. In the second case the “little slip of an officer” risks personal freedom to show Orwell basic civility. It would have been more prudent for him to turn Orwell in to the police, but he does not. Rather, he shows Orwell decency in the form of his silence on the matter of the POUM and the courtesy of shaking a man’s hand when saying goodbye.

Walter Ong argues that the writer’s audience is always a fiction within the “game of literacy” for at least two functional reasons. The first is that in the act of writing the writer must construct his/her audience in “some sort of role – entertainment seeker, reflective sharers of experience . . . , inhabitants of a lost and remembered world

³ Margery Sabin, in her reading of Orwell’s nonfictional work from the 1930s, analyzes this moment and concludes Orwell extracts such a positive takeaway through an articulation of decency as a shared human value. She writes that in the face of the violent political realities evoked by the book “[decency] comes to designate a shared physical and emotional humanity distinct from politics and propaganda – all that is not ‘official’, in the sense that every form of politics soon becomes” (56). The answer, according to her, is a common humanity between those living through events as opposed to the over-determining political formulations of how such moments are officially interpreted, framed, and deployed. It is true that Orwell qualifies his interpretations of his time in the trenches and in Barcelona as subjective and “partisan”; even full of “mistakes of fact and distortion inevitably caused by having seen only one corner of events.” Nonetheless, the key to understanding his memoir on his Spanish experience, I contend, is his affirmative point that “the whole experience has left me with not less but more belief in the decency of human beings.”

⁴ At that point in the internal-Republican conflict, the government had successfully initiated a reign of terror on the city, occupying it with its communist-backed Popular Army, and arresting anyone remotely connected to anarchists or Trotskyist factions

of prepubertal latency..., and so on” (“The Writer Audience is Always a Fiction” 60). The second is that the reader “has to play the role in which the author has cast him, which seldom coincides with his role in the rest of his life.” This literacy game can take many genre forms – as Ong shows through his exposition of Hemingway, Chaucer, and Charlotte Brontë – but the particular form that applies to Orwell’s writings is journalism, which is about getting the story across quickly so a camaraderie between the narration and the reader can be easily established. “The reader is close enough temporarily and photographically to the event,” writes Ong, “for him to feel like a vicarious participant.”

Orwell’s opening statement about Barcelona is about this establishment of camaraderie and about providing contextual information about an event the reader⁵ is interested in learning about. Decency, as a concept of appeal, is a part of this functionality. But it is also more: it is a coordinate of a role that the reader has to play, a modality of character not corresponding to how the readers actually live. “It is the reader’s responses that Orwell has in view all of the time,” writes William Cain about Orwell’s distinctly lucid prose style, “he anticipates them and coaxes and coerces adjustments in our pathways through them. Orwell writes sentences that reveal his thoughts and feelings and that prove acts of analysis and reflection in us” (80).

Decency as Critical Normative or Orwell’s Recursive Invention

Decency, building of its descriptive functionality, enables the argument Orwell makes for “his own eccentric brand of socialism” effective (Rossi and Rodden 3). Orwell’s depiction of life in Barcelona concludes that “true socialism was possible” and therefore its “formal principle” functions as a critical-normative, an ought, in comparison to which he judges and interprets the events making up his accounts (Rossi and Rodden 5). In his own words: “If you had asked me why I had joined the militia I should have answered: ‘To fight *against* Fascism,’ and if you had asked me what I was fighting *for* [sic], I should have answered: ‘Common decency’” (*Homage to Catalonia* 169).

To understand what Orwell’s “eccentric brand of socialism” is and to see it in terms of the principle of “common decency,” it is important to situate it as the site of invention for his arguments “*against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism.” This is illustrated by Orwell’s commentary on encountering an Italian militiaman and his significance to Orwell upon subsequent reflection. Orwell begins his narrative (literally the first line in the work) talking about seeing an “Italian militiaman standing in front of the officer’s table” (*Orwell in Spain* 31). He says he likes the man immediately and, though they spend only a few moments with him, the image of the militiaman becomes a permanent memory. Orwell writes:

With his shabby uniform and fierce pathetic face he typifies for me the special atmosphere of that time. He is bound up with all my memories of that period of the war – the red flags of Barcelona, the gaunt trains full of shabby soldiers creeping to the front, the grey war-stricken towns further up the line, the muddy, ice-cold trenches in the mountains.

On first impression this take strikes the reader as simply good writing; it is what Raymond Williams calls Orwell’s organizational style of positing a “first, representative experience,” which “shapes and organizes what happened to produce a particular effect, based on experience but then created out of it” (59). Within such a reading

⁵ As John Rossi and John Rodden argue, Orwell was singularly critical of the British socialists because of their elitism and hypocrisy: “[in *Road to Wigan Pier*] Orwell argued socialism [in England] attracted a strange type of intellectual cut off from the people – in a celebrated passage he labeled them an unhealthy amalgam of fruit juice drinkers, nature cure quacks and nudists” (4). Furthermore, the scholars point out, Orwell’s aggressive criticism of the socialists “embarrassed” his publisher, the left wing socialist Victor Gollancz, whose readership were the very parties the writer was so critical of. It is also important to note that it was his “political opinions” on the socialists which played a large part in Gollancz rejecting *Homage* even though he had a contract for it.

It was the British intelligentsia and socialists who represented Orwell’s readership, and it is telling that his criticism of the English leftists for their whitewashing of the Republican purges in Barcelona was a step too far. Despite relatively good reviews and even though *Road to Wigan Pier*, his previous book, sold extremely well, *Homage* sold only “683 of a modest run of 1,500 in its first month” and there were still unsold copies from the primary printing at the time of Orwell’s death in 1950 (Buchanan 303). It had to sell “poorly in the Popular Front atmosphere of the late 1930s, but it cemented Orwell’s reputation as an arch-foe of communism” (Rossi and Rodden, 6). It was this same reputation that meant the 1952 edition “elevated Orwell to the rank of a secular saint” (Buchanan 308).

⁶ This section was originally part of Chapter V, with its macro-political analyses of the situation in Catalonia, in the first edition *Homage to Catalonia*. Orwell, towards the end of his life, requested that the newer edition of *Homage* to remove sections of macro-political analyses to make the narrative more coherent reading. But his requests for these changes were only accommodated in the Complete Works of George Orwell, published in 1986. In *Orwell in Spain*, Chapter V of the original text is moved to Appendix I.

Orwell's preparatory listing of the trenches, the cold-mountains, the train full of soldiers indexes all the significant events that follow logically and emotionally. If it were a linear narrative, Orwell would not talk about things he has not yet experienced. But he does not do that: instead he foregrounds what is to come.

I contend it is equally important to see that Orwell never explicitly lists the militiaman in the series of the red flag, the train full of men, etc. Rather, he talks about the militiaman before listing these images, stating "his shabby uniform and fierce pathetic face . . . typifies . . . for me the special atmosphere of that time." While it might be easy to dismiss this linguistic organization as simply discursive happenstance, I believe it would overlook a more accurate reading of the militiaman as typifying, or in Williams' words, being a representational experience, and how it works under decency as a site of invention in the era of literacy.

Ong explicates the revolution in discourse that was literacy in terms of its directive for "exquisite circumspection" in writing:

To make yourself clear without gesture, without facial expression, without intonation, without a real hearer, you have to foresee circumspectly all possible meanings a statement may have for any possible reader in any possible situation, and you have to make your language work so as to come clear all by itself, with no existential context. The need for this exquisite circumspection makes writing the agonizing work it commonly is. (*Orality and Literacy* 103)

Orwell certainly understood this need to delimit the interpretation of what is written down. He repeatedly called for maintaining specificity in language, and it is arguably this reason for controlling the meaning "a statement may have for any possible reader in any possible situation" which was the basis for such statements: "I will only say that of late years I have tried to write less picturesquely and more exactly" ("Why I Write" 441). It is this same reason that is the rationale for Orwell to detail an account of war with vivid notations of "the look and feel of mundane human experience even in quite extraordinary circumstances – war as well as poverty" (Sabin 52). "A louse is a louse and a bomb is a bomb," he writes as he conflates the specifically horrific living conditions the soldiers lived in as they fought the enemy, "even though the cause you are fighting for happens to be just" ("Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War" 344).

Furthermore it is this aspect of "exquisite circumspection" that causes Orwell to tell his literary executor to relegate sections of general information about "the Spanish political scene to two appendixes. The consequence is a smoother text, but also one that engages far less overtly with the internecine debates of the period" (Buchanan 310). Having written down and published his experience in Spain, Orwell felt compelled to make corrections to the text with "reflective selectivity that invests thoughts and words with new discriminatory powers" (Ong 103).

Cain says reading Orwell's essays (in general) is "special – bracing illuminating, invigorating" and his essays from the 40s "is one of the major achievements of modern literature" (76-77). "Looking Back on the Spanish War" certainly fits both categories. Its style is Orwell at his finest and most lucid, and its greatest vigor lies in the succinctness with which he is able to ruminate on issues of significance such as propaganda, fascism, the fight of the common man for "what the world owed them and was able to give them," the hypocrisy of the intelligentsia and others that "preach against [working class] 'materialism,'" and the need for "neutral facts on which neither [political] sides would challenge the other" ("Looking Back on the Spanish War" 354-357). It is the basic fact of "exquisite circumspection" of literacy, which enables and forces Orwell to reflect on the events of the war illustrated in his memoir with "the heightened political consciousness of retrospection" into a reiteration of his experience in the form of a critical-normative argument based on "common decency" and signified by the Italian militiaman who burns himself into his memory.

Orwell likes the Italian militiaman straight away and, more so, the man becomes an image "bound up in [his] memories." But strangely Orwell, showing uncharacteristic reticence, does not say much more about the man and never comes back to him in *Homage*. He goes on to elucidate his experiences in Barcelona, the trenches, etc. in vivid and evocative detail. The Italian militiaman is seemingly overlooked. However, the fact is Orwell never really forgets, but also he could not immediately understand without a "reflective selectivity" enabled by the written word the significance of the militiaman. The meaning of the Italian militiaman had to be understood

slowly, and functions as the site of recursive invention on which “arguments, or the substance of a message, are discovered or devised” (Crowley 6). It is only upon looking back on the war six years later that he is able to voice and consciously “discover” the deep structures and realities hiding behind the image of his memory of the soldier. Finally, understanding the true “substance of the message” of the war and all that happens subsequently, Orwell articulates a poignant argument for his reasons for supporting the war. He writes: “When I remember – oh, how vividly! – his shabby uniform and fierce, pathetic innocent face, the complex side – issues of the war seem to fade away and I see clearly that there was at any rate no doubt as to who was in the right. In spite of power politics and journalistic lying, the central issue of the war was the attempt of people like this to win the decent life” (“Looking Back on the Spanish War” 360).

It is in this moment that we see decency functioning as a site of invention for a critical normative argument. For in the following section presenting a powerful explication behind the systematic exploitation of the working class by the status quo, Orwell points out the working-class demands only “the indispensable minimum” (“Looking Back on the Spanish War” 361). He explains, with the knowledge of several years of hindsight, the Spanish Civil War was not about fighting Fascism or a warm-up to World War II. It was about common working classes winning a decent life, which he states as:

Enough to eat, freedom from the haunting terror of unemployment, the knowledge that your children will get a fair chance, a bath a day, clean linen reasonably often, a roof that doesn't leak, and short enough working hours to leave you with a little energy when the day is done ... That was the real issue of the Spanish War, and of the last war, and perhaps of other wars yet to come. (“Looking Back at the Spanish War” 361)

It is a definition of life that he otherwise states as only possible under democratic socialism at that historical moment in Europe. While it might seem Orwell is using this view of how life ought to be to criticize the actual conditions, we also have to remember that decency is a descriptive in his writings as well. Decency is the way individual people actually are: it is the character of the Spanish soldiers and the officer. As such Orwell's representations show that his view of how life ought to be is actually a normalization of the individual's “one of the right ways of living.”

Conclusion

Decency in Orwell's rhetoric describes and promulgates. In the former functionality, it enables a bridge that is an “invitation to rhetoric” for his English readership. Orwell's careful prose forces the bourgeois reader to “make adjustments” to make the representations of the Spaniards that is part of the communicative act successful, and in the process are “acts of analysis and reflection in [the readers themselves].”

Subsequent arguments, in “Looking Back on the Spanish War,” about the real significance of the Spanish War as the fight of the working class for material gains thereby become not excessive demands, but legitimate ways of living. Their call for material benefits that was “technically possible” becomes an iteration of decency as a critical normative that is a moral obligation to support for the English literate classes. It is a sagacious practice of rhetorical invention because it draws on “persuasive potential that exists within language ... [to] invent culturally effective arguments” (Crowley 168). “Who, after all would dispute the claims of decency?” writes Lang on Orwell, “Who before that, would bother to mention them? In this appeal to something resembling moral intuition, furthermore, we undoubtedly hear an echo of the code of values to English upper-class character”(431).

Furthermore, his reevaluation of his Spanish experience in his essay and his defining of democratic socialism as a program of common decency also shows how the literacy enacts a transformation in both the modality and the meaning of a message. Prominent writing scholars Linda Flower and John Hayes conclude their study of expert writers: “Writers themselves create the problem they solve. The reader is not the writer's only fiction” (468). It is important to understand that Orwell does indeed create a different problem to address in his essay than the one he tackles in his memoir. In the latter, one of his major goals was to bear witness to the purges in Barcelona and thereby put to lie the discourse in England at the time that there was no revolution in Spain at the time and it was only about protecting the elected Republican side from the aggrandizements of the Fascist Franco. However, in his essay, Orwell uses the same experiences and the same key vocabulary to articulate a validation of workers'

rights for material benefits. When he concludes his essay saying the working classes “are right to realize that the real belly comes before the soul, not in the scale of values but in point of time” it recursively functions to reinterpret the meaning of the memoir as well because the text of that experience is transformed by this articulation by the author (“Looking Back on the Spanish War” 361). The meaning of both texts change because the problem Orwell creates in these acts of writing on the Spanish experiences changes in his various engagements with those experiences, and his notion of “common decency” turns from function of character into a political program.

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Of Movies and Money

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Abstract: *The commercial aspect of the film industry is becoming more prominent than its artistic concern in the global community. As a representation of the American film industry, the biggest film industry in the world, this paper will study the commercial aspects of the comic-based superhero movie The Avengers. Superhero movies often prove blockbuster hits and make mind-boggling amounts of money even though they have very loose plots and little artistic value besides the use of special effects. Here, I will discuss Frederic Jameson's critique of postmodernism for promoting schlock or kitsch and for being pro-capitalist. The paper will talk about the cultural implications of these Hollywood blockbusters and the money-making processes beyond the tickets sale such as gaming, toys and other merchandise. It will argue that the film industry has become the biggest cultural industry today run by media moguls and capitalist giants in the light of Stuart Hall's notes on popular culture. Finally, I hope to show that mainstream or popular movies make more money now because they are part of a hegemonic culture created by certain power groups.*

Keywords: *postmodernism, Hollywood movies, money, popular culture, film industry, cultural industry, hegemony*

Introduction

Today, we live in the world of the cinema. Whether we are buying tickets at the multiplexes or spending money on DVDs, we are all glued to this magnetic power which draws us into its virtual 2D¹ world of fantasy and forgetfulness. With the advancement of technology, there are now 3D² movies and the more the fantasy, the more enjoyable the effects of 3D. That is why, probably, comic-book movies have become so popular nowadays. Computers can capture the world of fantasy in the comic books more precisely and perfectly than has ever been done on celluloid.

With its immense money and power, the American film industry, Hollywood, has been able to develop and exploit technological aspects of movie-making better than anyone else. Over the last forty decades, Hollywood's action and science-fiction genres have catapulted sky high and half of these have been comic-book related. Names like *Superman*, *Batman*, *X-Men*, and *Spiderman* are renowned in every corner of the world not for the comics which are their origins but more for the movie adaptations. These comic-book movies are often highly computerized and they make millions of dollars solely depending on their use of special effects.

Gone are the days when movies happened to be realistic or artistic representations of social and political drama. The element of entertainment was there but the message was more important. However, in this twentieth century of increasing capitalism the whole motive behind movie-making seems to be earning money. This “whatever works” attitude can be called postmodern but does it mean that these meaningless movies are what we, the audience, want to see or are we made to think we want to see them. Is there a cultural domination caused by capitalism? If so, then how does it work in the film industry? To find answers to these questions, this paper will examine the most famous comic-book movie of recent times, *The Avengers*, and its commercial and cultural impacts on mass audiences.

The paper is divided into five sections: the introduction, a short historical background of comic-book movies in Hollywood and summary of *The Avengers* plot, an analysis of the postmodern aspects of *The Avengers* and Frederic Jameson’s criticism of postmodernism from his essay “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” a discussion of the categorization and influence of *The Avengers* as popular culture in light of Stuart Hall’s essay “Notes on Deconstructing ‘the Popular’,” and a comparison of the film industry with other cultural industries.

Historical Background of Comic-Book Movies

Comic-based movies have been popular since the 1970s after Richard Donner’s *Superman* (1978) starring Christopher Reeves proved a major critical and commercial success. Why the 1970s? Somdatta Mandal explains it as “a narcissistic phase of American life when people turned their backs on social issues to become absorbed in their own emotional and material well-being” and comic-book movies are easy options of doing so (88).

Though *Superman*, of the DC Comics, was the first major big budget feature film that did well worldwide, today the film industry is ruled by its competitor Marvel Comics. Initially, Marvel was having trouble competing with DC in the film industry but it all changed after the release of Sam Raimi’s *Spiderman* trilogy (2002-2007) followed by the *X-Men* series (2000-2006). Marvel did not look back and within a decade that saw comic-book movies revolutionizing Hollywood, it not only left behind its competitor DC but also became one of the biggest producers in Hollywood, threatening Twentieth Century Fox, Sony, and Universal. Marvel’s success story continued and flourished in the 2010s with one box-office hit after another such as *Iron Man* (2008, 2010), *Thor* (2010), *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011), and finally the movie that broke all records, the mega ensemble, *The Avengers* (2012).

What happens in *The Avengers*? The Norse god Loki, Thor’s evil adopted brother, finds the tesseract, a fictional powerful stone, to destroy Earth. To stop him, the superheroes Thor, Iron Man, Captain America, Hulk, Hawkeye, and Black Widow team up as The Avengers³. There is basically nothing more to the plot except several action scenes leading up to the climactic scene where Loki creates a cosmic gateway above Stark Tower for his alien friends to come and attack humans. The robot-like aliens are stopped by The Avengers in an action-packed finale that shows the multiple superheroes fighting bravely, each using their special powers or weapons, till finally Iron Man flies a nuclear missile into space blasting the alien ship and saving earth. It is pure entertainment or a “popcorn selling” movie with star power like Robert Downey Jr. as Iron man, catchy dialogues, stylish costumes, grand settings, and, most importantly, highly computerized action sequels that appeal to the imagination of the masses.

Does it show anything worth learning or taking away when we return to our real world? I do not say that movies have to be educational since the idea of education puts the burden of schooling and reading on them that makes them sound high-brow or high culture. The Motion Picture Production Code or, the “Hays Code” after Will. H. Hays, however, specifically says:

Most arts appeal to the mature. This art appeals at once to every class—mature, immature, developed, undeveloped, law-abiding, criminal. Music has its grades for different classes; so has literature and drama. This art of the motion picture, combining as it does the two fundamental appeals of looking at a picture and listening to a story, at once reaches every class of society. (qtd. in Tratner 3)

Yet, there must be something to make them valuable beyond the ticket price. Also, if this meaningless grand party like those of Jay Gatsby’s⁴ was a one-time phenomenon, it could be ignored but if it becomes a series of ongoing

propaganda to trick the masses, then we must study its roots and motives to be fully aware and armed. Even Gatsby's parties were not so meaningless after all. The next section will follow up on this idea of emptiness or hollowness in *The Avengers* despite all its "sound and fury"⁵ in respect to postmodernist theories while the argument of high culture and low culture will be further discussed in section four.

The Avengers as Postmodern and Jameson's Criticism

The Avengers is a postmodern movie if we think of Ihab Hassan's definition of the term. It has the qualities of 1) urbanism showing the city, here New York, as the "global village" with indications of "world totalitarianism" by Loki and then "world unification" by *The Avengers*; 2) technologism which includes futuristic impossibilities from "thought control to the conquest of space" (418); and finally 3) anti-elitism since one does not have to be very knowledgeable to understand the plot or actions. It is a perfect blend of anarchy and fantasy, horror and humor which makes it postmodern. Living in today's world, this is probably what we want to see or we think we do and so these movies become so successful. This success, however, is related to money. This is what Frederic Jameson criticizes in his essay, "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." According to him, movies like *The Avengers* are *schlock* or *kitsch*, that is, they are absolute rubbish and yet they are famous worldwide because postmodernism is populist. They make no distinction between high culture and mass or commercial culture but form part of the popular culture.

This popular culture is a highly dangerous thing to Jameson because he realizes that it acts like anodyne, taking people's minds off present reality and making them dwell in a virtual world, albeit momentarily. Jameson condemns the superficiality or "depthlessness" of postmodern works like *The Avengers* movies which makes the world "a glossy skin, a stereoscopic illusion, a rush of filmic images without density" (568). He also points out postmodernism's complacency with capitalism which is nowhere clearer than the film industry. This brings Mandal's comments to mind:

Hollywood is currently one of the largest and most profitable sectors of the U.S. economy. In a few decades it transformed itself from a dying company town into a merchandising emporium of movie games and licensed characters. And it is quickly moving into cyberspace, virtual reality, and digital imaging. (90)

It will not be an exaggeration to say that *The Avengers* is now the emperor of that "emporium," the Hollywood film industry. Now, what is an industry? In dictionary terms, it involves all kinds of economic activities needed for the production and distribution of goods. Then, what about the cultural industry? The range of cultural industry includes "... internet delivery of recordings and song lyrics, and video cassettes of movies for purchase and rental" (Hirsch 2-3). In addition, there are "a small number of powerful 'intermediate' organizations producing and distributing the movies ..." (Hirsch 3). These "intermediate" organizations play a major role in the promotion of movies nowadays, especially if it is a comic book movie like *The Avengers*. They create a sense of attachment and familiarity with the characters in the movie so that people become more and more enthusiastic about the sequels.

Because of this "sequel" factor, filmmakers need to sustain and even increase the spell created the first time. That is why American films are no longer confined to the movie screen but have made inroads to faraway places where essentials like food and education may not have reached but posters of Iron Man or action figures of Thor have. For a film like *The Avengers*, money is not limited to the ticket sale but comes from different directions like gaming, toys, and other merchandise, all of which boost each other's profit shares. By merchandise here, we understand action figures and similar toys. However, the market has now expanded to making almost everything that children, teenagers, and even comic-fan adults use in their day to day life such as plastic cups, aluminum cans, head caps, stickers, key-rings, watches, storybooks, school-bags, pencil-boxes, water-bottles, etc. The list of merchandise includes innumerable things from clothing to stationery with images of *The Avengers*. As a result, a child in some remote developing country is seen wearing a t-shirt with his or her favorite Avengers superhero or playing with its action figure even though he will not be benefitted by Marvel's financial gains.

While almost every household, whether in the East or West, have something or other associated with this iconic though meaningless movie, the capacity of the dominance of its cultural products becomes most evident on

occasions like the Comicon festivals where fans dress as their favorite comic characters. As more and more fans buy masks and costumes of their favorite superheroes, they contribute to the profits of the ancillary industries which in turn helps the big players in the capitalist market. For example, after Marvel's acquisition by Disney in 2010, the profits of all original goods related to *The Avengers* franchise go to Disney. There are, of course, duplicate ones, especially in the sub-continent, which are available at lower prices and benefit local investors. But the more people consume these products, the more excited they become about the movies and vice-versa, even though Marvel Studios executive Justin Lambros "proposed a creative hierarchy in which Marvel's filmmaking operations trumped anything developing in other markets" and this is due to the fact that the movies "command larger audiences and build greater exposure for Marvel's characters" (Johnson 3). The creative and thereby cultural domination of the movies is quite explicit in his comment.

The Avengers as Popular Culture and Hall's Definitions

The previous comment reminds us of the relation between art and money – a dilemma that has been bothering humans from the earliest of civilizations. Today, it is quite impossible to think of producing art without money. From a very economic point of view, if we think of art as just any other commodity then naturally it needs capital or investment for production and then profit for the continuation of that production. But is art an economic product? Can artists act like other members of the economy selling their creativity and should they? For other forms of art like painting or theater, these questions may have controversial answers, but for movies, especially Hollywood, the answer is very straightforward as articulated by Mandal. She calls American films "a medium of entertainment, an economic venture – a business-oriented project like any other industry mainly targeted at profit-making" (80). So, commercialization of art in Hollywood is an accepted fact.

Now comes the question of high and low culture. Is *The Avengers* a high or low culture movie and what difference does it make? Historically speaking, there was no strict distinction between the two till the first half of the nineteenth century. Rob King notes:

Art forms such as Shakespearean drama and opera appealed to audiences both popular and elite, while "high art" was not as yet insulated from more popular forms and genres. American opera houses were centers of entertainment ... By the turn of the century, however, America's genteel middle class sought to impose distinctions between high and low cultural forms, creating prestigious and exclusive cultural institutions – such as art museums and opera houses – that contrasted markedly from venues catering to the masses. (5)

However, with the advent of postmodernism this distinction was stripped away once again and what emerged was the combination of the two as popular culture and *The Avengers* belongs to the category of popular culture.

Stuart Hall gives three definitions of popular culture in his essay, "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'." Of the three, it is the first definition which is most relevant for this study. The first definition, he says, is "the most common sense definition meaning: the things which are said to be 'popular' because masses of people listen to them, buy them, read them, consume them, and seem to enjoy them to the full" (446). In this sense, *The Avengers* is a movie of the popular culture because it is watched and enjoyed by a mass number of people worldwide. The high box-office collections are proof of its immense popularity. However, Hall says that this definition of popular culture is "associated with the manipulation and debasement of the culture of the people" (446).

This brings us back to Mandal's commentary on the attitude of audiences in the '70s when there were no *The Avengers* but other science fiction movies like *Star Wars* which she calls "simply pure entertainment – people go to see them possessed by a great yearning for diversion, to put aside unresolved and pressing matters, to relax and get away from it all" (88). Therefore, as Hall says, people who watch and enjoy such movies must be "living in a permanent state of 'false consciousness'" but immediately refutes this idea saying that "the notion of the people as a purely passive, outline force is a deeply unsocialist perspective" (446). He defends the masses by arguing that "ordinary people are not cultural dopes" (447). Even Mandal's views reinforce this idea that the cultural domination is one of hegemony and not of ideology, that is, people willingly agree to live in the virtual world of *The Avengers* and where there is consent there is always possibility of dissent". Hall stresses this idea saying:

The cultural industries do have the power constantly to rework and reshape what they represent ... they don't function on us as if we are blank screens ... there is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganize and reorganize popular culture ... There are points of resistance; there are moment of suppression. This is the dialectic of cultural struggle. (447)

Two important points to note here are that culture is always changing and that popular culture is low culture since it is being reformed by the dominant culture constantly. The first is easy to grasp since we all know that yesterday's *Star Wars* is today's *The Avengers* and tomorrow it will be replaced by some other blockbuster movie. The general trend among the masses is that just as they become excited very easily, they get bored just as easily. So, cultural industries have to keep up with the fast-changing moods and tastes of people, and if they cannot, they will be quickly forgotten and discarded, ceasing to remain part of the popular culture. Thus, the masses are not as helpless as we often tend to think.

Secondly, while postmodernism advocates the elimination of divisions between high and low culture, merging them into what we know as popular culture, it is worth noting from Hall's essay that popular culture is rather inferior or secondary to what he calls dominant culture. Therefore, despite postmodernist slogans, anything to do with the masses seems to remain low, mass or popular culture. However, definitions and views may vary over time. Shakespeare was part of popular culture during the Elizabethan period because his plays were enjoyed by the masses but now they are considered high culture because only a segment of people related with academics and arts are interested in them. Similarly, when we consider that *The Avengers* cannot be accessible to all classes of society given the money needed to buy expensive tickets, it becomes high culture. (Illegal downloading or piracy has solved this problem for many but that is an issue beyond the parameters of this paper.) At present, we would be satisfied with the consideration that where access is possible, the movie can be easily understood and enjoyed by anyone, regardless of class, creed, or nationality⁷ and that makes it popular culture.

Conclusion

In no other field of the arts, be it literature, theater, or painting, is there so much money and cultural domination involved as in the movies. The only other form which can probably compete is the music industry. Books, plays, or paintings often do not make as much money as movies or music, except, of course, on rare occasions. Here again comes the clash between high and low culture. Reading a book, watching a play, or appreciating a painting is still considered high culture because it requires a certain level of education and taste. It is also a matter of economics, that is, demand and supply. A painting is expensive because it is not produced in mass amounts like music or movies, and though books may be printed in large amounts, not everyone can read or likes reading.

Plays are a bit different since they can be both high and popular culture as we have seen in the case of Shakespeare. Plays and movies work in a similar fashion, appealing to all classes of people, or at least they did before the computer. The key word is technology. Movies can be reproduced innumerable times by machines unlike a play which is performed by live actors. This reproducibility or notion of simulacra⁸ gives movies the benefit of mass productions and distribution, thereby overshadowing a play.

Music comes in second place to movies because, firstly, while songs appeal to our hearing, movies appeal to both our auditory and visual senses. But while musicians often perform their songs in live concerts, beside the sale of audio CDs, movie actors never need to perform their stunts in front of a live audience. So, like a play, music is a performing art while movies are not. Therefore, again, musical concerts cannot be mass produced. Thus, it is quite clear why and how the film industry is the largest cultural industry today.

In conclusion, it can be established that *The Avengers* is a true postmodern movie of the popular kind. It may not have much depth, but being pro-capitalist, it adheres to Jameson's argument. But it supports Hall's ideas as well. While it has great cultural domination escalating its commercial benefits, it does not make complete fools of us. On the contrary, it has to toil hard to please the consumers if it wants to keep on making the big bucks.

Notes

1. 2D refers to traditional two-dimensional screens in movie-theaters.
2. 3D refers to newly developed three-dimensional screens which require special glasses for viewing.
3. The italicized *The Avengers* refers to the name of the movie whereas the non-italicized the Avengers refers to the team in general.
4. Jay Gatsby is the eponymous hero of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*. He throws grand parties in the hope of seeing his long-lost love Daisy.
5. The words "sound and fury" are part of Macbeth's speech in Act 5 Scene V in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.
6. Ideology refers to a state of "false consciousness" according to Marxist theory and hegemony refers to "spontaneous consent given by the masses to dominant groups" as suggested by Antonio Gramsci.
7. Movies are often dubbed in different languages or provided with translated subtitles thus overcoming language barriers.
8. The concept of simulacra (copies) was given by French sociologist Jean Baudrillard

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Living with Nature in the City: An Ecocritical Reading of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*

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Abstract: *This paper seeks to do an ecocritical reading of Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon. Most slave narratives and African American novels have characters that move from the South to the North in order to escape slavery as well as make a better living. However, this novel is unique because Milkman undergoes a process of reverse migration – journeying from the North to the South. Also, the main character achieves a different kind of liberation. Although he is already a free man living in the 1950-60s America, Milkman is alienated from his historical roots because of the influence from his father Macon. The one who guides Milkman toward his ancestry is Pilate, his aunt, who lives in a totally opposite way from Milkman's father Macon. In this paper, I focus on Pilate's relationship to the environment – an ecocritical reading of the character. Pilate is important because she is the only guide for Milkman to achieve liberation. It is interesting that she, who is without a navel, lives in the Northern city, an urban environment, without any use of electricity and gas. Many studies on Pilate have already focused on her relationship to the physical environment, exemplified by her rural living style in the urban space; however, an ecocritical reading will provide various other aspects about Pilate. Pilate's Afrocentric way of living, exemplified by her natural way of living, is significant due to the fact that she reclaims the space that African Americans were exempt from. Black people in America could not claim a space for themselves other than living like the mainstream whites or like a radical extremist. Pilate's relationship to the environment is very unique she is able to have the agency to claim a space for herself as well as be rooted to her ancestry in the urban environment of the North.*

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, reverse migration, liberation, rural/urban, space*

Introduction

Nature, for most people, brings rest and peace from the cares of the civilized world. However, the African Americans' relationship to nature is a complicated one since they also view nature as work, violence, African homeland, and traditional culture due to their history of slavery and to their memories of Africa. In an interview, the African-American writer Toni Morrison comments on how her characters "represent certain poles, and certain kinds of thought, and certain kinds of states of being, and they are in conflict with each other, struggling for sovereignty or some sort of primacy" (*Conversations with Toni Morrison* 178). In *Song of Solomon*, the two poles in conflict with

one another are Pilate, representing earth, and Macon, representing property (76). If someone values earth more than property, then that person is more like Pilate, and if someone values property more than earth, then that person is more like Macon (178). While Macon owns the land by buying property, Pilate possesses the land without any economic transactions but by treasuring her African heritage. Even though Macon and Pilate come from the same background, they hold different relationships to the land, namely, land ownership and land possession, so I use ecocriticism in this paper to look at these two contrasting relationships that Macon and Pilate have, thereby further enriching the reading of the two characters' relationships to nature. Ecocriticism will be used since this criticism is "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty xviii). Here, the physical environment is "the material and tangible conditions in which we live," including the natural environment, built environment of houses and buildings, and socio-economic and cultural environment (*Public Health England*). This ecocritical reading will reveal that as Macon views nature as property, his relationship to nature is ambivalent, and as Pilate prefers coexistence with nature, her relationship to nature ties with treasuring her African heritage for the African-American community.

Macon Dead and Property

For Macon, the key to success and freedom is land ownership. He, for instance, believes that he was able to get married to the black doctor's daughter Ruth because "at twenty-three, he was already a colored man of property" (*Song* 23). As an African-American man, Macon is obsessed with owning a great amount of property because he has seen his father's farm property taken away by force and his father murdered by white people. Having seen not only his father deprived of the right to property but himself as well, just because he was a black man, and having difficulty getting rent money from his black tenants, Macon does not trust anyone except his money and his property (and even these are not entirely trustworthy since they can be taken from him). Macon influences his son to get money, telling him "Money is freedom ... The only real freedom there is" (*Song* 163). The kind of freedom that Macon is talking about is "positive" freedom. Positive freedom in this sense does not use the qualifier "positive" as a value judgment; rather, it means "acting ... in such a way as to take control of one's life and realize one's fundamental purposes" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). With money and property, Macon can take control over many things as he is free to choose from many things, such as enjoying summer vacations in other places, e.g., beach houses, and using a car for transport rather than riding a bus or walking. As slaves, black people did not have any such freedom, so freedom to own property led to more choices to move around, to have education, to live better lives, much as the white people were always able to do.

Although Macon has a certain amount of freedom by having more choices through money and land ownership, it is ironic that he sometimes feels "like the outsider, the propertyless, landless wanderer" (*Song* 27). He tells Milkman, "Let me tell you right now the one important thing you'll ever need to know: Own things. And let the things you own own other things. Then you'll own yourself and other people too" (*Song* 55). He has always believed that if a person owns something, then one can own oneself and others, but the reality was that he felt the opposite way. He feels like an outsider, specifically, to the black community and to his family. For instance, he would take a drive with his family in his Packard and drive around from Not Doctor Street, where black people mostly lived, and toward the wealthy white neighborhoods, especially to display his power. But the black people who view this with jealousy and amusement called his Packard "Macon Dead's hearse" because there was no life in it (33). This reflects Macon's heartlessness and apathy toward everything that he claims to own, including his family:

Solid, rumbling, likely to erupt without prior notice, Macon kept each member of his family awkward with fear. His hatred of his wife glittered and sparked in every word he spoke to her. The disappointment he felt in his daughters sifted down on them like ash. (10)

Willis argues that Macon's relationship to human beings "have become fetishized by their being made equivalent to money. His wife is an acquisition, his son, an investment in the future; his renters, dollar signs in the bank" (97). For instance, when Mrs. Bains, one of his tenants came to talk about her overdue rent, no matter what the circumstances were for the lady, he wanted her rent money. Moreover, when Ruth tries to show him what she calls nature's beauty by drawing his attention to a table centerpiece composed of flowers, Macon ignores her and does not respond. He has no regard for nature's beauty but is only interested in owning land, which also signifies for him nothing but monetary value.

Yet, Macon's relationship to nature is in fact a complex one. Macon is heartless toward nature, but this seems to change when his childhood memories of the South come back. One night, when he comes near Pilate's house to see how they are doing, he keeps his distance and remains hidden from them. He overhears some melody that Pilate, Reba, and Reba's daughter Hagar are singing. Then, he thinks of his home, dry, with no song compared to Pilate's. He yearns for the song that was available in Pilate's house: "He wanted no conversation, no witness, only to listen and perhaps to see the three of them, the source of that music that made him think of fields and wild turkey" (29). Pilate's house is more associated with nature, and the singing reminds Macon of that connection. Although Macon disdains his sister, as he nears the house and hears the song that reminds him of life close to nature, "he felt the irritability of the day drain from him and relished the effortless beauty of the women singing in the candlelight" (29). Nevertheless, he maintains a voyeuristic gaze by just looking at them from outside the house instead of telling them that he was there, maintaining separation from his sister and making no effort later to bring any song into his own home, which is not surprising, for we have already seen that, however complex might be his relationship to nature, his general attitude was to treat it only in its instrumental uses.

Macon's relationship to the land in order to gain economic profit is partly due to his past. As a black man, who migrated to the North and who saw his father murdered by white people and his father's property taken away, Macon does his best to own a lot of things, including nature, to survive in America. Moreover, because black people, as slaves, had been denied the right to property for years, then for them, nature – especially in its connection to land – was a complex place associated with labor and violence. Slaves hated the land because they had to work there all the time, "plowing, sowing, and reaping crops for somebody else, for profit they themselves would never see or taste" (Cleaver 57). Consequently, black people, after getting free status, especially the black bourgeoisie, would "measure their own value according to the number of degrees they are away from the soil" (58). Macon, however, is one example of the black bourgeoisie who believes that liberation can be somewhat measured by owning and controlling nature instead of laboring in it.

Pilate Dead and Earth

Although Pilate has the same background as Macon, since they're siblings, she has a very different relationship to the land. Instead of owning land, Pilate "possesses" land without any desire to gain money. In contrast to the materialistic lifestyle that Macon adheres to, Pilate lives without the use of electricity or gas in an urban environment, operating under what Willis describes as "subsistence economics" (94). Pilate does not have any material desires except for her three treasures: a bag of bones, some rocks, and earrings with her name on them. Instead of apathy toward nature, Pilate has had deep attraction to nature almost her whole life as she loves to chew pine needles, has loved to ever since she was little, and has been smelling like a forest since then (*Song* 27). With "berry-black lips" (38), she also "look[s] like a tall black tree" (39). Inside her house, pine smell and fermenting juice from the wine-making permeates (39). While Pilate does not have conventional material possessions, she seems to possess the whole earth, more specifically, her nation America.

Pilate's bond to the earth is associated with an African myth that partly inspired Morrison to come up with a character who represents earth, a character who has a navel-less stomach. Pilate was born right after her mother died, but she comes out of her mother's womb without a navel. Her "stomach was as smooth and sturdy as her back, at no place interrupted by a navel. It was the absence of a navel that convinced people that she had not come into this world through normal channels; had never lain, floated, or grown in some warm and liquid place connected by a tissue-thin tube to a reliable source of human nourishment" (28). Though she has a mother and a father, being navel-less means, literally, she was born of her own self. An African myth tells the story of how the female womb is similar to the mythical womb of the earth in the sense that they both produce and create life (*Conversations: Toni Morrison* 20). Around 10,000 BC, Africans thought that the female womb created life and that men took no part in giving birth to babies. This was so because of the time gap between the sexual act and the actual birth of a baby. Thus, African men thought that life originated in the female womb. However, after the domestication of sheep (and also of the women), the men realized that they took part in the womb's impregnation. But before this realization, Africans centered on the female womb as creating life, symbolically connecting the womb with the earth's womb. As an African-American female character close to the earth, Pilate is able to create life according to the myth, and because she does not have a navel, she is the beginning of everything (*Conversations: Toni Morrison* 20). Her ability to produce life is shown through taking part in giving birth

to her nephew Milkman. Ruth, wanting to have a baby, pleaded with Pilate for help, so Pilate gave her and Macon some herbal medicine so that they could make love to each other. Consequently, Milkman was born. Pilate, as a self-created individual, helping give birth to other human beings, signifies the earth's life-giving force.

By not using any convenient technology that often comes to rule one's life and by not having a kind of order that a modern individual with an urban setting usually lives under, Pilate as a character, indicates freedom in the "negative" sense, but again not in the sense of a negative value judgment. "Negative liberty is the absence of obstacles, barriers or constraints. One has negative liberty to the extent that actions are available to one in this negative sense" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). If one lives with technological conveniences, one is restricted in the way that the person has to pay for the extra bills and maintenance in managing the house. Pilate does not have nor need to make a lot of money since she does not need to pay for electricity or gas:

She had no electricity because she would not pay for the service. Nor for gas. At night she and her daughter lit the house with candles and kerosene lamps; they warmed themselves and cooked with wood and coal, pumped kitchen water into a dry sink through a pipeline from a well and lived pretty much as though progress was a word that meant walking a little farther down the road. (*Song* 27)

In addition, Pilate's house had no planning, no account of money spending. They were not restricted to a set meal time or a set way of how to live:

No meal was ever planned or balanced or served. Nor was there any gathering at the table. Pilate might bake hot bread and each one of them would eat it with butter whenever she felt like it. (29)

Pilate is free to do what she wants to do with a least amount of restrictions. She does not have to decide on what to eat or ever plan ahead of time. She is free because nobody tells her what to do, and nobody has the right to tell her what to do.

In addition to her exercising freedom, Pilate's natural space is a place of "refuge" and "freedom" for the African American community (Alaimo 139). This co-existence of nature brings balance to life. The African American scholar bell hooks writes about how the African Americans have always been a people rooted to the earth. Through ecological movements, she calls for a restoration of the black psyche to a proper relationship with the land:

For many years, and even now, generations of black folks who migrated north to escape life in the south, returned down home in search of a spiritual nourishment, a healing, that was fundamentally connected to reaffirming one's connection to nature, to a contemplative life where one could take time, sit on the porch, walk, fish, and catch lightning bugs. If we think of urban life as a location where black folks learned to accept a mind/body split that made it possible to abuse the body, we can better understand the growth of nihilism and despair in the black psyche. And we can know that when we talk about healing that psyche we must also speak about restoring our connection to the natural world. (hooks 39)

In *Song of Solomon*, Pilate is the one who brings this healing back to disrupted African Americans living in the North.

In addition, as a contrast to Macon, Pilate, with the least amount of material possessions, values human relationships. Ruth, Macon, and Milkman all find comfort in her house. She is a "natural healer" (*Song* 150), and even though she does not have much, she provides essential things to others. She is the one who is the source of Milkman's birth. Also, since she treasures the *Song of Solomon*, a song of their ancestor, she preserves the African oral tradition for the black community, which is in danger of losing touch with the past. The community members are reminded of Africa, and Southern memories are also kept alive by the presence of this ancestor-figure character Pilate. Both places – the South and Africa – remind the other blacks of a life closer to nature. Morrison intentionally places an ancestor figure in the urban city, arguing that the success of a character depends on the presence of the ancestor, a timeless figure ("City Limits" 43). Pilate literally seems to be timeless because she

continues subsistence living in the midst of urban development. Also, her rural lifestyle is treasured by the black people in the North, for they had migrated to the North and left their homes behind in search of better living. Pilate is able to provide life for black people in old ways, by treasuring her Southern and African heritage.

In other words, Pilate views nature, not as an object, but as a “living entity, an embodiment of [the] past” (Christian 68). Similar to Native Indians, African American folk tradition is deeply tied to the natural landscape. Because African Americans migrated to the North, change in living place meant loss of folk tradition that the Southern land represented. Barbara Christian states:

As in the ancestral African tradition, place is as important as the human actors. For the land is a participant in the maintenance of the folk tradition. It is one of the necessary constraints through which the folk dramatize the meaning of life, as it is passed on from one generation to the next. Setting, then, is organic to the characters’ view of themselves. And a change in place drastically alters the traditional values that give their life coherence. (65)

The connection between the folk culture and the Southern region of America is what sustains the lives of the African Americans. Land is as important as the people because land participates in the continuation of the folk culture (Christian 80). Because of the people’s tie to the land associated with the traditional culture, the break away from that land effects loss of traditional values, the folk culture. Therefore, through Pilate, Morrison connects nature with culture instead of the strict division because African-American culture in itself cannot be maintained without a tie to nature.

Finally, by claiming possession and by transcending the physically-defined realm of culture, Pilate remaps the space that the African Americans have been denied: “Pilate had taken a rock from every state she had lived in – because she had lived there. And having lived there, it was hers – and his [Milkman’s], and his father’s, his grandfather’s, his grandmother’s” (*Song* 329). While most people associate a certain place to be their own because of the community and the culture they build and share through a certain place tied with the culture, Pilate is able to create her space wherever she goes even if she had not formed a community of people in the place. She is able to claim possession, as is shown by her taking a rock from the places that she has lived in. Before she settled down at Detroit, Michigan, just for her granddaughter Hagar, close to her brother Macon, Pilate moved about different places, possessing each in her own way. Her possession does not stop at herself. She attributes the possession to her family and past generations of Deads as well. She transcends the physical environment because she has the agency to create her place wherever she goes. While it is normal to create and associate with an urban culture in an urban environment and rural in a rural environment, Pilate transcends this notion by creating a rural environment in an urban setting. This connects to how she represents the earth and how she can go back to the beginning of America’s frontier past to remap the space for her fellow African Americans. African Americans, because of slavery and racial discrimination, could not find a space to own and possess in America. However, because of the ancestor figure Pilate, African Americans can reclaim the space that they, for generations, toiled and built their homes in but were denied the rights to ownership. Pilate’s possession of the earth places her in the center of life as the beginning, beginning of the U.S. especially, which holds significance to her community of African American people.

Conclusion

Ecocriticism of Morrison’s *Song of Solomon* reveals that Macon’s land ownership and Pilate’s land possession both show the complex relationship that African Americans have with nature. As polar opposites, one vies for supremacy over the other and vice versa. Although Macon privileges the right to property by claiming ownership to the land, he has lost touch with his African ancestry and heritage. By contrast, although Pilate lives without modern conveniences, she is able to maintain and preserve the African heritage for herself and for the black community of the Northern city, which have left the Southern home to pursue a better life.

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Canonization: The Megalomaniac's Way to Dictate the State

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Abstract: *The Autumn of the Patriarch (1975)* by the celebrated Boom author Gabriel García Márquez and *The Lizard's Tail (1983)* by the Argentine author Luisa Valenzuela expose dictator/ruler with physical deformity and supernatural power. The first portrays an unnamed dictator in the Caribbean living for ages and the latter the historical López Rega, Isabel Perón's minister of social well-being in Argentina ruling through sorcery. Within the usual but marvelous Latin American literary framework of magic realism, incoherent narrative, and various perspectives in story-telling, both the novels surprisingly show the use of canonization through which the megalomaniac dictator/ruler dominates the state and its people. García Márquez's dictator sanctifies his mother, the birdwoman Bendición Alvarado, by false means to maintain power. Valenzuela's competitor (metaphorical) in the writing of the biography of the Sorcerer, López Rega, first benefits from the canonization of Eva Perón (the Dead Woman) and then sanctifies himself to sustain power. The paper aims to show a comparative analysis of the two Latin American dictator novels in the light of theories on gender studies, power and psychoanalysis in terms of their representation of mother figures and how the process of canonization is used to create an ideological fantasy among the superstitiously manacled, awe-struck people to perpetuate power.

Moses, in an article on Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat*, focalizes the preternatural reign of "the fictional dictator of *The Autumn of the Patriarch* who lives to be over 200 years old and, in a career coextensive with the history of modern Latin America, tyrannizes his island nation for what seems to his abject countrymen an eternity" and compares this magical representation with the nearly 32 year long reign of the Dominican tyrant Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Gabriel García Márquez, in the quite sympathetic depiction of his forlorn dictator tangled in the pursuit and detainment of power, actually represents what is true in so many other contexts in Latin American countries ruled by dictators. In addition to all the celebrated Boom authors like García Márquez and Vargas Llosa, "Luisa Valenzuela is the heiress of Latin American fiction. She wears an opulent, baroque crown, but her feet are naked" (Carlos Fuentes, qtd. in Stavans 316). *The Lizard's Tail* is her struggle as an author in writing the biography of López Rega, who tries to overpower her in the narrative. While praising Valenzuela's surrealistic language, Gerald Martin comments on the portrayal of the historical López Rega, "The self-styled minister of social welfare is viewed as a deranged evil genius engaged in some atavistic crusade to be achieved through hideous blood rituals" (355-56). This paper compares the two

dictator novels with the aim to show a similar approach toward the use of canonization by the protagonists as a means to substantiate power in dictating the states. In the process, theories on gender studies, power and psychoanalysis are consulted and discussed to validate the parallel attitude of the dictators toward the mother figures. Religious sanctification in an obvious manner arms the dictators to create an ideological fantasy among the people.

The Autumn of the Patriarch presents a General ruling an unnamed Caribbean island who lives to be anywhere between 107 and 232 years old, sires 5,000 children, all runts, all born after seven-month gestations. He is a bird woman's bastard, conceived in a storm of bluebottle flies, born in a convent doorway, gifted at birth with huge, deformed feet and an enlarged testicle the size of a fig, which whistles a tune of pain to him every moment of his impossibly long life. (Kennedy)

His mother, Bendición Alvarado, is the one “who dared scold him for the rancid onion smell of his armpits” (16). She is portrayed with all the traditional maternal abilities of giving birth in a difficult condition, rearing her son through struggle, maintaining the household, etc. She is placed in her suburban mansion where the General goes to visit her and “... she in her maternal rocking chair, decrepit but with her soul intact, tossing handfuls of grains to the hens and the peacocks ...” (18). She suffers all through her life and even has to appear in the commercial district dressed in a flowered dress buying a feathered hat and junk from the stores when Patricio Aragonés, the General's look alike has been killed and the government does not want to spread the news. She says, “Even I believed that it was really my son who had died, and they forced me to smile when people took full-length pictures of me because the military men said it had to be done for the good of the country” (23). When the General was experiencing “life without him” and watching “his” body being desecrated, his anguished refrains of “mother” lead him to a bloody execution of the treacherous generals and members of the parliament with a declaration “from now on I'm going to rule alone with no dogs to bark at me” (27).

The herniated General has a Jesus-like birth story:

... he knew that he was a man without a father like the most illustrious despots of history, that the only relative known to him and perhaps the only one he had was his mother of my heart Bendición Alvarado to whom the school texts attributed the miracle of having conceived him without recourse to any male and of having received in a dream the hermetical keys to his messianic destiny.(40)

The General's adulation of his mother is made obvious as he considers “no one the son of anyone except his mother, and only her” and proclaims her as “the matriarch of the land by decree” (40). However, the birdwoman with uncertain origin and “simplicity of soul” fails to prove her worth for the presidential palace as the fanatics of presidential dignity feel embarrassed at her spreading wet clothes to dry on the balcony from where speeches are delivered, or at her comfort in staying at the maids' quarters, or at her bidding of the President to return empty bottles to the nearby shop on his way. She even goes to the extent of saying in front of the ambassadors that she would have put her son to school if only she knew that he would be the president of the republic, wondering at the grandeur of his appearance. She lived by helping others get healed with her medicinal herbs. She saw poverty at its worst and keeps on directing her son to save up for the future not knowing the fact that she is the richest lady in the land with the accumulated wealth that the General put in her name. Ironically, she comments, “you're only a general, so you're not good for anything except to command” (52). The simple lady could not even understand her son's transformation as he keeps political secrets away from her. Even though he separates her from his political life at the presidential palace, every night when he goes to sleep and says “goodnight” to her, she responds likewise from her suburban mansion. The innate tie with the mother leads the General to believe that her death is a mysterious one and he canonizes her.

The incoherent events that are narrated by various narrators in an almost incomprehensible manner with extraordinary long winding sentences spanning three or four pages, take a turn with Bendición Alvarado's sickness and death. The General has seen astonishing happenings in nature and in his country, and lives on defying death. Characters appear and disappear in his life and in the narrative, but he and his mother live on until one day at his mother's bidding, he discovers to his horror the “steaming ulcers” chewing her back. The mighty ruthless

pervert General nurses his dying mother like a child and shares his meal with her using the same utensils against the advice of the Minister of Health who fears it is some Indian curse. When one Monday morning he finds her gone, he also finds the imprint of her body with her hand on her heart on the linen which could not be erased “because it was integrated front and back into the very material of the linen, and it was eternal linen” (113). As the nationwide mourning takes place with the corpse in display in the farthest corners of the country, a rumor is spread of the living signs of the dead body and people start selling her relics. When the General gets the news of the miracles, he calls on the nuncio from Rome to authorize the canonization of his mother. However, the nuncio refuses to do this by declaring that the imprint on the linen was done by painting. As a result, the holy man faces the terrible wrath of the superstitious people of the country. Later on, Monsignor Demetrius Aldous discovers that the uncorrupted body and the selling of relics are the making of the proselytes of the General. Power-hungry people around the General have been stuffing and decorating the dead body of his mother so that what remains now is “a demolished mother.” Even after knowing the facts, the General does not disclose this to the religiously fanatic people of the country who go on demolishing the Catholic churches due to the refusal of her canonization. The dictator then proclaims “the civil sainthood of Bendición Alvarado by the supreme decision of the *free and sovereign people*” [emphasis added] (133). She becomes “patroness of the nation,” “curer of the ill,” “mistress of birds” and the cult of Saint Bendición Alvarado of the Birds gets established.

The Lizard’s Tail with its confusing narrative and multiple narrators presents an author forever in struggle with “the Papoose”/“Eulogio”/“the Sorcerer”/“Estrella”/“Sixfingers”/“the witchdoc”/“the Sawman”/“Red Ant” whose biography she is writing. The Sorcerer makes the Tacurú, modeled on his childhood favorite anthill, to hide away from the President and perform his sorcery in the winding tunnels, passageways and dungeons. Born with three testicles, raised by a family in the lagoon as his mother died giving birth to him, the Sorcerer’s childhood is a disturbing one. His lifelong obsession is with his sister from the adopted parents Don Ciriaco and Doña Rosa, Sixfingers, who he calls his first love; with his third testicle, Estrella, who he calls his great love and with the Dead Woman (Eva Perón) who he missed in his lifetime but venerates for her mysterious power in curing people. Though he renounces sex, he satisfies Madam President Isabel Perón (in his words, the Intruder) to secure his position – “the power she held over her people was actually a power that came from him, her Master” (25). In a sexually explicit manner the Sorcerer dares say, “*I am the Master, because love cannot master me. I do not breed. I never scatter myself*” (25).

The sarcophagus of the Dead Woman is restored to the Sorcerer, the Generalissimo and the Intruder. They feel excited at the prospect of opening up the coffin and looking at her after twenty years. They organize a ceremony with chants and incense in the mortuary to uncover her embalmed body. They use a diamond to cut through the glass. The entire High Command is called on by the Intruder and the canonization process is talked about. They plan to build a sanctuary with the mausoleum in the center, a monument of solid gold studded with diamonds so that people can come and venerate her. When somebody suggests examining the corpse to be sure it is really the Dead Woman, the Colonel Doctor proposes to amputate a finger and match it with her fingerprint. Against the protests of the Generalissimo – her husband – the finger is cut off. However, the Sorcerer has another plan to replace the finger of the Dead Woman. He wants to drink the water where the finger is submerged so that it is circulated throughout his body: “I shall have the essence of the only woman who matters to me, and Estrella will receive the benefits of a digital femininity that will show her the way” (86). After replacing the forefinger with a blonde’s finger, and getting hold of the sacred finger, he feels, “I am the fathermother neuron. I am also my eminent destiny as pointed out to me by the Finger. The Finger is all I need to fulfill myself, it’s what is lacking in my aide” (91). After the death of the Generalissimo, the Sorcerer continues sanctifying her by spreading her miracles and the people continue praying to her with “votive candles, reliquaries,” gifts in exchange of things that they ask for from her. A voice in the novel utters, “Superstition is slowly hemming us in. Superstition that goes by the name of fear” (66).

Later the megalomaniac builds a human-pyramid to sanctify himself as the Master of Black Lagoon and prepares a masque to inaugurate the splendid work. He hands over a terracotta mask to each of the guests and makes them drink a bowl of the broth prepared with the dead body of the once blind all-knowing Machi who dared contradict him in matters of sacrificing twenty thousand workers of the pyramid.

He would no longer be in his own incarnation, anyway. He would be in each and everyone of his guests who wore his mask. His face. With eyes the exact tone of gray of his own eyes, in tiny holes in the pupils so the guests could look through those eyes. His eyes. Then nothing of what they were to see or what they saw would be offensive to them. (138)

The gory event ends with a trance of the Sorcerer, and the clubbing and bashing of the guests when they attempt to break each other's mask in frenzy. Later when the people of the town of Capivarí build a pseudo-pyramid with wooden furniture, branches in order to burn the effigy of the witchdoc, he mistakenly asks his spy out of whim, "Do you think they're worshipping me?" (158). Meanwhile, the Peoplists working undercover discover the almost empty sanctuary of the Dead Woman and bring the leftover relics to the capital for the mass. The cornered Sorcerer mobilizes "the people so that they would take up the cult again and plunge into action and defend him" (165). The desire to punish the people of Capivarí starts with the disappearance of the Mayor and then the planning of a day when he will deliver a speech and ask them to be annexed with the Black Lagoon. If faced with defiance, he will bring flood upon them by opening the sluice gates of the dam. Unexpectedly, when the day arrives, the Capivarians succumb to his feet. The uprising checked, the witchdoc concentrates on the only important thing ahead and comments on "the apparent indifference of the Central Government" as "Our new separatism is a form of self-communion so we can make love as we like and fertilize ourselves. Estrella. Adored little ball. Little ball of sweetness" (233).

With a dream of impregnating Estrella, the Sorcerer asks the Egret, his loyal aide, to prepare a cradle. He wonders "who knows what kind of cradle it will be, for who knows what kind of child. . . anything engendered by me will be born by me and nourished by me. . . This son will be the son of my exclusive person, because Estrella is me. This son: my continuance, my essence" (182). After collecting his semen in test tubes, he will devote himself to hormones and "develop my other aspect, the feminine one. And in that way I shall engender I, and I himself will be born – be reborn – to support me in my/his/our enterprise" (234). For this, first he decorates the inside of his sacred pyramid with mirrors with the help of blind men as workers, then builds a huge tent for the birth, and continues taking injections to make Estrella become larger. All this time the loyal Egret anoints the transsexual Sorcerer until bidden to be headed towards the sanctuary to call the appointed people back to the Black Lagoon to worship him/her. The novel ends with the death of the Sorcerer by the bursting of Estrella and the flow of a river of blood to the south as the ancient prophecy mentioned.

Both the protagonists are megalomaniacs as "the aggrandizement of the ego in the megalomania which consists in the extreme form of a normal process in addition to entailing a magnification of the ego" (Surprenant 144). The General considers himself as "the Magnificent who arose from the dead on the third day" (Márquez 29) and after his son is conceived of Leticia Nazareno, names him Emanuel. The sense of invincibility overpowers him and makes him so overbold that he shows extreme brutality like serving Major General Rodrigo de Aguilar as a decorated dish and offering the chopped off flesh on plates to the other guests-generals. The Sorcerer, the pseudo dictator, is keen on sexual experiments and violates the Indian maidens by experimenting with their uteri in order to dissolve them. In the process, if any of the girls is impregnated, he has the newborn baby served at his table with an apple in its tiny mouth and eats the flesh. This violent process is to declare to the people that "he is master of lives and properties" (Valenzuela 22). He believes, "In my hands is the fate of the country, may be the entire world, and I mustn't forget it. The pleasures of the flesh are accessories compared to the pleasures of power. They alone matter" (Valenzuela 52).

In addition, both are obsessed about the mother/mother figure in the novels. According to Freud, "obsessional neurosis has as its basis a regression owing to which a sadistic trend has been substituted for an affectionate one. It is this hostile impulsion against someone who is loved which is subjected to repression" (532). The General showers reverence for his mother and wants the whole country to do the same but at the expense of falsification which results in crude treatment of her corpse. Though not his birth mother, the Sorcerer considers the Dead Woman as "Our Lady Captain. A mother to all of us" like the country people do (Valenzuela 95). He has a perverse veneration for her and he goes to the extent of supporting the dissection of her embalmed finger, stealing it and replacing it with somebody else's. "Megalomania consisted in a 'reflexive turning back' and was equivalent to an overvaluation of the erotic object (such an overvaluation introduces variation in the aim and

object of the sexual drive)” (Surprenant 115). The General’s maternal obsession, the Sorcerer’s obsession about the Dead Woman as his muse in creating the aura of power around him and his obsession about self-procreation have a sexual tint in them. Disfiguring of the birdwoman’s and the Dead Woman’s corpses, and experimenting with the third testicle – all have in them, not only the proclamation of the supremacy of the dictators but also the treatment of the over-evaluated bodies as erotic objects.

Rivkin and Ryan in their “Introduction: Feminist Paradigms” focalize the development of feminism and gender studies. They define the Essentialists’ stance, “men must abstract themselves from the material world as they separate from mothers in order to acquire a license to enter the patriarchy, and they consequently adopt a violent and aggressive posture toward the world left behind, which is now constructed as an “object” (767). This objectification can be detected in the canonization of the female figures which validates phallic power. The dead Bendición Alvarado in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* functions as an object that can be used to make profit by instigating the religious fervor of the people. Gerald Martin, while analyzing Tomás Eloy Martínez’s *The Perón Novel* and comparing it with Valenzuela’s *The Lizard’s Tail*, comments on the historical figure of Eva Perón (the Dead Woman in the novel):

Nothing could dramatize more clearly the condition of Latin American woman as object than the treatment of Eva Perón: little more than a good-time girl turned actress, than the Virgin Mother of the People, than a mascot embalmed and carried around the world, for the deranged López Rega to prey on like a vampire. (341)

Martin points out the similarity between *I the Supreme* and *The Lizard’s Tail*:

in particular the would-be dictator’s obsession with his own self-generation and his desire for the entire world – to him a mere abstraction – to be ordered according to the pulsation of his own perverted will. Valenzuela’s inclusion of herself among the guilty cannot disguise the fact that this novel links thematically Argentine solitude, writing and masculine will into a chain which needs to be deconstructed before that still unhappy country can clarify its own past and invent a new future for itself. (357)

Even when the Sorcerer experiments with his body for self-generation, his sense of separation from the previous self is evident as he asks the Egret to call him the Queen instead of Master. The Egret puts a clay mold all over his body so that he looks feminine with breasts. Thus, in sanctifying himself with the birth, the Sorcerer is overpowering the female entity.

According to Biron, “Masculinity for men functions as both an unquestioned ontological guarantor of gender identity and an unstable, ever-shifting demand for credible performances of that identity” (11). Both the protagonists continue to hold onto their identity as the invincible dictators and take actions to guarantee the continuation of their existence. The professing of their masculinity is in line with their desire to cling onto power. The canonization/sanctification of the General’s mother, the Dead Woman, and the Sorcerer not only establishes cults and ensures the selling of relics, but also gives something to the superstitiously-manacled people of the country to chew on while the dictators exercise absolute power. Biron quotes Connell in establishing the relationship between masculinity and power:

In order to think about masculinity as simultaneously a factor in establishing power positions, a constructed category of difference and hierarchy and, a desired quality, trait, or state of being, it is important to employ at a threefold model of its structure, “distinguishing relations of a) power, b) production, and c) ... cathexis (emotional attachment)”. (13)

While tracing the long history of horror in Latin America, Alok Bhallain ““Power, like a Desolating Pestilence’: Dictatorship and Community in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*” sums up, “*The Autumn of the Patriarch* is both a political novel which analyses the origin and structure of dictatorship, as well as, a moral fable” (1597). However, as we look into these novels from the gendered point of view, the moral fables become apparent on how they represent mothers as all caring, all enveloping, all enduring traditional figures who can easily be sacrificed to climb up and stay at the top of the ladder of power. Biron justly points out, “They (the theorists of masculinity) attribute

the danger of such fictions to their being predicated on the objectification, subordination, or repudiation of femininity and women” (147).

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**LANGUAGE AND
APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

Importance of Multi-Stakeholder Needs Analysis to Develop LSP Module: Migrant Workers' Module in Perspective

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Abstract: *This paper reviews and reflects on the needs analysis conducted to develop a trade-specific Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) module for prospective migrant workers incorporating English-Bangla-Arabic in a tripartite collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL). This paper explores the multifaceted nature of this needs analysis by asking some questions – what module, for whom, to serve what purpose, at what cost, under whose supervision, by whom and under what logistic setting. The analysis was carried out by observing classes and interviewing prospective migrant workers at Technical Training Centres (TTCs), interviewing the TTC instructors, conducting focus group discussions (FGD) with returnee migrant workers, sharing ideas with ILO personnel and advocacy groups such as BRAC Migration Program (MP). This process helped the researchers identify the target groups' fragmented knowledge about target discourse situations which was somewhat compensated by the experiences of returnees. The expertise of the instructors helped to categorize the typical strengths and weaknesses of target groups and under continuous efforts of ILO to enforce international best practices for a decent working environment for migrant workers. Taking into consideration the multiplicity of issues and various inputs from the stakeholders, this paper underpins the importance of a multi-stakeholder needs analysis for better comprehension of the target discourse situation and appropriate delivery of services with some suggestions for future LSP modules.*

Keywords: *trade-specific, LSP, multi-stakeholder, needs analysis*

Introduction

Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) is considered an effective approach to teaching-learning a new language for a need-specific purpose and is gradually taking over the general-needs approach to learning languages. These new LSP courses are different not only in their content but in every other possible aspect – starting from the financing authority, end-users, instructors, administrators to even the course or material designers. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) rightly remark that English is no longer deciding its future path but becoming subject to the expectations of the learners. While agreeing with this stand of the author we would attempt to add that learners alone are not the stakeholders to influence the destiny of an LSP course.

On another note, while these courses are bringing new opportunities, the diversity of issues is posing challenges to module development, especially to LSP practitioners. One of the challenges emanates from the overwhelming expectations from the financing organization, language learners, and government entities while the academic challenge is also there for the course designers. They need to keep themselves aware of the international best practices while making the modules context-specific, relevant, and learner-friendly. For achieving that end, LSP practitioners need to give special attention to the needs analysis (NA) process.

Background of the Study

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) refer to some major politico-economic developments in the world which engendered the growth of ESP as a strong branch of language teaching. They identify an “age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international level” (p. 6) during the post Second World War (WWII) context which resulted in a demand for “tailored-to-fit” (Belcher, 2006, p. 135) language skills. But their identification of the post WWII economic expansion does not necessarily restrict the growth of ESP/ LSP only to that context. New scenarios are evolving in every geographical context and LSP practitioners are trying to cope with those situations with necessary adaptation, omission, revision of the standard practices course design. Bangladesh, a highly populous, developing country with slow industrial growth, has long been exporting manpower to Middle Eastern countries on a large scale and trying increasingly to open up new markets for its young manpower. The growing demand for skilled manpower from the manpower-shortage countries is making pre-departure training in trade-skills and in language a compulsory phenomenon. These issues result in LSP courses, both in English and Arabic, for the prospective migrant workers of Bangladesh because competence in the target language is a deciding factor in being selected for overseas jobs and it helps to reduce exploitation and increase the possibility of safe migration. Lack of trade skills and gaps in target language competence have always been obstacles for the Bangladeshi migrant workers to get a competitive salary abroad while migrant workers from other Asian competitors are quite well-paid and also have the bargaining power. Moreover, the aforementioned incapacities of the migrant workers lead to various sorts of extortion by middlemen and recruiting agencies at home and employers abroad.

All these issues led ILO to develop trade-based language modules for the prospective migrant workers of Bangladesh in four trades, namely housekeepers, care providers, electricians, and construction workers, which will be delivered in the TTCs under the Bureau of Manpower, Training and Employment (BMET). BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University acts as the service provider in this tripartite collaboration.

Research Questions

The study aims at finding answers to following research questions:

- a) What are the roles of different stakeholders in the needs analysis of an LSP course?
- b) How do the interests of the stakeholders complement each other?

Literature Review

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) give supreme importance to the issue of identifying learner needs before designing any ESP course. They also suggest that course designers know the ethnographic background of the learners. Belcher (2006) says, “It is probably no exaggeration to say that needs assessment is seen in ESP as the foundation on which all other decisions are, or should be, made.” David M. Litwack (1979) gives us a six-step model for developing ESP courses and keeps “Analyze trainee and job needs” (p. 384) at the top of the list. Though the model was given for developing ESP modules, it can be used with contextual variations to develop any LSP module. Any fault resulting from the miscomprehension of the first step, namely analyze trainee and job needs, will increase difficulty in all the later steps of Litwack’s model. Kourilova (1979) advises that the course designers gather information objectively. The author, moreover, observes that the information collected and assessed objectively helps the researchers focus to develop content which will be appropriate for the target group. On the other hand, Robinson (1991, as cited in Benesch, 1996) argues that needs analysis is “influenced by the ideological preconceptions of the analysts” (p. 724) and Brindley (1989) also refuses to acknowledge any “objective reality” of the NA, as cited in Robinson (1991, p.7).

To enquire into the target needs, course designers usually consider the needs in “an objective sense” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) and the real learners’ involvement in the process plays an important role in maintaining

objectivity. However, the learners have their own limitations if we consider the situation of migrant workers. In this case, migrant workers often have very little knowledge of the target job and discourse situation. Thus, a segmented view with various limitations may come out from one stakeholder group which must be addressed by the valuable input from a different stakeholder. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) refer to the “conflicting perceptions” which the learners and the course designers or teachers may have regarding their “idea of the necessities” and “view as to their lacks” (p. 56). Again, Litwack (1979) proposes to do a task analysis of the target learner group to “set the priorities of language skill needs: oral versus written, or receptive versus productive skill needs” (p. 384).

To gather objective and authentic data on learners’ target needs, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) prefer more than one method – questionnaires, interviews, data collection, and informal consultations with sponsors, learners, and others. Many experts in this field propose the importance of both the quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources to develop an effective and purposeful LSP course and functioning teaching materials. The authors recommend that the course designer apply at least two or three of the aforementioned methods. For accumulating information, the course designer needs to know why the language is needed and how the language will be used. The authors also suggest that the course designer find out what the content areas will be to analyze the target situation. It is equally significant to know with whom the learners will use the language, in what context and where. After receiving the answers of the queries from different sources, the course designer needs to analyze learning needs. For analyzing learning needs, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) propose a framework that includes a set of questions such as why the learners are taking the course and how the learners learn.

Methodology

This research was conducted in multiple institutional settings which helped the researchers access all the involved stakeholders to understand target-language needs and also to enrich the input for appropriate course design. Qualitative data have been collected through meetings with ILO, the financing authority, TTC principals and instructors of Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre (BKTTC) and Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Mahila Technical Training Centre (SFMMTTC) while quantitative data has been collected from thirty-three TTC instructors of Bangladesh. Focus group discussions with the returnee migrant workers was arranged by BRAC Migration Programme and Nagar Daridra Bostibashi Unnayan Sangha (NDBUS), both of which are advocacy groups working to ensure safe migration policy in Bangladesh. BKTTC and SFMMTTC were given priority considering multiple issues for all the stages of the pilot phase: suggestions from ILO, proximity of the TTCs from BRAC University, target group availability, and the quality of the facility. The final reason for prioritizing these TTCs was that newly developed LSP modules were supposed to be implemented in those two TTCs first. Interview sessions with a total four batches of learners were conducted in BKTTC and SFMMTTC while the learners were receiving training with the existing training set up.

Findings

Data gathered from the interviews, focus group discussions, and meetings reveal some of the overarching perceptions of all the stakeholders. A few important but aforethought issues also came to light.

Interview with the instructors of different TTCs.

| Question | Ans: a | Ans: b | Ans: c | Ans: d |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|--------|
| 1. Do you need to conduct English/ Arabic classes at the TTC? | 23 (Yes) | 10 (No) | | |
| 2. Do you have any prescribed text in English/ Arabic? | 7 (Yes) | 16 (No) | 10 | |
| 3. How often do you conduct English/ Arabic class in a week? | 13 (1/week) | 3 (2/week) | 17 (3/week) | |
| 4. What is the duration of each class? | 33 (45 minutes) | 1 hr (60 minutes) | 90 minutes | |

| Question | Ans: a | Ans: b | Ans: c | Ans: d |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| 5. What type of modules do you use to teach English/ Arabic? | - (Specific) | 33 (Generic) | | |
| 6. Have you ever selected any trade-based (subject) content to teach English/ Arabic? | - | 2 (yes) | 31 (no) | |
| 7. What is the regular class size? | 30 (25-40) | 3 (41-60) | (above 60) | |
| 8. Which of the following materials do you have in your classroom? | 33/33 (whiteboard) | 6/33 (multimedia) | 6/33 (TV) | 6/33 (VCD) |

Figure 1: Result of the interview with the TTC instructors

The total number of respondents in the interview was thirty-three trade-based instructors of TTCs who need to conduct language classes along with their regular responsibilities. Twenty-three respondents were conducting Arabic and English language classes at the time of interview with regular trade-based sessions. The remaining ten respondents had started conducting language classes. Seven respondents positively answered that they followed the prescribed language module in the classroom but that is a generic module. Other respondents admitted that they followed different modules chosen from the market. Thirty-nine per cent respondents confirmed that they took language classes once a week where fifty-one per cent respondents took sessions thrice a week. This frequency depends on the course duration and the importance given on language sessions for a trade. All the respondents conformed to the forty-five minute duration of a language class. But language courses for the trades of “care providers” and “housekeepers” are given much importance and are usually given more time. Two of the respondents replied positively to the issue of using trade-based materials in the language classroom. Ninety per cent respondents experienced regular class size of twenty-five to forty learners. Ten per cent of the respondents reports on class size of forty to sixty. Finally, they were asked the question on available teaching-learning and audio-visual materials in TTCs. All of them said that they had whiteboards in the classroom. But television and CD/DVD sets are not available in all the TTCs. Though language modules will be developed for four different trades, all the trades do not always remain in offer in all the TTCs. The TTC has set entry-level minimum academic qualifications for all four trades. The minimum academic qualification for the other three trades is as follows: Care Providers - SSC Graduates; Electrician - JSC graduates; Construction Workers - fifth grade graduates. Respondents are unanimous on the point that, housekeepers’ trade draws not only the lowest proficiency level participants, but also contains the mixed-ability learner group with wider gap than any other trade. Some highly qualified learners are often enrolled in the Electricians trade and in Care Providers trade while housekeepers’ trade gets some SSC graduates.

Meetings, interviews and FGD. Qualitative data from the interviews, meetings and focus group discussions brought some surprising issues. Some issues overlap with multiple stakeholders while some are unique. ILO personnel delineate in the meeting the rationale for being involved in the project and they clarified that the LSP course development is just a minor part of an umbrella project which includes many stakeholders. ILO personnel and TTC were quite aware of the mixed-ability training batches and agrees with the TTC instructors regarding the content-level difficulty. They propose to keep the average linguistic and cognitive competence in consideration for the course materials. Advocacy groups supported this with information of returnee migrant workers. They described the various ways of exploitation by recruiting agencies at home and by the employers in the foreign countries. Steps for legal migration are also highlighted by them.

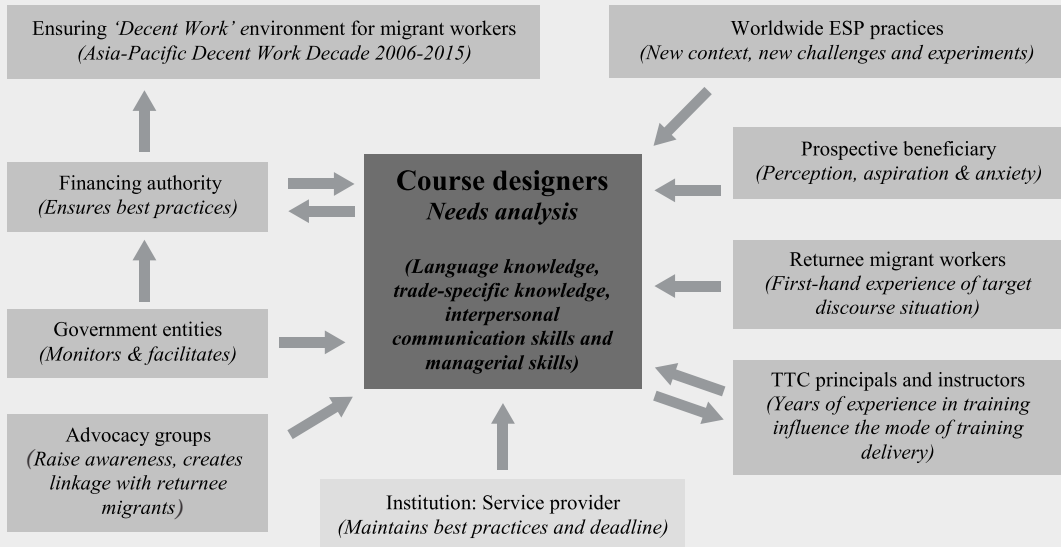


Diagram 1: Inter-stakeholder roles and relationships

The diagram on inter-stakeholder roles and relationships shows how all the aforementioned meetings and interviews between and among the stakeholders clarified the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder which ultimately helped in the later steps of the LSP module development activities.

An FGD session was arranged with six female returnee migrant workers who opened up the treasure of their first-hand experiences and sufferings in foreign countries. Only one returnee, out of the six attendees, could recollect good memories from her first tenure in Saudi Arabia. Other five attendees described horrific stories of their sufferings. Three of the attendees received language training in Arabic before being recruited. But outright rejection of the training was evident as they gained no benefit from it. This interview helped the module developers to realize that the target discourse situation will mainly be monologue-based or dialogic where short responses from the migrant workers would often suffice to complete the communication as they will remain on the receiving-end of the commands of their employers.

All the stakeholders, involved in the needs analysis process helped the course designers to identify the target needs for the learners of each trade. Suggestions, feedback from ILO and advocacy groups helped the course designers to realize safe migration related issues. They also gave input on different steps of safe migration, importance of legal money transfer, and adaptation approach to the culture shock in a foreign country. Interview of the TTC instructors provided authentic states of logistic setting in all the TTCs because one objective of the project was to replicate the language manuals in all the TTCs of the country. Instructors of BKTTTC and SFMMTTTC provided great insight into the content-knowledge and helped course designers prioritize contents. Experiences of the returnee migrants helped to identify roles of housekeepers and care providers in a foreign country. According to them, duties and responsibilities of these two trades often overlap. TTC instructors supported the experiences of the returnees and suggested keeping basic housekeeping related contents in the module of the care providers. The provision in the project was for two separate modules, namely Arabic-Bangla and Bangla-English. This provision has been changed, sequencing the languages in English-Bangla-Arabic in the same manuals.

Recommendations

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) focus on knowing the ethnographic details of the learners. Besides assessing information on the learners' background, both the authors guided the course designers to investigate the

surroundings of the class. Thus, the study has emphasized on the importance of knowing the age, level of study, years of study gap, motivation, and logistic setting of the TTCs during needs analysis. Moreover, the study has identified one of the major challenges in engaging the trade-instructors in the language classroom. Though the instructors are competent in their respective subject contents, they are not well aware of pedagogy and practices of language teaching. Therefore, the study proposes to recruit teachers from the target-language background or to train the trade-instructors for facilitating language sessions. As mentioned earlier in the study, the learners are from a low language context. Therefore, this clearly suggests to the course designers to use simple semantic structures and important trade-specific lexis, which will be useful in the target discourse situation. Furthermore, the study recommended the development of audio-visual materials to complement the manuals and help the teachers to play the role of facilitator. This paper has suggested that the course designers choose eclectic methods to reach the objectives of any LSP course.

The roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder need to be properly identified and subsequently valued by all the parties but more specifically by the service providing institution. Moreover, relationships among all the parties need to be systematically maintained without hurting any stakeholder's sensitivities or reservations if there is any. This issue will be clearer if we consider the complex communication dynamics between public and private sector entities in Bangladesh. Designing relevant, trade-based LSP modules is, of course, of great importance. But developing a sense of ownership among all the stakeholders is equally important for proper implementation of the modules and for their eventual sustainability. New research scopes are there for finding out the subtleties of LSP module design where English is not the only concern but Arabic and languages of some other countries, where migrant workers from Bangladesh go fortune-hunting, are gradually becoming important.

Conclusion

At no point can the importance of needs analysis be put into question since it is the foundation for designing an LSP course. Though every LSP has some commonalities, they are significantly distinctive as well. The scenario varies from one LSP context to another LSP context. Earlier experience may somewhat help a course designer. However, it is better to be prepared to confront newer or even unexpected scenarios due to the interests of multiple stakeholders. Finally, this study has justifiably shown how the involvement of different stakeholders in needs analysis helped the course designers to develop effective and functional language manuals for each of the trades ensuring a sense of ownership among the stakeholders.

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Reforming a Community to Serve the Underserved: ESP Modules for Midwifery Course at BRAC University

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Abstract: *This paper examines the impact of an ESP course designed by BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL) for midwives to develop their English language skills, and to develop them professionally. The course is expected to reform midwives, to empower them with English language skills and professional development by taking part in global development. The community then will be able to reduce the maternal as well as newborn mortality in order to increase coverage of quality maternal and neonatal health services. The course is being offered by BRAC Institute of Global Health (BIGH) with the financial support from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The paper shows to what extent an English language course can help midwives in their profession where they sometimes need to interact in English with foreign doctors, write prescriptions, and other official documents in English. The study is carried out among the course teachers with almost the same experiences, exposure, and education, and among course participants with Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) backgrounds. The data and information have been deduced from a questionnaire, focus group discussions with students, and observation of their performance. The paper shows that most of the participants, having limited English language proficiency, have been able to improve their basic English communication skills. It also shows that almost all students can maintain patients' portfolio, write prescriptions, reports, discharge certificates, and so on in English. They even feel relaxed enough to speak in English when necessary. It is suggested that ESP modules should concentrate on needs assessment to make it more productive and target oriented.*

Keywords: *Midwifery, English for Specific Purposes, BRAC Institute of Global Health, BRAC Institute of Languages, BRAC University*

Introduction

The concept of midwifery services in the context of Bangladesh is not something new though it was eclipsed from the common. The East Pakistan Nursing Council was fully constituted in 1952 as a Regulatory Body for Nursing Education and Services. After liberation, it was renamed as the Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC, 2015). According to the World Health Organization (2015),

midwifery encompasses care of women during pregnancy, labour, and the postpartum period, as well as care of the

newborn. It includes measures aimed at preventing health problems in pregnancy, the detection of abnormal conditions, the procurement of medical assistance when necessary, and the execution of emergency measures in the absence of medical help. (para. 1)

WHO (as cited in Bhuiya et al., 2015) has identified Bangladesh

as one of the 57 countries facing a crisis in the supply of human resources for health (HRH). The density of professionally trained health personnel is only 7.7 (5.7 doctors and 2 nurses) per 10,000 individuals; this is coupled with the imbalance of urban (80%) and rural (20%) distribution while about 26% of the population lives in the urban areas and the remaining 74% lives in the rural area. The majority of the rural population relies on informal sectors, with untrained or semi-trained health service providers, where 71% of the deliveries still taking place at home. Of them, 95% births are attended by untrained providers. (p. 15)

BRAC Institute of Global Health (BIGH), BRAC University has started the Community-based Midwifery Diploma Programme (CMDP) in an attempt to further improve maternal and newborn health in Bangladesh. According to Bhuiya et al. (2015), the program targets to ensure availability of at least one midwife in all the 4,500 unions (consisting of several villages) of the country by 2030, starting from the hard-to-reach under served areas. In 2012, six academic sites were developed in five different districts (two sites in Sylhet and one each in Mymensingh, Khulna, Dinajpur and Cox's Bazar) with the help and hosting of partner non-government organizations (NGOs) in each site. The program, with financial support from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and technical support from a Johns Hopkins affiliated organization (Jhpiego) along with Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC) developed a competency-based curriculum targeting to meet national and global standards for midwifery education. Core courses or the modules of the program have been developed by the clinical team of the program using the latest and evidence based information. BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL) of BRACU has developed six English Language Modules focusing on the clinical modules of the respective semester. The clinical team of BIGH and faculty members of BIL have trained midwifery teachers in their respective modules.

The rationale of this paper is to bridge the gap between developing English language skills and implementing these skills for the economic and professional development of midwives. WHO, in a document presented in the newly updated Strategic Directions for Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery services (2011-2015), seeks to enhance the capacity of nurses and midwives to contribute to:

- universal coverage
- people-centered health care
- policies affecting their practice and working conditions, and the
- scaling up of national health systems to meet global goals and targets. (para.3)

BIGH, being a part of BRAC University, seeks to maintain a global standard of education and to help midwives contribute to the economic development of the individual and of the country as well. That is why BIGH has decided to incorporate supplementary English modules into midwifery core courses. EIA (as cited in Erling et al., 2015) writes the "English in Action" project, which is running in Bangladesh from 2008-2017, "aims to contribute to the economic growth of Bangladesh by providing English language as a tool for better access to the world economy." Again, economic development is intertwined with the development of English language skills as well as professional development. As Erling et al. (2015) comments,

English language teaching projects in development contexts are often underpinned by a perceived relationship between English language ability and economic development. One national context in which the relationship between English and economic gain has been a prime motivator for international development initiatives is Bangladesh. (p.7)

To comprehend the midwifery curriculum, to contribute to the economic development, to develop professionally, and to meet and focus on the national and global standards for midwifery education, midwives must use English language skills. Keeping all these things in mind, BIL has developed an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course for the Midwifery Diploma Programme. This paper will show to what extent ESP

modules can help the midwife community to reform and empower them with English language skills and professional development that will result in reducing the maternal as well as newborn mortality rate by increasing coverage of quality maternal and neonatal health services.

Background

The ESP movement, according to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), originated from the massive expansion of scientific, technical, and economic activities on an international scale in the 1950s and 1960s. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), when the Second World War ended, new scientific, technical, and economic demands grew and English became the international language. Therefore, language teachers were pressed to meet the demands of people outside the teaching profession. Furthermore, a dramatic change took place in linguistics, which demanded focus on communicative aspects of language and learners' needs in specific contexts. Silva (2002) mentions that English for Specific Purposes reflects learners' specific purpose in learning the target language, and is a response to learners' needs and the acquisition of language relevant to communication outside the classroom, especially in their studies and future careers. Chien et al. (2008), browsing through teaching objectives of ESP education in Taiwan, affirm ESP "as a learner-centered and content/context-based approach that primarily involves professional and practical English, and next meets learners' specific needs in utilizing English in their specific fields such as science and technology" (pp.115-116).

Murray (2012) conducted a research on a pilot English language intervention model for undergraduate trainee nurses. His intention was to evaluate the efficacy of, and practicalities around, designing and delivering a range of different language proficiency intervention models. The process seeks, ultimately, to produce a workable and comprehensive English language strategy and finally he has been successful.

Mazdayasna & Tahririan (2008) developed a profile of the ESP needs of Iranian nursing and midwifery students. Over one-third of the students expressed their dissatisfaction with the course and almost all the subject-specific instructors were dissatisfied with their students' language skills. The paper shows the course to be ineffective as it does not sufficiently take into account students' (1) learning needs, (2) present level of foreign language proficiency, (3) objectives of the course, (4) resources available in terms of staff, materials, equipment, finances and time constraint, (5) the skill of the teachers and the teacher's knowledge of the specific area.

Ghalandari & Talebinejad (2012) analyzed ESP textbooks taught in Shiraz Medical College. The paper found that ESP textbooks in medicine are appropriate books for the purpose of medical English for Iranian physicians and compatible to students' needs and achievement.

Studies conducted by Azam et al (2010) and Aslam et al (2010) show that knowledge of English among the common people, in particular rural people, brings economic value and development. Azam et al (as cited in Erling et al., 2015) used the India Human Development Survey of 2005 to quantify the effects of English-speaking ability on wages. Their findings show that being fluent in English (compared to not speaking the language at all) increased the hourly wages of men by 34 per cent. This paper will expose the impact of ESP modules in developing English language skills and professional development to contribute to the economic development of the community as well as of the nation.

Methodology

Participants. To carry out the research, the researchers interviewed 12 English teachers and about 295 students in six different hubs. All the teachers have their Bachelor of Science in Nursing from different private universities and government colleges. Among them, seven teachers are female and five are male and their age limit is 25-30 years. They are also trained in both Midwifery and English modules. So, all the teachers have almost the same level of experience, exposure, and education. On the other hand, students have diverse socio-economic, socio-cultural and educational background. Those from remote communities were selected and excluded students from the Dhaka hub. About 180 students, belonging to the first cluster, have completed five modules whereas others, belonging to the new cluster, have done only their first module. The students in the first cluster in all the hubs have mixed ability background with SSC and HSC education. Besides, some of them have long study break. As a result, their age ranges from 15 to 32 years. On the contrary, the students in the new

batches have the same educational background with HSC education without any study break and their ages range from 17-22 years.

Data Collection

The researchers visited six hubs in five different districts as mentioned above. They collected data and information from both teachers and students using a semi-structured questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with students, and observation of their performance. The researchers put students into different groups of 10-12 members and conducted the FGD. The researchers also went to different hubs to conduct tests on speaking skills with the prescribed rubric. While conducting assessment on speaking, they also observed their performances.

Findings and Results

The data have been analyzed on the basis of the questionnaire, FGD, and observation. After collecting and analyzing the data, it has been found that almost all students and teachers are satisfied with the English modules.

As mentioned, English modules were expected to assist students to understand midwifery modules. Responses to the question “To what extent does the English course help you understand your midwifery module?” are given below:

Saroti Rani: English course helps me understand our midwifery module 99 %.

(LAMB, Dinajpur)

Dulali Akter: The English course helps me understand my midwifery module very much, because our midwifery education curriculum is in English.

(Hope Foundation, Cox’s Bazar)

Dilara Khatun Dola: Yes, of course the English course helps me understand my midwifery module very much.

(Partners in Health and Development, Khulna)

Joya Roy: English course help our midwifery module 100%.

(LAMB, Dinajpur)

As supplementary modules, English modules therefore help students to understand their core modules. Midwifery students are also expected to communicate with foreigners as it has been written in the module outline of the midwifery course: “improvement of speaking and listening abilities with emphasis on initiating conversation with foreigners and constructing arguments” (Module outline, 2013, p. 3). Keeping this in mind, BIL has incorporated different types of speaking activities in contexts into the modules. Here are some responses to the question “Have you communicated in English with a foreigner or anyone else throughout this English course? If yes, how it was.”

Jesmin Akter: Yes, I have communicated in English with many foreigners. It was very excellent and interesting moment and they understood what I say.

(LAMB, Dinajpur)

Joya Roy: I have communicated in English foreigner and my communication is interesting.

(Partners in Health and Development, Khulna)

Ismat Ara Alam Rani: Yes, I communicated with a foreigner in English. When I communicated in English with a foreigner, I felt proud and happy.

(Partners in Health and Development, Khulna)

English modules have thus been successful in making students speak with foreigners at least to serve the basic needs. Sometimes, students need to maintain patients’ portfolio, write prescriptions, reports, discharge certificates and so on in English. About half of the students have claimed to be successful in these areas.

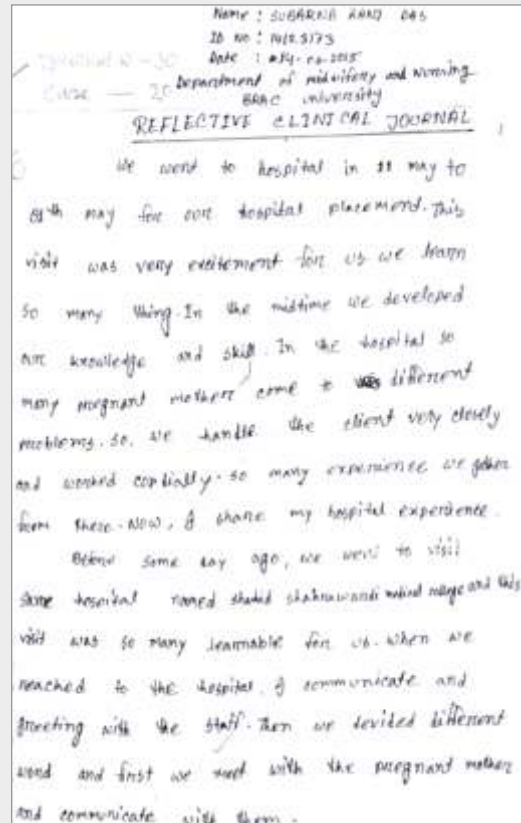
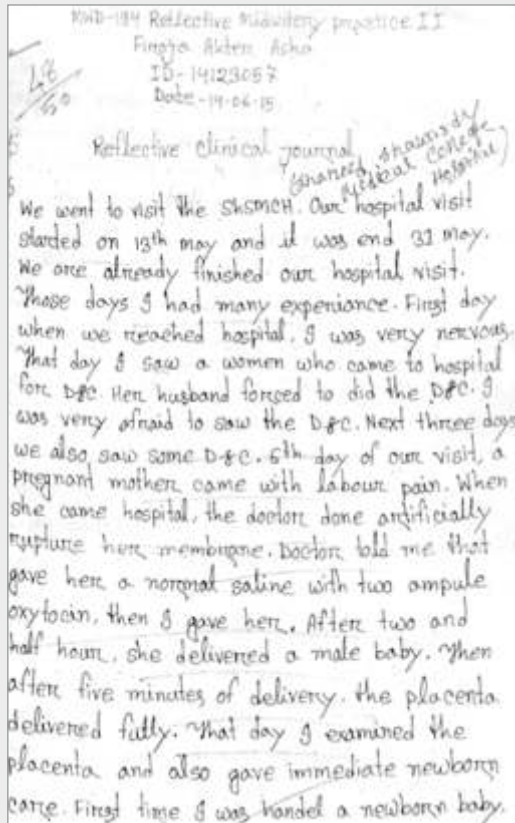
Sayed Begum: I have written doctor's advice in English. They have praised me very much.

(Hope Foundation, Cox's Bazar)

Jesmin Akter: Yes, I have written a report according to doctor advice. I have been successful.

(Hope Foundation, Cox's Bazar)

Students also need to write reflective clinical journals. Teachers are satisfied at students' writing in the clinical journals and have graded them well. Here are two samples.



While conducting a speaking assessment, we have found from performance observation almost at all hubs that students in the new batch, i.e., those who have completed the first module performed much better than the old ones who had completed five modules. Besides, they seemed to be very enthusiastic and motivated. In investigating further, we discovered from teachers that all these students have similar backgrounds with HSC education and all of them are regular students. We also came to know that almost every day they speak with foreigners who are posted at the hubs. On the other hand, the old students' performance was poorer because they have had a long study break and were less motivated. Still, both old and new students, from their own perspectives, are developing themselves linguistically and professionally with the help of the English modules. Even Midwifery Program stakeholders Bhuiya et al. (2015) commented that

The BRAC Institute of Language (BIL) has been responsible for developing the English language teaching modules for each semester, focusing on the clinical modules of the respective semester for the students and teachers. The textual comprehension exercises, case studies, role plays etc. have been set and prepared on maternal and newborn health

issues, so that students can learn the language relevant for the context. This has made English language learning very effective. BIL has been very successful in developing the modules and the teaching methods from scratch, to cater to the needs of the midwifery students. (p.17)

Discussion and Recommendation

Empowering community, in particular empowering women, is a crying need today throughout the whole world. Midwifery education as well as midwives are crucial to reducing maternal and newborn mortality rates and increasing the coverage of quality maternal and neonatal health services. So, for quality education, quality modules for specific learners are needed. BIL has been successful in designing and developing ESP modules for midwives as it has maintained the criteria to develop ESP modules whereas Mazdayasna & Tahririan's study (2008) has revealed that ESP modules for Iranian nursing and midwifery students failed to achieve the target due to lack of maintaining the criteria for students' (1) learning needs, (2) present level of foreign language proficiency, (3) objectives of the course, (4) resources available in terms of staff, materials, equipment, finances, and time constraint, and (5) the skill of the teachers and their knowledge of the specific area. Hence, before designing and developing an ESP module, all the criteria should be considered by the resource personnel.

To make a course successful and learners equally efficient, students of similar proficiency need to be enrolled. Otherwise, an ESP course or the objectives of the course will fail. We recommend BIGH as well as stakeholders to select students of the same level for the utmost success of an ESP course.

As has been mentioned, teachers who teach the English modules have expertise in their own areas, that is, they have a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, but they are not as competent in the English language as they are in Midwifery modules. For English modules, BIGH can recruit teachers with English background. BIGH can even launch a language lab or at least provide computer access for students to develop listening skills from native speakers. To develop speaking skills, students can be encouraged to keep in touch with the foreigners posted at different hubs. For this, students might be given some kind of extra points. Though they have less opportunity to practice writing, students also sometimes need to do technical writing. More space for writing practice can be ensured when students stay at the hospital for practical classes.

Conclusion

Erling and Seargeant (as cited in Erling et al., 2015) comment that "improving English skills is viewed as an important means of advancing both individual wealth and the economy of a country" (p. 8). ESP modules for midwifery courses have been successful in improving English skills to contribute to the economic development of the country and to professional development to reduce maternal as well as newborn mortality in order to increase coverage of quality maternal and neonatal health services. According to a report published by bdnews24.com (2014), "nearly 70 percent women deliver at the hand of unskilled attendants in Bangladesh due to lack of skilled midwives. The government has recently started training them" (para. 2). Rubayet (2014), Save the Children Bangladesh's Saving Newborn Lives project director, said "It's important to know that many of these 93,000 deaths in Bangladesh could be averted simply by having a skilled health provider present to ensure safe delivery and to respond in case of a crisis" (para.4). Another report says Prime Minister Hasina (2010) "committed to train 3,000 midwives by 2015" in response to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's initiative "Every Woman Every Child" (para.4). Therefore, to ensure the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality, we need skilled midwives who have midwifery education. BIGH has designed a competency-based curriculum targeting to meet national and global standards for Midwifery education for which ESP modules work as a supplementary, and BIL has been successful in designing and developing such supplementary ESP modules as has been claimed even by stakeholders of BIGH.

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Learning Language through Literature: A Study of Maugham's "The Luncheon" and Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

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Abstract: *This study shows how literature can be used as a tool to develop learners' knowledge in English. Most of the courses in the Departments of English in Bangladesh are literature-oriented and the teaching and testing systems mainly cover some thematic and philosophical aspects. This paper aims at exploring the effectiveness of learning language through literature, locating the different distinctive linguistic features tightly patterned in a literary text. As literature does not constitute a particular type of language, the effects of literary language and the real life use of it in texts allow the language learners to trace how different linguistic rules are embedded in, and how the learners can develop language skills, unveiling the inseparable bridge between language and literature. This paper, therefore, is a linguistic experimentation on Maugham's "The Luncheon" and Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to demonstrate how they can be used as teaching materials to enrich students' communicative and linguistic competence in English. This study also focuses on practical uses of some figurative languages such as dramatic monologue, humor, irony, metaphor, paradox, satire, and symbol as well as some idioms and phrases which may help the learners gain a lot of exposure in English.*

Keywords: *Literary language, linguistic competence, SLA/EFL, language skills*

Introduction

It is well known that there is an overlapping relation between literature and language. Literary texts are enriched with varieties of language, which give learners a scope to learn and use them in communicative language teaching. Communicative language teaching pays importance to the learners' ability to use language profitably according to the circumstances. Furthermore, a literary text is a living organism which offers the learners a chance to sort out different linguistic features that collaboratively make the language coherent. As Collie and Slater (1987) have suggested, "in reading literary texts, students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers and thus they gain additional familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode: with irony, exposition, argument, narration, and so on" (p. 4). Since literature, especially the short story and poetry, motivates the learners linguistically and culturally, the learners practically experience interaction and the art of using literary language in practical life. It is reality that in the literature-based classrooms "the reader is placed in an active interactional role, working with and making sense of the (literary) language" (Brumfit, 1986, p. 15). This study will give an insight into how

these linguistic factors occur in a literary text and how the pedagogic principles are implemented in a communicative language classroom.

Most of the teachers of our country do not consider literature as a great source for learning language. In the class, they want to establish that literary language and our daily language are different, so we should not use them in our practical communicative events. In this connection, Lazar (2002) says, "Our main task in the classroom is to pinpoint how far literary language deviates from ordinary language" (p. 3). So the teachers always emphasize aesthetic and philosophical sides of literature and give tests to the learners on thematic and stylistic aspects of literary texts. It is, however, time to think positively about learning language through literature. It is widely accepted today that literature can be used to transmit the culture of a target language in SLA/EFL classrooms. "The advantages of using literary texts for language activities are that they offer a wide range of styles and registers; they are open to multiple interpretations and hence provide excellent opportunities for classroom discussions," say Duff and Maley (1990, p. 6). As literature deals with the culture of a particular speech community and pattern of language of that speech community, the learners get the syntactic features of that speech community. So literature helps the learners to develop their writing skills. According to Collie and Slater (1987), "the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas are presented at many levels of difficulty in literature" (p. 5).

Among all the literary genres, the short story is a very convenient tool to teach and learn language. Short stories delineate real life situations and present grief, enjoyment, and feelings lucidly. This is one of the most significant media for learning a language. As the content of a short story is short, simple, and touching, readers read it with great enthusiasm and finish within a very short time, usually understanding the meaning easily. Short stories are more creative and challenging so that the learners have the scope to accept this challenge. A short story is always mysterious and the conclusion is not satisfactory so the learners are tempted to study short stories closely in an attempt to complete the unfinished issue. Multidisciplinary learners can use short stories to learn a language due to its universality. Short stories can be selected more frequently in our syllabi at any level (secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary) for teaching and learning a language. For this paper, we have taken Somerset Maugham's short story "The Luncheon" as a text to learn language. We will analyze this text from various angles to get our objectives. In "The Luncheon," words are not used anomalously but rather used to give a literary effect.

Like the short story, poetry is also another very important genre of literature to be used in the SLA/EFL classroom to learn language. As poetry deals with metaphorical language, the learners can learn about the aesthetic sides of language. By studying poetry, learners practically learn the basic rules of grammar, enrich vocabulary, and understand sentence patterns: "In the poem there are a number of different words connected with certain ideas or images" (Lazar, 1993, p. 125). The learners achieve profound analytical abilities, cultural background, and become capable of using figures of speech like similes, metaphors, symbols, irony, personification, paradox, and so on. According to Maley and Moulding (1985), "If carefully selected, poems can open up themes which are common to us whatever our cultural background, and can thus act as a powerful stimulus to the students' own reflective thinking, which will lead to more mature and fruitful group discussion" (p. 135). In this study, we have taken T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" as a text to learn language. It is interesting for teaching as its content and form are pedagogically potential. Since this poem deals with the aspects of modernism like decadence, disbelief, loss of values, identity crisis, disintegration, demoralization, restlessness, indecision, and nakedness, the learners read it seriously. This study will give an outlook about how the linguistic factors occur in this poem and how SLA principles are implemented in a classroom setting.

The Role of Literature in Language Learning

English language and literature are very closely related to each other. Literature is one of the best sources of learning basic language skills as well as improving linguistic competencies. Povey (1972) asserts, "Literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax" (cited in McKay, 1982, p. 529). English today is taught as a global language, for the purpose of multilevel communication. It makes sense, therefore, to choose literature from as wide a range of sources as possible. "In many countries around the world, literature is highly valued. For

this reason, students of English may experience a real sense of achievement at tackling literary materials in the classroom,” according to Lazar (1993, p. 15). The main purpose of English teaching today is to enable our students to use English for practical purposes – to form personal relationships, to run a business, to know the culture of a particular speech community, to engage in further studies, and so on. Lazar says “Literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying” (1993, p. 16). To be successful in an SLA/EFL program, literature can play a very significant role. The scope for practicing speaking and writing in English are limited in different countries of the world due to the variety of settings and lack of facilities. In that context, literature can be used as appropriate material to practice English. “Literature may provide a particularly appropriate way of stimulating this acquisition, as it provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language” (Lazar, 1993, p. 17). In a classroom setting, the students can learn English properly as it is a formal setting and the teacher plays a significant role as facilitator. Using a literary text and ensuring participatory methods, the teacher can teach language with enjoyment. Here, the students have an opportunity to listen and speak properly:

The reading of literature then becomes an important way of supplementing the inevitably restricted input of the classroom. And if recorded literary material is available, then students can acquire a great deal of new language by listening to it. Within the classroom itself, the use of literary texts is often a particularly successful way of promoting activities where students need to share their feelings and opinions, such as discussions and group work (Lazar, 1993, p. 17).

Literature plays an important role in increasing language awareness among the learners. Using literature, the students can be more sensitive regarding the overall features of English. To develop the ability to interpret, learners can use literary texts. As indirect, allegorical, and hypothetical aspects are available in literature, the students get the scope to make inferences from the meaning of the text and try to interpret them.

This is because literary texts are often rich in multiple levels of meaning, and demand that the reader/ learner is actively involved in ‘teasing out’ the unstated implications and assumption of the text. In a poem for example, a word may take on a powerful figurative meaning beyond its fixed dictionary definition (Lazar, 1993, p. 19).

There are a lot of advantages to studying literature with a view to learning language. Penny Ur lists some advantages of using literature to learn English language:

- It (literature) can be enjoyable and motivating
- It can widen student’s horizons by providing knowledge about the culture which is the background to the text
- It encourages empathetic, critical, creative thinking
- It raises awareness of different human situations and conflicts
- Literature study has value in itself, like any other school subject
- It provides examples of different styles of writing, and representations of various authentic uses of the language
- It is a good basis for vocabulary expansion
- It develops reading skills
- It can provide an excellent starting point for discussion or writing. (1996, pp. 223-224)

It is very clear that learners can learn language through literature with pleasure, and they will be introduced to language variations due to geographical settings. On the other hand, they will be able to understand the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of the text. The students get a clear idea regarding synchronic study and diachronic study through studying literature. Apart from these, literature can help learners know about cultural variation, be a critical thinker, achieve competences in reading and writing skills, and become capable of distinguishing between the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation of sentences used in literary text. As Collie and Slater explain it (1987), “Though the world of literature is a created one, it depicts contextually vivid characters from varied social backgrounds. A reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave behind closed doors” (p. 4).

Teachers should use literary texts in the classroom with a view to teaching basic language and linguistic competences. Through literature, the learners get motivation, stimulation, enthusiasm, fluency, and language awareness. To show the essentiality of literature in the classroom setting, Lazar (1993) lists some reasons:

- it is very motivating
- it is authentic material
- it has general education value
- it is found in many syllabuses
- it helps students to understand another culture
- it is a stimulus for language acquisition
- it develops students' interpretative abilities
- students enjoy it and it is fun
- it is highly valued and has a high status
- it expands students' language awareness
- it encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings. (pp. 15-16)

Formalism gives insight about the language of literature. According to Abrams (1999), "Formalism views literature primarily as a special mood of language, and proposes a fundamental opposition between the literary (or poetical) use of language and the ordinary, 'practical' use of language" (pp. 102-103). So it proves literature uses both literary and practical language to make an organic whole, which indeed offers students a lot of exposure in that language. Peter Brooker (2003) claims about formalism, "the movement's attentions were focused on the formal specificity of literary works" (p. 104). And this formal specificity is expressed through language where "form" and "content" become almost the same. This form and content of a literary text – a story or a poem – give an intelligibility about the language pattern which gives shape to a person's thought and imagination.

Actually, language is the vehicle for the growth of literature or vice versa. The concept of language is not a separate or isolated entity; likewise literature is impossible without the weaving of language. From that standpoint, the relationship between language and literature is inseparable – one is impossible without the other. To elaborate on the relationship between language and literature, Dr. Askari (2011) explains:

To weigh up the importance of language and literature in context seems to be a chicken and egg situation. Despite knowing full well that language is the vehicle for literature, it remains a vexed question to determine whether language works as a catalyst all by itself for the growth and development of literature or vice versa. As a matter of fact, language is never an isolated entity, self-born and self-developed. Nor is it a readily available tree in the fullest blossom from which people pluck flowers and weave wreaths of literature with considerable ease. It is rather a stream that keeps on flowing with different currents and undercurrents. These 'currents' and 'undercurrents' do not always spring from the stream itself. They rather come from other sources and are harmoniously assimilated with it, and thus enrich the language. This is true in the case of all modern major languages in the world that they are considerably nourished by the literatures they produce.

Literary texts possess the ability to involve the learners in language learning contexts where learners are exposed to various instances of literary languages as well as various writing styles and sentence constructions. Furthermore, literary texts arrange such a situation which foster learners' creativity when learners use them to perform different drills in the language classroom. In this context, Barman and Basu (1996) quote ideas from Hirvela:

- Conventional texts used in ELT, which are usually only information based, come from no particular context. In activities with these texts, the learners are supposed to take the role of a passive learner. Literary texts, on the other hand, encourage the students to identify with or react against the characters that attract their attention. The learners become more active, involved and engaged while learning the language through literature.

- Literature stimulates the learners to solve mysteries, answer questions, engage in different types of creative activity that foster deeper connections.
- Literature also has many instances of “deviant language” usages. These can be used as resource for the teacher to expose the students to a variety of text types and different social and functional uses of language.
- By reading literature, students are exposed to various cultures as well as various styles and levels of English.
- The imaginative properties of the literary texts foster the students’ academic literacy skills, which is not so easy if a non-literary text is used as the language teaching material. (pp. 247-248).

Developing Language Skills and Dissection of Linguistic Features from “The Luncheon”

To learn language from Maugham’s “The Luncheon,” we discuss the use of words, phrases, and sentence patterns of the text. We will analyze it from SLA and linguistic point of view. On some occasions, words are used through a process of combination and selection which are the Saussurian “syntagm” and “paradigm.” Syntagm, a combination supported by linearity, claims words to make a sentence because they are chained together (Varshney, 1995, p. 32). In “The Luncheon,” the lines “She waved him aside with an airy gesture... And my heart sank” (13-14), the relationship is restricted to certain orders. A term in the above line acquires its value because it stands in opposition to everything that precedes and follows it, or to both. And paradigm, contrastive or choice relationships, presses that words that have something in common, are associated in the memory, resulting in groups marked by diverse relations. Here the use of “sank” unconsciously calls to our mind a host of other words – descend, drooped, afraid, frightened. But the writer is using “sank” instead of those.

Cohesion, the grammatical and lexical relationship within a text, is superbly handled by the writer giving anaphoric and cataphoric references, and sometimes ellipsis/substitution and conjunction. As McCarthy (1991) puts it, “Spoken and written discourses display grammatical connections between individual clauses and utterances. For our purposes, these grammatical links can be classified under three broad types: reference, ellipsis/substitution, and conjunction” (p. 35). The following passage of “The Luncheon” gives the scope to identify some of the features of cohesion mentioned above:

“No, no. I never eat anything for luncheon. Just a bite, I never want more than that, and I eat that more as an excuse for conversation than anything else. I couldn’t possibly eat anything more, unless they had some of those giant asparagus. I should be sorry to leave Paris without having some of them.” (13)

The anaphoric reference, looking backward, is made by “them” in the last line, which indicates “giant asparagus” in the earlier sentence. Cataphoric reference, looking forward, is made when the “little fish” becomes “salmon.” “Just a bite” is an example of ellipsis which is used instead of the full sentence “I eat just a bite.” Besides these, there is a relation among giant asparagus, eating, and the luncheon itself, which shows the lexical grouping built in the text. And these cohesive devices make the world of this text semantically coherent. Another extension of literature is that it is a good source for increasing vocabulary and mastering different grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions, which second language learners of English develop from it to have sound expertise in English language. “The Luncheon” is a good source of learning and mastering different idiomatic expressions as well – keep body and soul together, bill of fare, by all means, go on, take to task, walk out, make up one’s mind, how time does fly! Furthermore, students can develop and practice various exquisite words, e.g., “succulent,” “appetising,” “ingratiating,” and so on in the proper context to help them become more fluent in English. Maugham’s “The Luncheon” is also full of humor and irony which a learner can easily dissect and have an understanding regarding the issues. In “The Luncheon,” the lady repeatedly says “I never anything eat for luncheon.” But when the author asks her, “What would you like?” she replied, “My doctor won’t let me drink anything but champagne” (13). The humor is also evident when the lady says, “Follow my example ... and never eat more than one thing for luncheon” (13). Maugham has also used diverse superb expressions, such as “It was twenty years ago and I was living in Paris” (16). Sentences like “You ruin your palate by all the meat you eat,” “My heart sank,” “But I was flattered and I was too young to have learned to say ‘no’ to a woman” (11) give students a sound exposure to English.

Another important factor that influences second language acquisition is the particular setting that impacts learning outcomes. Actually, the setting of language learning is linked with the final level of proficiency. Ellis (1994) uplifted Gardener's socio-educational model that "explains how setting is related to proficiency – one of the primary goals of any social theory of L2 acquisition – by positing a series of intervening variables (attitudes, motivation, self-confidence)" (p. 238). As mentioned earlier, setting influences learning outcomes. Gardener claims that the formal language context results in linguistic outcomes and, likewise, an informal one culminates non-linguistic outcomes (p. 238). From this perspective, second language acquisition and learning is befittingly possible in a non-threatening environment congenial to any learning that Stephen Krashen in his "affective filter hypothesis" answers. The very first paragraph of "The Luncheon" – "I caught sight of her at the play and in answer to her beckoning I went over during the interval and sat down beside her. It was long since I had last seen her and if someone had mentioned her name I hardly think I would have recognized her. She addressed me brightly" (p. 11) – provides ample learning materials, e.g., phrase, long sentence construction, stylish expression, and so on. A teacher in a language classroom can get his or her students to practice more sentences identical to the mentioned structures and expressions in a non-threatening atmosphere. Indeed, students' practice in low affective filters results in ultimate level of L2 attainment.

Developing Language Skills and Dissection of Linguistic Features from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" provides wonderful learning materials that ease instructed second language acquisition. The poem is a compact composition where Eliot's mastery is well reflected in the subtle weaving of sentences, giving special importance to the grammaticalization, and thereby bringing a transition, in the structure of his poetic composition to symbolically incarnate the period in which he writes. Eliot's conscious use of preposition, relative clause, compound formation, images, and above all, punctuating devices is worth mentioning, for the teacher in a language classroom concerned, in an active drilling, can get help from the examples used in the poem while giving insight regarding the above mentioned linguistic items. From the following lines, a teacher can give his or her students some important input that can enable the learners to have an exposure to them in their practical life:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table; (6-8)
...
The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains ... (20-24)

In line number 8, the idiomatic expression "spread out against the sky" gives the learner a scope to learn the phrase "spread out" and the use of a preposition like "against." From line 20 to 24, Eliot's use of relative clause, linguistically marked construction, imparts learners an occasion to master relative clause construction. A teacher in a language classroom can show how the relationship between "fog and that" is established and how the verb "rub" conforms to the antecedent. Apart from these, a teacher can bring an example of compounding like "window-panes" – a system of forming words. Actually, second language acquisition and learning, through the process of instructions, lays a lasting effect on the ultimate level of attainment. In this respect, Diane Larsen Freeman and Michael H. Long in *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research* cite the linguist Pavesi:

the instructed group's superior performance derived not from formal SL instruction per se, but from the instructed learners' exposure to the more elaborated, more complex input of language used as the medium of instruction, i.e. from their exposure to what Ochs (1979) terms 'planned discourse.' Planned discourse has been documented as containing, among other things, a higher degree of grammaticalization (Givon, 1979), including a higher frequency of linguistically more marked constructions. (317)

Conclusion

Teachers in language classrooms can make their students practice more sentences identical to the mentioned structures and expressions in a non-threatening atmosphere. Indeed, students' practice in low affective filters results in ultimate level of L2 acquisition. This study shows how English literature provides examples of different styles of writing – formal, informal and personal – and also representations of various authentic uses of the language. Along with this, the paper also shows how literature becomes a good resource for increasing word power and how it works as a springboard for exciting discussions.

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MOOC Mania: Implications and Collaboration for English Language Teachers

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Abstract: *In today's Internet ridden world e-learning is one of the crucial parts of modern education. This way of learning is surprisingly diverse but shares a predictable common denominator. Technology's transformative power enables learning interactions that might otherwise be impossible for students and teachers alike. Coursera.com is a fast growing MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) provider empowering students and educators, and enables learners to create an interactive platform. In this study, we will discuss the course "Shaping the Way we Teach English" which has brought enthusiasm among passionate English teachers. This paper will highlight how the flexibility of this course paves the way for collaborating with the online and offline teaching and learning community with the experience of digital learning. Furthermore, it also examines how the learners are adapting to the digital platform, the challenges they face, and how they are overcoming the obstacles.*

Keywords: *MOOC, Online course, E-learning, Collaboration*

Introduction

If pedagogy is the most classical and theoretical discourse of teaching, MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is the well-known educational buzzword in present academia. It is on the way to creating history and bringing changes and opportunities to learning styles. Furthermore, it democratizes the opportunities of lifelong learning. In this research, a group of teachers who were newbies in the online learning environment participated in a six-week online course. All the teachers were really excited and uncertain about each step and part of the course since they did not have any online learning experience, let alone with MOOCs.

The aim of this paper is to find out how MOOCs help English teachers collaborate, share and complete a course while working full-time.

Importance of E-learning in Education

According to Page (2007), in a typical high school a student has access to a teacher 40 minutes per day. That means she has access to that teacher 5% of her waking day, and even that time is shared with 25 classmates. She has access to the Internet 100% of the time. Technology is no substitute for an inspiring teacher. However, online materials are far more available. In fact it is twenty times more accessible.

Using a textbook-based lectures approach seems very static where the learning outcome is limited. If we think otherwise, a wireless laptop has access in two ways for both the teachers

and the learners. Information technology seems the magical lamp of Aladdin which allows learning anywhere, anytime and takes education beyond the classroom.

Ling (2007), in researching the extent to which a successful community of inquiry might be established online, states that the three kinds of presence (cognitive, teaching, and social presence) associated with the model can all be achieved through online contact only. Interactive simulations and illustrations create dynamic images in the human brain which can produce a much greater depth of understanding of a concept.

When virtual manipulatives are used in a classroom setting, they make a different scenario than chalk and talk. Using a projector, the teacher can conduct onscreen investigations and demonstrate concepts far more easily than with just words and arm-waving. If the students have access to the same tools over the web, they can reinforce the ideas by experimenting with the simulations themselves, anytime, anywhere. Oliver (2002), however, identifies the role of educational technologists as being both marginal (in terms of contact and security) and powerful (in terms of remit linked to “strategic priorities”) (p. 245).

Some of the goals of ICT ran in parallel with perceived advantages of e-learning, as Blass and Davis (2003) state, “the control of pace, place, time and style of presentation and interaction shifts more towards the learner” (p. 229). Technology allows the learning system to be turned. Instead of teaching (push), students can be given projects that require them to learn (pull) the necessary material themselves. Here the challenge is to provide them with what they need any time anywhere, without being in the physical presence of a teacher. The MOOC courses are based on reciprocal approach which makes learning far more interesting for the learners. Students’ curiosity and concern over new material and the propensity to meet the deadline of a new submission is an eye-opener. In the old days, students could write in a notebook. Their notes were confined and seen only by the teacher. Using modern technology they can make a PowerPoint presentation, record/edit the spoken word, do digital photography, make a video, run a class newspaper, run a web based school radio or TV station, compose digital music on a synthesizer, make a website, create a blog, allowing access to myriad other readers/viewers.

Collaboration

A vital skill in the new digital world is the ability to work collaboratively with others who may be physically out of reach but not virtually because of the tools such as the web, email, instant messaging, and cell phone. Instead of struggling alone on homework, students can work in small groups wherever they can work as a team. They are doing this already – but it can now be formalized and taught as a crucial skill. Students need to be prepared for this to adapt with modern world.

As Oliver (2002) highlights, the role of the educational technologist is one that emerged over recent decades in response to developing technologies. The world view of the student can be expanded because of the zero cost of communicating with other people around the globe. The Internet permits free video conferencing which allows interaction in real time with sister schools in other countries. From an educational viewpoint, it is always important to understand other cultures through dialog and collaboration which open a new horizon of knowledge.

Learners are, of course, individual and different. The target of MOOCs is basically to make a common platform for all. Information technologies can permit them to break step with the class and go at a pace and order that suits that student better. Without disrupting the class, they can repeat difficult lessons and explore what they find interesting. With time, it will become more like having a private tutor rather than being lost in a large class.

It is frequently the development of these technologies, or indeed of e-learning, that is cited as a catalyst for change (Conole, White, & Oliver, 2007), and the change this brings for academia (Salmon, 2000). Shephard (2004) identifies the differences as “helping staff to help themselves.”

Students need productivity tools for the same reasons we academics do. They need to write, read, communicate, organize, and schedule. A student’s life is not much different from any knowledge worker, and they need similar tools. Even if they are never used in the classroom, portable personal computers will make a student’s (and teacher’s) life more effective. To cash in on this benefit, schools need to go paperless. Inglis, Ling,

and Joosten (1999) highlight this – the recognition of each other’s expertise as part of the collaboration – as one of the crucial factors of successful learning and teaching development.

It is not unusual for a textbook to be costly, where they are purchased by the student; they can cost more than the tuition itself. Through the use of open, free educational tools on the web, the dependence on expensive paper textbooks can be reduced. There is a growing movement to create and publish this type of material through organizations such as OER commons. OER stands for Open Educational Resources and the idea is to follow the open source model made popular by software projects such as Linux. Material is created by the educational community itself and then freely shared with others.

Shaping the Way We Teach English (background of the course): MOOCs, as discussed above, have given learning and teaching a new dimension. This section looks at how the course “Shaping the Way We Teach English,” offered to English teachers, has used this platform for teaching. Coursera’s description of the course states that it is meant for teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and could be useful to both newbies and for “those already working in the field who would like to revise and refresh their methods and approaches.” The five-week course was meant to enable teachers “to explain how the various materials and approaches presented will lead to better language learning.” They would also “be able to choose appropriate materials and apply varied classroom activities to improve [their] students’ study of English. [They would] also be able to better evaluate both [their] own and other teachers’ practices.”

Method and Observation

This study investigates the teaching learning process and the impacts of virtual forums (collaboration with online peers) during the course. It also determines the pattern of interactions between the learners among peers and instructors to understand the actual use and benefits. For this, interaction sessions were observed and even the researchers were directly involved in some online courses where they synchronously interacted with peers. Later, 10 MOOC participants who completed this course were interviewed and they answered a questionnaire designed to comprehend the effects and impact of the MOOC on their learning. The data was collected using a questionnaire, discussions, and interviews which were compiled and analyzed through the quantitative method. The results are discussed in terms of their experience of an online course, benefits from online forums, and the interaction patterns during the course.

Findings and Discussion

Most of these participants were first-timers at a MOOC. The underlying message which we get through it is the power of MOOCs which moves participants to engage in it. According to our survey, most of the participants were not very clear about the grading and some were really uncertain about the validity and reliability of the course since it is free and they did not have any prior experience. However, ultimately the confusion did not deter them. Rather, as time went on, their confidence increased according to their responses to the questionnaire. Most of the participants thought that the course is good for beginners, some of them thought that mid-level professionals could do it. The most crucial finding of the survey is the collaboration where all the participants agreed that the online forum was an excellent source of cooperation and a source of ideas and motivation.

The participants of this course experienced a variety of dimensions in their teamwork. In-house (institutional) discussion, international affinity, virtual connections, motivation from the American Center in Bangladesh, and a new vibe to share their learning across the border worked as a holistic approach to make the entire experience very successful. This was communicated by the participants during their interview.

Recommendations

There are some questions and controversies regarding MOOCs. Currently, colleges and universities are not accepting MOOCs for credit, unless it is offered from their own program. But the number of students and offerings from various universities are increasing. So, what does a MOOC learner need to succeed? The answer is motivation for learning, and having self-confidence and faith. An inclination to adaptation is a must as well since it is a new way of learning. Lastly, if participants do not value education as a life skill, most of the online courses are not for them because participants have to prove the validity of the certificate through their learning outcomes.

Conclusion

“Behaviorism” is the philosophy that explains the behavior where learning and practice come together and are frequently reinforced. On the other hand, “constructivist” is more about creating someone’s own way of learning which deals with a learner’s individual way of thinking or interpreting and discovering independent meanings of knowledge attributed to experience. “Connectivism” is a learning hypothesis which integrates network and self-generated theories that connect information and can also be referred to as Internet-based learning. If we blend the three methods to form a new theory of learning, the learners will have a unique exposure to the distinct features of learning through peer-assisted online learning, using the information to construct their own ideas or projects and continuous reinforcement of learning practices. Blended learning, flipped classrooms and MOOC models can also reallocate the contemporary education system to bring new dynamics into learners’ achievements and outcomes.

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Appendix A: Shaping the Way we Teach English (Questionnaire)

1. Is it your first online course?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Is it the first (MOOC) you have attended?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. What is the main obstacle you find during this course?
 - a. Understanding the marking pattern
 - b. The real goal of the course
 - c. Uncertainty of the validity and reliability since it is free.
 - d. Task completion within the time frame
 - e. (Anything more) Comment:
4. Choose some features which helped you do the course alongside your professional life.
 - a. It increased my confidence.
 - b. It is a new style of learning.
 - c. I can customize my time and learning style within the given time frame.
5. This course is better for
 - a. Beginners
 - b. Mid professionals
 - c. Experienced teachers
6. How many times did you contact with your offline peers (If you have/know anyone) during this course in a week?
7. Do your offline peers have any influence on you/motivate you to meet the deadline and answering the questions?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Comment:
8. The online interaction on board helps to get ideas in language teaching and motivate you to share your ideas.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
9. Has the teaching style of this course brought any significant change in your learning style?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
10. How did you handle the difficulty of reading materials?
 - a. I did not face any difficulty
 - b. Seeing the video
 - c. Reading other comments on the forum
 - d. I answered what I have understood
11. After doing this course if you are interested, what type of course do you prefer?
 - a. I am not interested
 - b. Fully online
 - c. Classroom (Offline)
 - d. Blended (Online and offline)

An Acculturation Model Based on Motivation for Foreign Language Learning in Bangladesh

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Abstract: *As an international language, English has enormous popularity worldwide and undeniably, even in Bangladesh, students are taught English as a foreign language for 12 years before they are enrolled in undergraduate programs. However, the students still fail to show any level of excellence as would be expected after studying the language for such a long time. Motivation is factor that can contribute to improvement of foreign language acquisition. Traditional teaching does not adequately address this issue. This paper examines the complex yet closely connected relationship between motivation and attitude regarding English language learning among the students of Bangladesh University who are currently in their undergraduate programs in English Language and Literature. An adapted version of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) is used to conduct a survey as the study is based on quantitative research techniques. The aim of this study is to focus on theoretical knowledge to explore the extent to which motivation under a controlled environment and close observation can help students in learning English as a foreign language.*

Learning a foreign language is, undoubtedly, a crucial task as it is more difficult to learn than the first language. Most theorists believe that learners' achievement largely depends on their attitudes and motivation regarding the targeted language. The "acculturation" of learners (for instance, social, attitudinal, and motivational conditions) is highly influential as all these factors can help to determine learners' achievement. Broadly speaking, almost all the research works on motivation has been conducted in second language acquisition rather than foreign language learning in the contexts of Europe and/or North America. This paper attempts to examine the complex yet closely connected relationship between attitudes and motivation which would be applicable in the context of Bangladesh.

This research was stimulated by both theoretical and practical contexts of foreign language acquisition as it would be helpful to those who want to reinforce students' motivation. It is essential to keep in mind that EFL learning motivation cannot be labeled as an instrument to pursue or better life. The ability to be fluent in English is connected to educational achievement as well as advancement in career. But there is probably a gap between what the learners expect to learn and what they get in the classroom. This paper seeks to bridge this gap. It is must also be clarified that the researchers only tried to investigate to what extent motivational factors can actually help the learners in our context and did not look for the interplay and connection between social, cultural, and psychological factors.

Theoretical Framework

There is no scope to doubt that increasing motivation for foreign language learning is a worthwhile objective but to achieve such a goal that entails awareness is correlated to pedagogical intervention. In order to complete such a critical task, the theoretical perspectives applied to this paper were strictly borrowed from the works of R.C. Gardner and J. H. Schumann. Gardner's foreign language learning model (1988) regarding motivation depicted five hypotheses:

- i) The integrative motive hypothesis: positively and closely connected with second language achievement
- ii) The cultural belief hypothesis: cultural belief can influence the development of integrative motive which is related to achievement
- iii) The active learner hypothesis: integratively motivated learners can achieve success as they are active learners
- iv) The causality hypothesis: integrative motivation can be regarded as the cause while second language achievement is the effect
- v) The two process hypothesis: considers aptitude and integrative motivation as independent factors in SLA

Gardner claimed that there are two components of motivation – instrumental motivation, which concerns an individual's primary concern for linguistic growth apart from social goals in SLA; and integrative motivation, which refers to an individual's willingness and interest in promoting L2 acquisition through social interactions with members of L2 group. A strong connection can be made between motivation and attitude in order to find out to which extent motivation can reinforce EFL acquisition in our culture. This paper stands on the understanding that motivation is the cause, not the result of successful EFL acquisition.

Apart from Gardner, Schumann's acculturation model was also followed in this paper. The acculturation model developed by Schumann was solely based on social as well as psychological factors. According to this model, acculturation (which is defined as a cluster of social-psychological factor) is the major factor of SLA (Schumann, 1978, 1990). Schumann claimed that acculturation, which can be defined as the integration of the L2 learner into the targeted linguistic community, is not a direct cause of SLA; but rather it is the first in the chain of the factors which results in natural SLA (Schumann, 1986). He enlisted various factors that can bridge the gap – Social dominance, Assimilation, Preservation and Adaptation, Enclosure, Cohesiveness and Size, Congruence, Attitude and Cultural Shock. Schumann (1976) believed that the level of language proficiency achieved by a learner strictly depends on the degree of acculturation. Focusing on attitudes along with motivation, this paper attempts to portray that successful learning of foreign languages can be possible. The researchers also believe that learning of a second or foreign language is associated with cultural as well as linguistic competence because undoubtedly all the languages live within specific cultural contexts. But it is not possible to pursue all the factors together in our restricted format as well as limited size; so we attempted to combine perspectives regarding attitudes from the acculturation model with the role of motivation in EFL acquisition. It is known and believed that an EFL learner wants to achieve proficiency like those who use the language and motivation can play an important role which was found in the work of Gardner. His AMTB can help in determining the situation in Bangladesh and an adapted version of the attitude/motivation test battery was used for testing purposes.

Definition of concepts: In this paper, motivation and attitudes were used with their general meaning defined by Gardner (1983). Attitudes are considered as a way to show an evaluative reaction inferred on the basis of the learners' beliefs. Usually, attitudes are believed to have three factors:

- Cognitive (a learner's belief structure)
- Affective (a learner's reaction)
- Behavioral (a learner's tendency to behave in a certain way)

On the other hand, motivation (as defined by Gardner) is a combination of effort, desire and positive attitude towards the learning of L2. Following Gardner's terms, integrative motivation was used as learners' own desire of learning while instrumental motivation stood for goal-oriented willingness to learn. Apart from these two

types depicted by Gardner, this paper followed the four categories of motivation provided by Rod Ellis (1994); namely intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, integrative motivation, and instrumental motivation. The different forms of motivation used for this paper are presented below in Table 1:

| Purpose \ Source | Intrinsic Motivation (Internal desire) | Extrinsic Motivation (External desire) |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Integrative Motivation | A learner's own wish to learn a foreign language | Someone else (i.e. parents) wants the learner to learn |
| Instrumental Motivation | A learner's own wish to learn for personal goal or achievement | Someone else or external source the learner to learn for a specific purpose |

Table 1: Types of motivation based on source and purpose

Sources of motivation: Learner-centered teaching helps the students, as researchers claim, because in this process each and every student can participate. Students of varied abilities can take part in classroom activities either in pairs or groups, or individually. Thus, emphasizing the interactive process can help motivate students in learning a foreign language. On the teacher's part, using appropriate and authentic materials is really important in this regard. Following Widdowson (1990), authentic materials mean exposure to real language and its use in its own community. Proper use of materials signifying interrelationships between teacher and students can bring massive achievement in L2 learning. Elucidation, of course, like career linkage, is another important source of motivation. Students are more likely to make their best effort in learning a foreign language if they come to know that their achievement would help them in career development. Goal-oriented motivation makes the students put in extra effort which reinforces learning of a foreign language. Thus, the sources of motivation can be categorized as:

- Activities and tasks in classroom
- Quality/ability of the teacher
- Background in the targeted language
- The desire or willingness to learn

Undoubtedly, situation-specific factors are important when it comes to foreign language acquisition and a blend of motivation, linguistic confidence, and classroom environment help the learners to excel in learning a foreign language.

Methodology

Instrument. Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery was adapted into a 40-item questionnaire (see Appendix A). 6 categories included (5 questions in each category) interest, attitude, evaluation of teachers, classroom activities, instrumental motivation, and integrative motivation. 34 questions were positively worded and 6 negatively worded. The interest category included a variety of reasons for learning English. Attitude reflected the learner's anxiety or confidence.

Procedure and participants. There were 50 participants (25 males and 25 females), all university students studying at Bangladesh University. They were students in the 1st year and all had studied English as a part of their course work (i.e. students working with specialized or intensive EFL syllabi were not included). The questions were randomly ordered. The students completed the questionnaire in a single class period.

Analysis and Results

In order to fulfill the stated goal of the paper, all the data were analyzed. Table 2 lists the most and least agreed with statements of the questionnaire. Indeed, some items showed deviations but most learners said that they have a strong desire to learn English, they enjoy learning, and they do not feel uncomfortable while speaking.

| Most agreed with statements | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| I wish I could speak many foreign languages. | 55% |
| I look forward to going to class because my English teacher is so good. | 60% |
| Learning English is really great. | 75% |
| I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English. | 60% |
| Studying English is important because I will need it for my career. | 80% |
| Studying English is important because it will make me more educated. | 70% |
| I wish I could have many native English speaking friends. | 55% |
| My English teacher is a great source of inspiration to me. | 55% |
| Least agreed with statements | |
| My English class is really a waste of time. | 75% |
| The less I see of my English teacher, the better. | 55% |
| Studying foreign language is not enjoyable. | 50% |
| My English teacher doesn't present materials in an interesting way. | 50% |

Table 2: Most and least agreed with statements regarding motivation (in percentage)

It seemed quite clear from the responses that two dimensions of motivation actually boosted foreign language learning. It was also prominent that those who felt motivated were less anxious. On the contrary, the less motivated ones were very anxious about their ability and lacked confidence. Most of the participants claimed that they were interested to learn English as a foreign language due to their own interest or because of their desire to achieve personal goals. Another fact that became clear was that the teacher was a great source of motivation to the learners. This is closely followed by classroom activities as a mode of motivation.

Another scaling regarding motivation had 10 items where the learners were asked to judge their level of motivation, attitudes, and interest. The results from the questionnaire are given below in Table 3:

| Dimensions of motivation | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Learners' goal (i.e. communication, practical purpose) | 50% |
| Learners' attitude (i.e. English class, English teacher, anxiety) | 40% |
| Learners' interest (i.e. willingness to learn) | 70% |

Table 3: Achievement oriented motivation (in percentage)

The results from this part of the questionnaire showed that those who scored high on intrinsic and instrumental motivation, preferred communicative and goal oriented environment while those high in anxiety refused to respond to communicative language pedagogy. The participants who were motivated by both their teacher and parents were least anxious to communicate in English and were also eager to learn. Contrasting this, those who felt less motivated showed much anxiety and their interest in learning English was below 40%.

In order to portray the overall situation clearly, a bar graph with all the contributing factors of motivation along with the percentage is presented below:

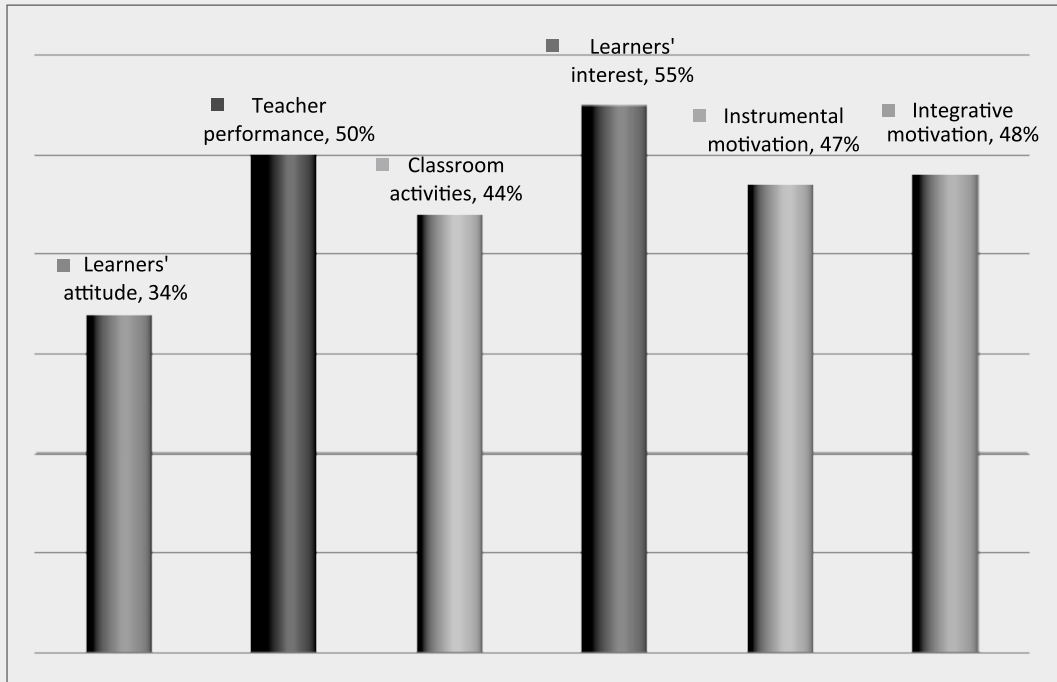


Figure 1: Motivation contribution to students' achievement (in percentage)

The X axis of the bar graph represents the six contributing factors that motivated the learners most. The Y axis depicts the percentage of the participants. The findings are given below:

Learners' Attitudes: Around 50% learners claimed that they did not feel anxiety to communicate in English in their class. 40% stated that they would feel nervous to communicate with tourists in English. 30% agreed that they felt embarrassed to answer in English both inside and outside the classroom. Overall, 34% learners reflected positive attitudes and confidence regarding learning English as a foreign language.

Evaluation of the Teacher: From the survey it became clear that learners put great emphasis on their teacher. 60% participants stated that they attended their class because their English teacher is good. Overall, 50% learners agreed that their teacher is a prominent source of their motivation.

Classroom Activities: 75% participants felt that their English class was effective and their activities and/or tasks were enjoyable. That is why they attended the classes. 44% learners believed that their English class was sufficient for learning English as a foreign language.

Interest in English: Learners expressed great interest in all aspects of English as 75% claimed that learning English has been a great experience and 60% said they possessed a strong desire to learn all aspects of English. 55% participants stressed their interest in learning English as a foreign language.

Integrative and Instrumental Motivation: The research revealed that integrative motivation stood almost neck and neck with instrumental motivation (48% and 47% respectively). Responses did not clarify whether the learners were in favor of integrative motivation or instrumental motivation.

Conclusion

After analyzing all the data it would not be wrong to state that learners having strong instrumental motivation were confident about accomplishing their linguistic goals. They felt that the educational setting alone can help them achieve their goal. On the contrary, those with a higher degree of integrative motivation wanted to explore the extensive areas of language. But there is no denying that the less motivated reflected the higher level of anxiety. So it would be better to conclude that both instrumental and integrative motivation should be recognized as fundamental factors when it comes to foreign language learning in the context of Bangladesh.

Appendix A: Attitude/Motivation Test Battery

What you choose would indicate your own feeling based on everything you know and have heard. You should circle one alternative for each question.

****Note:** there is no right or wrong answer.

1. I wish I could speak many foreign languages perfectly.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
2. My parents try to help me to learn English.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
3. I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive in my English class.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
4. I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
5. I look forward to going to class because my English teacher is so good.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
6. Learning English is really great.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
7. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
8. My English class is really a waste of time.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
9. I would get nervous if I had to speak English to a tourist.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
10. Studying foreign languages is not enjoyable.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree
11. I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Moderately Disagree
 - c) Slightly Disagree
 - d) Slightly Agree
 - e) Moderately Agree
 - f) Strongly Agree

12. Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
13. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our English class.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
14. My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
15. I don't bother checking my assignments when I get them back from my English teacher.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
16. I feel confident when asked to speak in my English class.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
17. The less I see of my English teacher, the better.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
18. Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
19. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
20. I wish I could have many native English speaking friends.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
21. I enjoy the activities of our English class much more than those of my other classes.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
22. I tend to give up and not pay attention when I don't understand my English teacher's explanation of something.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
23. I don't understand why other students feel nervous about speaking English in class.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
24. My English teacher is a great source of inspiration to me.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
25. I would feel uncomfortable speaking English anywhere outside the classroom.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
26. My parents encourage me to practice my English as much as possible.
a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree

27. I can't be bothered to try and understand the more complex aspects of English.
 a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
 e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
28. Students who claim they get nervous in English classes are just making excuses.
 a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
 e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
29. I would rather see a TV program dubbed into our language than in its own language with subtitles.
 a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
 e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree
30. My English teacher doesn't present materials in an interesting way.
 a) Strongly Disagree b) Moderately Disagree c) Slightly Disagree d) Slightly Agree
 e) Moderately Agree f) Strongly Agree

The purpose of this part of the questionnaire is to determine your feelings about some specific factors. Each item is followed by a scale that has a label on the left and another on the right, and the numbers 1 to 7 between the two ends. For each item, please circle any one of the numbers from 1 to 7 that best describes you.

1. My motivation to learn English in order to communicate with others is:
 WEAK ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 STRONG
2. My interest in foreign languages is:
 VERY LOW ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 VERY HIGH
3. My desire to learn English is:
 WEAK ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 STRONG
4. My attitude toward learning English is:
 UNFAVORABLE ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 FAVORABLE
5. My attitude toward my English teacher is:
 UNFAVORABLE ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 FAVORABLE
6. My motivation to learn English for practical purposes (e.g., to get a good job or higher studies) is:
 WEAK ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 STRONG
7. I worry about speaking English outside of class:
 VERY LITTLE ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 VERY MUCH
8. I worry about speaking in my English class:
 VERY LITTLE ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 VERY MUCH
9. My motivation to learn English is:
 VERY LOW ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 VERY HIGH
10. My parents encourage me to learn English:
 VERY LITTLE ___ 1: ___ 2: ___ 3: ___ 4: ___ 5: ___ 6: ___ 7 VERY MUCH

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Facebook Could Motivate EFL Learners to Develop Genre Based Writing Skills: A Study on Bangladeshi Undergraduate Learners' Emersion in Free Writing Space

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Abstract: It is observed that EFL learners from mainstream education taking admission in different undergraduate programs at different public and private universities in Bangladesh are very weak in L2 writing. Because of the HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate Examination in Bangladesh) question pattern and traditional methods of teaching, it is observed that almost ninety percent students are weak in free writing in L2. The learners do not have any idea of different genre of writing in L2. It is also found that the learners are not motivated enough to write in L2. They somehow try to avoid the writing from their creativity. Often teachers complain that the learners take much time than they are given to complete the writing, since they did not get enough opportunity to practice creative writing in the class room. However, they need extensive writing skills at university level in L2. Therefore, the teachers of undergraduate programs are facing a challenge to develop their writing skills in L2. It has also been observed that because of limited vocabulary, the newcomers cannot write according to the requirements. To help these students, the researchers have observed that proper guided Facebooking can motivate students to write L2 on their own. For this research, the researchers will go through mixed method research. The researchers have collected data through a questionnaire for teachers, a questionnaire for students and interviews. The findings of the research will definitely help both the teachers and students at undergraduate level.

Keywords: Facebook, genre based writing, EFL, undergraduate

Introduction

It can be assumed that the 21st century in human history will remain memorable for its profound opportunity of connectivity and global inclusion. The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the use of the Internet have fueled the process at such a speed that human civilization has never seen such progress before. As a result, the world has grown smaller over the last century. Social Networking Sites (SNS) like Facebook, Twitter and a few others have facilitated this opportunity with significant changes in our everyday affairs like communication, business, and education. The young generation is spending much time online, especially on Facebook, mainly for social and personal communication, sharing and discussing ideas with a view to having virtual interaction. The questions that can be raised with regards to the amount of time young people are spending online are: (1) whether Facebook could be used as a platform for learning and

(2) how the learning process can be managed meaningfully. Though there is a huge pool of resources at our disposal in the form of the Internet and SNSs, how far the educators have realized the potentiality of these resources as a means of alternative method of educational instructions is a matter of serious examination (Yunus and Salehi, 2012). The researchers, therefore, have taken an initiative to investigate the feasibility of exploiting these resources to develop genre based writing skills using Facebook groups among some Bangladeshi EFL educators and learners of undergraduate level.

Objectives of the study. This study involves the following objectives:

1. To explore the attitude or perception of the Bangladeshi EFL learners and teachers of undergraduate level about using Facebook as a platform for academic instruction.
2. To examine the feasibility of developing genre based writing skills in Facebook groups supervised by a teacher.

Research questions. The following are the research questions upon which the present study was done:

1. What are the perceptions of Bangladeshi EFL learners and teachers of undergraduate level about Facebook as a platform for learning?
2. Is it possible to develop genre based writing skills of undergraduate level EFL learners through Facebook groups mentored by a teacher and how?

Significance of the study. At present, Facebook has about 936 million daily active users and about eighty three percent users are from outside the US and Canada (Facebook Newsroom, 2015). In this huge crowd, about 2.8 million users are from Bangladesh, the majority of whom are between 18 to 24 years old (Kabir, 2012). The EFL learners of undergraduate level who constitute the target participants of the present study belong to this age group. As these learners spend certain amounts of time online in SNSs like Facebook, it may be possible to make them interact in groups with a view to learning and practicing genre based writing which involves a lot of social interaction and use of language (Hyland, 2007).

Literature Review

The researchers did not find any conclusive study directly linked to the research but did locate some newspaper reports and internet articles which show that the research is essential. It is found that a huge number of students of undergraduate level are using Facebook for different purposes in Bangladesh. The researchers decided to take advantage of the situation to examine how to it can be used to improve students' genre based writing. Clive Thompson's "The New Literacy" (2009) was also part of the motivation. Andrea Lunsford (as cited in Thomson, 2009) has stated that writing ability is not being destroyed by technology. Rather technology helps to revive and direct it properly. Referring to the results of her research, she has also said that online socializing helps the new generation to write more text than the old generation. In the research she and her team have found that about forty percent of students' writings is done out of the classroom. It is called a paradigm shift by Lunsford. She has further added that when the students write today on Facebook, Twitter, or any other SNS, they are writing for a different audience which makes them think and produce good writing.

Mark Zuckerberg started Facebook in 2004 to facilitate social interaction among the Harvard University students. Now Facebook is widely used by educational organizations and universities (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010).

In connection with Facebook as one of the SNSs, Roblyer and Wiencke (2003) distinguished five components that underlay interaction in online settings and one of them is student-teacher engagement. So it is no wonder that this engagement is likely to facilitate learning of the EFL learners in a significant way.

Methodology

For collecting the data, the researchers applied both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researchers also examined relevant sources to collect information, and visited two public and three private universities. The researchers collected data from teachers and students using questionnaires. With a view to completing the research, the researchers collected data in three stages.

- i. Collecting data from students using questionnaires
- ii. Collecting data from teachers using questionnaires
- iii. Interviewing some experienced and expert teachers

Procedure and instrumentation. The questionnaires were designed for non-native speakers of English in an EFL setting. A five-point scale for responses was used to encourage clear indications of agreement or disagreement. During the completion process of the questionnaire, the researchers were present physically to monitor and also to help the respondents understand certain parts.

Participants. For the study, 80 students of undergraduate level were randomly selected from five public and private universities in Dhaka. Among the 80 students, 36 students were selected from private universities and 44 from public universities. It is also worth mentioning that among 80 students, 34 were female and 46 were male. 15 teachers were also selected randomly for the study from two private universities in Dhaka.

Results and Findings

Results of different findings are given here under three different headings. In questionnaires, there were also open-ended questions for teachers and students. The results of these questions are also included here.

Questionnaire for students. The researchers collected data from eighty students by distributing questionnaires. According to these questionnaires, the results of a student's affiliation with Facebook, the student's views on Facebook for teaching and learning, and how far the student was ready to use Facebook for learning writing have been given here.

| Regularly | Often | Sometimes | Rare | Never |
|-----------|-------|-----------|------|-------|
| 50% | 18% | 21% | 06% | 05% |

Table 1: Student's affiliation with Facebook

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 34% | 53% | 10% | 02% | 01% |

Table 2: Student's thinking about Facebook for teaching and learning

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 24% | 35% | 20% | 18% | 03% |

Table 3: How far the students are ready to use Facebook for learning writing

Responses from open ended questions

In response to the question 13 in the questionnaire, the researchers have found a variety of data. Hence, a list of responses on how Facebook helps undergraduate students is given below.

- Notifications from teachers and institution
- Learning new academic lessons
- Discussion on academic or career based issues
- Maintaining a study group
- Communicating with friends and relatives
- Knowing about a class test
- To get important images and articles
- Discussion with the faculty members can be more interactive and fruitful in Facebook than email
- Can help to become a freelancer
- To become an extrovert/self-confident

- Getting information from other countries and people
- Getting in touch with mentors
- Practicing spelling perfectly
- Can help to improve grammar
- Finding a lost friend

Question 14 also elicited a variety of data. A list of responses on how Facebook helps undergraduate students improve their genre based writing is given below.

- Comments become descriptive at times
- Comments become argumentative at times
- Getting different opinions in others' writing
- Interesting posts encourage comments on the issue
- The platform allows students to write something where others can comment on the writing
- Mistakes in writing can be corrected from the comments in given on Facebook
- Comparing with others' writing can improve the particular genre based writing
- Debating on a particular post can improve argumentative writing styles
- Creating social awareness in Facebook (cause and effect)
- Posting in Facebook may develop students' critical thinking skills
- Teachers may use Facebook for assignments on descriptive or argumentative topics every week

Questionnaire for Teachers. The researchers collected data from fifteen teachers through questionnaires. According to these questionnaires, the results of the teacher's affiliation with Facebook, the teacher's attitude towards Facebook for teaching and learning, and how far the teachers are ready to use Facebook for teaching writing have been given here.

| Regularly | Often | Sometimes | Rare | Never |
|-----------|-------|-----------|------|-------|
| 17% | 15% | 43% | 17% | 08% |

Table 4: Teachers' affiliation with Facebook

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 27% | 60% | 10% | 03% | 0% |

Table 5: Teachers' thinking about Facebook for teaching and learning

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 14% | 38% | 31% | 08% | 09% |

Table 6: How far are teachers ready to use Facebook for teaching writing

Responses from open-ended questions

The teachers were asked to answer two open-ended questions. In response to question 13, teachers have said how Facebook can help them.

- Facebook works like media to communicate with students
- Works like a notice board
- Useful for uploading relevant links for students' academic purposes
- Helps to give students useful instructions
- Useful for uploading the assessment of progress
- Useful for collecting write ups and giving feedback
- For notifying students quickly about class timings or other information

- Communicating with the absentees

Question 14 in the questionnaire also showed a variety of data. A list of the responses on how Facebook helps teachers supervise undergraduate students to improve their genre based writings given below.

- Uploading topics from any of the genres allows students to give their own opinions
- Posting rubrics for students to help improve a paragraph
- Scaffolding group members with a more able peer leader
- Posting images related to certain genres and asking students to write on them
- Uploading an assignment and detailed feedback on Facebook can help shy students
- Uploading samples of writings in the group for comments or opinions
- Arranging discussion sessions on a Facebook group
- Allocating bonus marks for posting can encourage genre based writing
- Assigning group write ups to be posted and after receiving feedback, students can post individual write ups incorporating the feedback
- Assigning mentors to check others' comments on Facebook

Discussion and Analysis

Questionnaire for students. According to the questionnaire, it is clear that students agreed on the point that Facebook could help them improve their writing skills. It is observed from Table 1 that 50% participants participate actively on Facebook. Table 2 shows that 34% strongly agreed that Facebook could be used for teaching and learning. Interestingly, 53% agreed that it is possible, so it may be assumed that both categories of students (87% in total) are already in the process of learning using Facebook. In Table 3, we see that 24% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that they are ready to use Facebook to learn writing. In this category, 20% are neutral so they may be motivated if they receive proper direction. Therefore, after analyzing Table 3, it can be said that more than 80% students are ready to use Facebook as a parallel free space to learn genre based writing.

After analyzing the responses of question 13, it is evident that students on Facebook are getting different kinds of help including from academia. Examining the responses of question 14, the researchers have summed up that if teachers help the students by monitoring and giving constructive feedback, they will improve their skills in genre based writing.

Questionnaire for teachers. From the questionnaire, it is also confirmed that teachers are affiliated with Facebook. Table 4 shows that 17% of teachers “regularly,” 15% “often,” and 43% “sometimes” use Facebook. This means that 75% teachers are affiliated with Facebook, though some may be more active than others. Table 5, regarding Facebook for teaching and learning, we see that 27% strongly agreed and 60% agreed that the medium can be useful. It means about 87% teachers believe that Facebook could be used for teaching and learning. From Table 6, we see that 14% strongly agreed and 38% agreed. This means about 52% teachers are ready to teach genre based writing using Facebook. Interestingly, 31% teachers were “neutral,” which means they may also be ready to help students in this medium if given proper guidelines. Facebook is a free space where teachers can involve a good number of students and motivate them to utilize the free space for writing through fun.

From the responses to questions 13 and 14, it is clear that Facebook can be very helpful for teachers and teachers can use it to teach genre based writing.

Interviews. For the purpose of the research the researchers have interviewed some educational experts and experienced teachers. All responded that Facebook’s free writing space could be utilized for teaching and learning. Some of them have said that Facebook is a great option for developing slow or shy learners. Moreover, it may help them gear up their writing. One experienced teacher said that after a class on genre based writing (e.g., compare and contrast), teachers may upload two images (e.g., old city and new city) to a Facebook group where all the students can write comments. He added that teachers can nominate a few mentors who will comment on others’ postings and the teachers can supervise the whole process. Another teacher said that teachers can upload grading rubrics for specific types of writing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has tried to find an alternative solution for undergraduate students to develop their genre based writing. For this purpose, the researchers have found that the free space of Facebook could be used to guide students in developing their genre based writing. In Bangladesh, many students are not very good at academic writing because of the traditional question pattern which encourages students to mainly rely on memorization as a strategy for their writing. Many of them do not have any clear idea about genre based writing. Therefore, when they are enrolled at the undergraduate level, they face problems in writing academic papers. However, teachers have tried different strategies to assist them. To further help these students, the researchers have thought of utilizing the free space of Facebook. From analyzing the data recovered from the questionnaires and interviews, the researchers have come to the conclusion here that since students are already on Facebook, they will be motivated to learn genre based writing using their favorite free space.

It is a good opportunity for teachers to use Facebook in developing students' genre based writing. If teachers make Facebook groups for their students, it will be more convenient to facilitate genre based writing. Teachers may divide the Facebook group into a few more sub-groups according to the number of students. Some mentors may be selected to help each sub-group. Teachers will supervise the process by monitoring the posts and comments. Teachers may allocate some bonus marks for the students who are posting regularly. Bonus marks will motivate the students to make posts according to the teacher's directions. Teachers may upload grading rubrics to the Facebook groups for specific genre based writing so that students can check their writing themselves and discuss for better understanding. As part of their Facebook time, students will posting to the Facebook group and develop their skills in genre based writing. In a nutshell, if we can make use of students' affinity for Facebook and its free writing space, it will be a big step towards the emersion of Bangladeshi undergraduate learners in acquiring genre based writing skills.

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